

Changeling: The Lost Preview, Part 3

Spring Blossoms

Table of Contents

Chapter Five: Shared Nightmares	7
Fetches	7
Building the Fetch.....	7
Fetch Traits	8
Magic of the Fetch	10
Storytelling the Fetch.....	12
Resolution	14
The Loyal	16
Bridge-Burners.....	17
Privateers.....	20
True Loyalists	22
Storytelling the Loyal	24
Hedge Ghosts	24
Creating Hedge Ghosts	24
Hedge Numina	30
Example Hedge Ghosts.....	31
Hobgoblins.....	32
Creating Hobgoblins	32
Dread Powers	34
Hobgoblin Deals	36
Example Hobgoblins.....	37
The Wild Hunters.....	46
Never Far from the Queen	46
The Wild Hunt	47
Calling the Hunt.....	48
Sample Dread Powers	49
The True Fae	51
Names and Titles.....	52
Sign on the Dotted Line	53
True Fae Traits	54
One Thousand and One Stories.....	57
Chapter Six: All the Kingdoms of the Earth	63
Eighty-Nine Dreams of Home, the Yuanfen Pavilion	63

Historiarum Obscura	63
The Dragon Court	65
Society of Morning	65
Society of Day.....	66
Society of Night	67
Faces	67
Places	68
The Council of Elves	69
Historiarum Obscura.....	70
The Seasonal Lög.....	71
Spring.....	71
Summer	72
Autumn	72
Winter	73
Faces	74
Places	75
Hard-a-Lee	76
Historiarum Obscura.....	76
The Court of Tides	77
High Tide	78
Ebb Tide.....	78
Low Tide.....	79
Flood Tide.....	79
Faces	80
Places	81
Tumbledown Market.....	82
Historiarum Obscura.....	82
The Traders' Court	84
The Court of Coins.....	84
The Court of Barter	84
The Court of Favors	85
The Court of Shady Deals.....	86
Faces	86
Places	87

[FICTION]

It Happened to Me, Part V

Lucy:

I've always prided myself on being perceptive.

Stella and Susan were paddling around in the tub, and James was sitting on a stool next to me, cooing at them. When I looked to my side, there was a man whose glasses were sliding down his nose. When I turned slightly past, I could see our reflections in the bathroom mirror. Mine looked the same — snub nosed, sleepy-eyed, blonde roots growing in under bottle red. His... blurred like someone had smeared a handful of Vaseline on the glass. There, his face was patchwork, and his flat, button eyes hung loose. When I turned back to James, his bright-blue eyes lit up, and his smile pulled up the rims of his glasses. In the mirror, cloth shuffled itself and formed a gap shaped like that smile. I didn't flinch when he rested his flesh (fabric) hand on her knee and leaned in for a kiss. His face felt warm and unshaven and familiar. But when I peeked through my lashes, the cloth face in the mirror was rubbing against hers.

I've been thinking about that for a couple of weeks now. Would you feel yourself going crazy? Or might it happen so quietly that one day you could wake up sure that there was a cloth doll in your bed? Do nightmares about getting lost in writhing brambles snap into place all at once, or are they the ones I used to forget as I woke? Because I would have noticed. I think I would have noticed.

The sun was too bright again today. Out of the corner of my eye everything had extra reflections. The light bouncing off my coffee cup from a direction it couldn't have, in colors the light couldn't have been. My doctor says they're migraines. That the nightmares are normal for new mothers. Adopting is stressful, especially two babies at once. Bureaucracy can feel like a briar patch. Have I been meditating? Taking my medication? I haven't told him about the mirror thing, he'd probably tell me I'm hysterical. Not the funny kind of hysterical either. I think you can get your kids taken away if you're committed. I love James. I think the person I love is James.

I promised myself I'd never be that girl. The one who's paranoid, the one who snoops. But he *gave* me his email password. Because "he trusts me." It's not that much of an invasion of privacy to use something he offered me, right? And I just want to ask her a question.

What happened? They dated for years. They knew each other most of their lives. And then everything went to pieces. What changed? They haven't spoken in years, but I know she still lives in town. I see her walking at the beach sometimes. She followed me back on Instagram. Why does James go all cold and stiff if I mention her in passing? I just want to know...I want to know if he's always been like this. If he was different before we started dating. If this is really him.

I slept next to a cloth doll for seven more days before Katrina emailed me back. I hadn't wanted to press. I wanted to give her time. I mean, it must be a little weird to talk to the woman who came after you. Weirder if her email is 1,000 words of circling around a secret. Never quite managing to put that suspicion into words. All she said was "yes." Just like that. Yes, what? Yes, he changed? Yes, he was always like this? Yes, I can meet her in person?

I slept next to a cloth man that I wished I didn't love for three more days. Who was still everything I wanted, as long as I never looked at him in the mirror. I didn't pick the storm on purpose. I'd just been driving around so long before I could bear to call her that it came up around me. The rain seemed appropriate somehow. Like the downpour would wash away all my fears and fantasies, and James and I would be okay again. She answered when I called. Said "yes" again. Confirmed her address. I was getting drenched standing on the doorstep, as people walked in and out of the lobby. A tall man leaned out the door and invited me in with a soft patience, and looked knowing when I finally touched the handle and went inside.

I blinked. Twice, three times, again and again trying to force sense on what I was seeing. Katrina was already in the lobby, close enough to kiss a woman whose face made my stomach knot. The other woman looked at me wistfully, her eyes so sad, her face a soft reflection of the one I saw this morning. Every feature shifted so slightly. I met James a couple of times in passing before we were really introduced. I don't think he always went by James. They were whispering, and my feet carried me forward.

My voice sounded shrill and defensive even to my own ears. "Yes, what? What did you mean?"

Katrina looked first at the woman next to her, and then to me. She looked embarrassed, and concerned. Then, slowly, "To both. James did change, but also she didn't."

"What the hell is that supposed to mean?" There's this awful hum in the air. I can barely think.

"...That the guy you married is different from the one I dated, but the one I dated was like the guy you married?"

"That makes even less sense." I put my hands to my head and pressed hard against the noise.

"Okay, so, Lucy, I'm Aimee. I know you already, and I guess we need to talk, but we don't have time right now. And I know you don't have any reason to trust me, but I need you to take my hand, so I can show you something."

Spitefully, I felt myself pulling my arms closer, tight around my body. Like that would keep the memories away. "How could you possibly help me? And what's making that awful noise?" Something kept creeping around my head. I kept almost remembering.

Then someone was with them, who I couldn't *quite* see. Like a flicker in my vision. A missing cell of film. A skipped beat. But when I framed that space against the light just right, his skin was illuminated from within. Even more of what I already wasn't telling my doctor about. People shaped wrong, rushing off the elevators.

"Who's that?" When he opened his mouth, it sounded like bees and fluorescent lights, and he looked at me like I was the funniest thing he'd ever seen. "What is he saying?"

"You can see him?" The other woman seemed terrified. I wasn't sure that was an improvement over the wistful look she'd been giving me earlier. "Lucy, please. I know this is...difficult for you, but I kinda feel like I owe it to my fetch to keep you safe until we all have a chance to talk?"

She shrugged defensively. "I mean, I'd want you to be safe if I was in his shoes."

The space where a man shouldn't have been flexed, and I could see the imprints of his fingers on her shoulder.

"What's a fetch?" I whispered. But I knew. *I knew.*

[END FICTION]

Chapter Five: Shared Nightmares

Lies and half-truths fall like snow, covering the things that I remember, the things I saw. A landscape, unrecognizable after a snowfall; that is what she has made of my life.

Neil Gaiman, “Snow, Glass, Apples”

Just because you’ve escaped from Faerie with your life and your wits, that doesn’t mean you’re safe. Behind that ordinary lamppost, a grinning goblin offers sweetmeats that rot hearts instead of teeth. In your bed, a thing made of matchsticks and clockwork snuggles, warm, under your covers. You meet the cab driver’s eyes in the rearview mirror, and they flash iron gray as he runs you off the road into a ditch, taking not a scratch. And waiting for you always on the other side of the Hedge — oh God, you hope they’re still on the other side of the Hedge — are the Fairest Ones of all, the ones that will haunt your dreams until you die. The only difference between before and after is that you *know* now what’s reaching for you from in between the thorny cracks in the Mask’s façade.

Fetches

When the Fae steal human beings from their cribs, or pull them into the Hedge as they walk alone down certain alleyways, they leave something behind. The being — the *thing* — they leave behind looks identical to the person they stole, and can function in the abducted human’s life with little difficulty. But that thing the Fae leave behind isn’t human and isn’t fae. It is something in between, a creature made of detritus and Glamour called the *fetch*.

Building the Fetch

Almost every changeling has a fetch. When the Gentry capture a person, they rip away part of the victim’s shadow and use it to form the fetch. That isn’t enough raw material, though, and so the Fae use whatever is handy — household materials, plants, garbage, even the victim’s clothes — to make the fetch. From the time the fetch begins its charade, its personality develops in much the same way a human’s would in response to its environment. Just as a human being’s personality and proclivities depend in large part upon genetics, however, a fetch’s personality receives a great deal of influence from its “heritage.”

The player and the Storyteller should work together to determine the circumstances under which the human was abducted, and thus the circumstances under which the fetch was formed. The player begins this process by answering five questions regarding the character’s human life and abduction.

Five Questions

- **Where was the character abducted?** Where was the character when she was taken? What is the last thing she remembers? The circumstances surrounding her abduction help to determine what kind of situation the fetch encounters when it resumes the changeling’s life. Was the character in the middle of a birthday party for an ex-lover, feeling bitter and petulant? Did she step away from a business meeting to take a phone call? Was she wandering alone at night, unable to sleep? Her last moments of freedom shape the fetch’s first thoughts upon being “born.”

- **Who knows or suspects the truth?** Did or does anyone suspect that the fetch is not really who it seems? Maybe someone witnessed the abduction, but didn't quite know what he was seeing. He saw a woman walking down the sidewalk at night, and then great hands reach out, grab her, and yank her into...nothing. Moments later, there she was, resuming her walk, but with an air of detached calm rather than exhausted stress. Likewise, someone close to the victim might *know*, on some horribly instinctive level, that the person who walked in the door the night of that terrible storm isn't really her father, brother, or spouse, but of course, she has no way to express these suspicions without sounding mad. Someone who suspects the truth about the fetch might make a good ally for the changeling, once she returns from Faerie.
- **What is the fetch made of?** Gentry whip up a fetch in moments, using whatever is handy. They use a tiny piece of their target's soul, sometimes a few drops of her blood, and convenient detritus. Fetches might wind up created out of manmade material (garbage, clothes, objects from a victim's home); natural material (leaves, sticks, dirt); living or once-living material (the victim's pets, animals plucked from the surrounding area); or fae-stuff the Fair One has with it. A fetch's components don't necessarily affect its traits, but they probably affect its personality. A fetch made of the clothes of the person it's impersonating might be better able to carry off the charade in superficial ways, but be incapable of real empathy; it is, in effect, an empty suit. A fetch made from fae-stuff might show more of an affinity for faerie magic and the Hedge, while one made from dead animals might become feral and impulsive over time.
- **How is the fetch flawed?** No fetch is a perfect recreation of the person it is meant to replace. The player should consider how her character's fetch is flawed. How might it give itself away? What small but basic facet of humanity has it never quite mastered? What detail about the character's life does it continually forget or get wrong? Some fetches become murderers, monsters completely without remorse or humanity, but more often, fetches are just *off* somehow. They can relate to people, up to a point, but have strange blind spots. Some fetches are flawed in more physical ways; a fetch might have a fist-sized hole in the small of its back, stuffed with dead leaves. Another might have its creator's initials branded on its collarbone. Deciding how the fetch is flawed will help the Storyteller portray this character when the time comes.
- **Did the changeling see the fetch?** Does the character know she *has* a fetch? Not every changeling does. The Lost tend to find out about these simulacra when they emerge from the Hedge and find someone else living their lives, but some changelings have to watch as the Keeper who collected them crafts the fetch. In some ways, this is beneficial — the changeling has an idea of what to expect when she returns home, and the knowledge that someone is masquerading as her can provide strong motivation to escape. On the other hand, knowing that something else is living her life can muddle a changeling's focus when she pushes her way back through the Thorns. Changelings who know about their fetches tend to want to destroy them as soon as possible...which can make for a confusing realization if the fetch in question has done a reasonable job of living the character's life.

Fetch Traits

The Storyteller doesn't have to develop traits for a fetch, and should only do so if the fetch is going to play a prominent role in the story *and* interact mechanically with the characters. If the fetch is an afterthought, a note in a character's backstory, or is going to enter the conflict chiefly through influence from afar, traits aren't necessarily required. If, however, the changeling decides she's going to track down her fetch and kill it (a not-uncommon reaction to learning that

a fae-created duplicate has taken over one's life), it's helpful to have some idea of the fetch's capabilities.

Create a fetch in much the same way as a **Changeling** character (see Chapter 3 for details). The allocation of the fetch's dots, while numerically the same as the changeling's, demands some consideration.

One possibility is to distribute the fetch's Attribute dots in the same way as the changeling's. The fetch was fashioned as an exact duplicate of the changeling, after all, so it makes sense that their basic capabilities would match. Likewise, if the changeling possesses Merits that reflect innate capabilities (such as Ambidextrous), the fetch should as well. Skills and Merits that develop over time, however, are unique to the fetch and should be decided based on how the fetch has spent its life. If the fetch replaced a person after she was already an adult, though, the Skills and Merits might match much more closely. Indeed, differences at this stage might provide the changeling a way to track when she was taken — if the changeling has the Iron Stamina Merit and the fetch does not, people close to the character might remember that she suddenly lost her high pain threshold “after she got lost in the woods that summer.”

Another way of looking at this is that when the changeling returns to the mortal world, the fetch immediately realizes it and develops some sense of itself. This might cause it to gain knowledge of Skills it wouldn't otherwise possess. For instance, a Playmate changeling, forced in Arcadia to be a toy for a spoiled Fae child, has become an expert tracker through endless games of hide and seek. The changeling escapes and flees through the Hedge to the mortal world. His fetch awakens one morning knowing that something is different and he is in danger. He can't shake the feeling that something is hunting him down, and he might escape if he can hide from it. The fetch therefore might unconsciously develop dots in the Stealth Skill; or, if he feels his best chance of living involves finding and killing his hunter, the Survival Skill.

The Storyteller might choose to decide the fetch's game traits, or allow the player to do so. Either way has its advantages. If the Storyteller does it, the player truly does not know what to expect from her character's imposter, and this should heighten the suspense when the inevitable confrontation occurs. It is also probably more expedient for the Storyteller to handle this aspect of character creation, which might be a factor depending on how often and for how long the troupe meets. If the player does it, she has the ability to show the Storyteller exactly what she expects from the fetch/changeling dynamic, which is helpful for the chronicle as a whole. One way of compromising in this instance might be for the player to allocate the dots as usual, but for the Storyteller to spend a certain number of Experiences on the fetch to reflect its years in the mortal world.

Finally, consider Needle and Thread. As fae beings created for a purpose, fetches have these instead of Virtue and Vice just like changelings do. While their Needles are similar, their Threads can be stranger things, stemming from unconscious drives the Gentry instilled in them. A fetch could have a Thread of *Obedience*, never quite understanding its urge to do as it's told until it discovers the truth about itself; or it could have one of *Surveillance*, created to keep watch on the humans around it just in case the Gentry ever want to come back and pick through its memories. In rare cases, a Keeper might steal a human not because it even *wants* a changeling servant, but because it wants a fetch subliminally doing its bidding to accomplish something in the mortal world.

Character Creation in Brief

The first four steps of character creation proceed as described on p. XX of this book, with regards to the number of dots that fetches have to distribute. How those dots are allocated is discussed in the previous section.

Step Five (adding the supernatural template) varies a bit:

- Fetches do not have access to Contracts.
- Fetches do not have seemings (and thus kiths).
- Fetches cannot gain status in any of the courts. It is *possible*, however unlikely, for a fetch that is aware of its nature to gain the Court Goodwill Merit, but as fetches are not changelings it is not possible for them to have dots in Mantle. A fetch might come to think of himself as a member of a given court, and the courtiers might even regard him as one, but in game terms, the best he could hope for is a high Court Goodwill rating. Given that all changelings see fetches as reminders of the lives the Gentry stole from them, though, it would take a peculiar circumstance for changelings to even grudgingly accept a fetch into their society.
- Fetches begin with one dot of Wyrd just as changelings do. The Wyrd rating of a fetch *always* matches the Wyrd rating of the changeling it impersonates, though, so if the player trades Merit dots for Wyrd, or raises Wyrd with Experiences in play, the fetch reaps this benefit without expenditure.
- Fetches have Integrity, like mortals, rather than Clarity. They therefore derive none of the benefits that changelings do from having a high Clarity rating, but they also do not risk Integrity for the kinds of acts that deal Clarity damage to a changeling. Since fetches are not player-controlled characters, the Storyteller doesn't necessarily need to worry about breaking points or tracking the fetch's Integrity rating, but it makes for a useful benchmark as to how well the fetch holds its stolen life together. A fetch with Integrity 8 might have worked hard to maintain the life it has, and sees those accomplishments as valid even after learning of its true nature. A fetch with Integrity 2 has never really thought of itself as human at all, and might be oddly pleased to learn that it was right.
- Fetches automatically gain the Attuned to the Wyrd Echo. The player (or Storyteller) selects one additional Echo per dot of Wyrd the fetch possesses. During play, if the changeling's Wyrd rating increases, the fetch gains an additional Echo as well as a dot of Wyrd.

Magic of the Fetch

Fetches are unable to call upon Contracts; the magic that powers them just doesn't apply to fetches. Likewise, fetches cannot seal pledges, or forge oaths or bargains, though as creatures of the Wyrd, they are almost immune from having their own words sealed (p. XX). They are, however, able to use their fae heritage to their advantage. Fetches can call upon powers called *Echoes*.

Echoes, as the name implies, are powers based upon the fetch's relationship with its changeling counterpart. That is, the fetch is nothing but secondary to the changeling, a placeholder, a stopgap to prevent other humans from discovering and thwarting the Fae. Most Echoes only function in the presence of changelings, and some only function on the changeling that the fetch impersonates. Others play on effects similar to echoes — shadows, reflections, and other residue.

All fetches begin play with the Attuned to the Wyrd Echo, and gain additional Echoes as their Wyrd rating increases.

Echoes and the Chronicles of Darkness

Should a situation arise in which a fetch's Echo conflicts with the supernatural abilities of another, non-changeling being, the Storyteller can make a Clash of Wills (p. XX) using the fetch's Resolve + Wyrld.

Fetches require a certain Wyrld rating to acquire Echoes. These requirements are noted after the name of the power ("Shadow Step (Wyrld 3)," for instance).

Echoes

- **Attuned to the Wyrld (automatic):** All fetches can recognize changelings for what they are, even before the changeling to whom they are attuned returns to the mortal world. Fetches see changelings' miens as well as their mortal guises, in much the same way that other changelings do. In addition, fetches can sense changelings coming before they see them. This sensation is general; the fetch cannot differentiate between changelings, but can tell when a changeling is within a 50-foot radius. The exception, of course, is the changeling that the fetch is impersonating. The fetch can immediately tell if that changeling is within this distance. This attunement means that changelings cannot surprise a fetch (p. XX).
- **Call the Huntsmen (Wyrld 5):** The fetch can send up a beacon to any nearby Huntsmen, usually as a last resort. Since only powerful fetches have this ability, Huntsmen generally respond to this summons quickly. At the Storyteller's discretion, this Echo may summon the Gentry instead. Using this Echo requires an instant action and the expenditure of all of the fetch's Glamour (however much it has at the time, as long as it has any).
- **Death of Glamour (Wyrld 4):** The fetch becomes a sinkhole for Glamour, creating a small zone in which no Contracts are honored and no fae magic can function. Spend 10 points of Glamour and roll Resolve + Wyrld as an instant action; obviously, this Echo takes several turns to enact due to the Glamour expenditure. If the roll succeeds, no Contracts function within a 50-foot radius and all beings that can hold Glamour (including the fetch itself) lose one point per turn. This Echo lasts for one turn per success.
- **Enter the Hedge (Wyrld 1):** The fetch can enter the Hedge in the same ways a changeling can (p. XX).
- **Heart of Wax (Wyrld 1):** Made of Glamour and inanimate matter, the fetch feels no pain. The fetch ignores wound penalties. By spending a point of Glamour, it can reflexively shed the effect of a Tilt causing physical impairment for the scene.
- **Mimic Contract (Wyrld 2):** The fetch can use any Contract its changeling counterpart possesses. The fetch must have interacted with the changeling at least once, face to face, to use this Echo. This costs one point of Glamour, or the cost of the Contract, whichever is greater. Fetches cannot make use of Loopholes.
- **Normalcy (Wyrld 1):** This Echo is permanent and never needs to be activated, although the fetch can turn it *off* reflexively if it so desires. The fetch is completely undetectable by fae magic. As far as the perceptive magic of the Fae and changelings are concerned, the fetch is simply a human being. The fetch must turn this power off to use other Echoes, other than Attuned to the Wyrld.
- **Shadow Boxing (Wyrld 2):** Fighting one's fetch is like fighting one's shadow — you can't surprise it. The fetch can predict its changeling's next move with disturbing precision.

Spend one point of Glamour for the fetch reflexively. For the remainder of the scene, the changeling receives no Defense against the fetch, though armor is unaffected.

- **Shadow Step (Wyrd 3):** The fetch can use shadows to teleport limited distances. The fetch must find a shadow large enough to step or fall into, and the Storyteller spends a point of Glamour. The fetch disappears into the shadow and reappears from any shadow of comparable size within 100 yards or meters. The fetch can use this power to escape from a pursuer, circumvent a locked door, or gain a tactical advantage over an opponent (appearing behind her, for instance). The teleportation normally requires an instant action, but if the Storyteller spends three points of Glamour, this action is reflexive. The fetch does not have to see where it is going, but if it cannot see its destination it gains no protection from unfavorable circumstances there.
- **Summon Shard (Wyrd 1):** In the modern world, the fetch is always armed. By touching a pane of glass, the fetch can summon a mirror-like blade reflexively. This requires the expenditure of one point of Glamour. The blade inflicts 1L, or 2L if the fetch pulled it from a mirror. The blade fades at the end of the scene.

Storytelling the Fetch

The role the fetch plays in the chronicle depends on the Storyteller and the players. That said, the fetch is well-suited to highlight a few of **Changeling**'s themes, and can make for stories unique to this game.

The fetch is fashioned out of a piece of a human being. Specifically, the Fae use a piece of the person's shadow, but this is an obvious metaphor for the soul...and to the Fae, metaphor is as good as truth. The fetch, therefore, is put into the role of imposter without any choice in the matter and usually with no idea of his position. It isn't until a changeling escapes from Arcadia and arrives home, breathless and bloodied from a harrowing run through the Hedge, that a fetch realizes he — it — is different.

What form does that realization take? One fetch sits bolt upright one night, sheet soaked with sweat, in the middle of a panic attack so intense he can barely breathe. Another finds herself standing in a crowded square one day, tears running down her face, because she suddenly cannot remember her name or where she lives. Yet another fetch walks out of class at the college he attends only to be grabbed by the lapels and slammed against the wall by a man that his friends don't get a good look at...but after the assailant runs away, the fetch is so terrified he can hardly stand, because the face of his attacker was identical to his own.

Fetches are not necessarily "evil twins" to **Changeling** characters. Remember that many believed themselves to be human until shown otherwise by their counterparts. As such, they can be anything that a human being can be — cruel, hateful, petty; but also loving, kind, and selfless. Are they more prone to sociopathy because they lack true souls, or do they mimic human morality because they are meant to blend in? Is killing a fetch really murder, from an ethical standpoint (what it means from a Clarity standpoint is discussed on p. XX)? Your troupe can confront these questions, if you wish to tell a story about the fetch.

How does the fetch react when it realizes it isn't human? Finding out it is a copy of a person, inserted into that person's life to cover up a kidnapping, is a traumatic event. Of course, since the fetch is a Storyteller-controlled character, how a given fetch responds is subservient to the needs of the chronicle, and should be informed by the player and how he sees the relationship with the fetch progressing. One player might be interested in hunting down and killing her character's

fetch, no matter what. It might be interesting, then, for that fetch to try to continue living the changeling's life, dutifully doing what she was made to do, until the changeling forces her hand by becoming violent. Another player's character might be terrified to confront his fetch because that represents an attempt to retake his old life, and for whatever reason, he feels unready or unworthy to do that. This fetch might be more confident, ruthless, and opportunistic, forcing the player to make some tough and firm decisions to resolve the story.

Making the fetch a straight-out monster is always a possibility. Fetches aren't human, and learning that fact might propel the fetch headfirst into inhumanity. It might become violent, bloodthirsty, abusive, sociopathic, or just numb. If it knows the changeling is around, it might attempt to ruin the changeling's life in any number of terrible ways. It might even try to attract the attention of a Huntsman or the Gentry; after all, if the changeling goes back to Arcadia, the fetch gets its "life" back!

Conflicts inherent to **Changeling** are discussed in Chapter 7, but below are some conflicts and stories specific to the fetch and its role in the chronicle.

The Fetch as Adversary

Once the fetch realizes what it is and that the changeling exists, it might well be incensed. As long as the changeling is around, it knows it is a fake, a mannequin made to dupe the changeling's relatives. But while the changeling was gone, the fetch was doing all the work, and doing it quite well, thanks anyway. Why should the changeling get to show up and take it all away just because he actually happens to *be* the genuine person?

This kind of attitude doesn't have to stem from bitterness or fear, though it certainly can. The fetch might have a spouse and children, and whether it can feel genuine love or not, it isn't going to give up its family without a fight.

The fetch can be a violent adversary to a changeling. The two can spend their days sparring, attacking whatever the other holds dear, or playing a tense game of cat and mouse, each trying to maneuver the other into a deathtrap.

The fetch can also be a rival. The fetch and the changeling might both be part of the local changeling court, to whatever degree. What if the reigning monarch decrees that fetches cannot be killed, but must agree to give up their stolen lives and return to their changelings' shadows? The fetch would need to submit to this fate, or be beaten down and degraded to the point that he agrees. The battles between changeling and fetch then aren't literal, physical battles, but political and emotional games of wit and endurance.

The Fetch as Other Half

Some changelings believe they can merge with their fetches. The fetch can, according to rumors and fanciful tales, step back into the changeling's shadow and give up its stolen life. This is akin to death for the fetch, but the fetch's memories of its life as a human being transfer to the changeling. In that moment, the changeling becomes whole again and regains the entirety of his soul. He's still a changeling, yes — nothing's going to take that away from him — but he's human, as well.

It's a beautiful idea, but is it true? Enough changelings believe it that the idea persists, for whatever that's worth.

If merging with the fetch is possible, it requires an extraordinary set of circumstances. Perhaps as part of creating the fetch, the Fae had to build a clause into the Contract that enabled what was sundered to become whole again. This clause might involve beating the fetch in a certain type of combat, or it might require that the fetch knowingly and willingly agree to the “merger.” Perhaps the changeling can complete this merger if he drags the fetch back into the Hedge and keeps him prisoner there for a certain amount of time...but that fetch will probably scream for help until he is hoarse, and in the Hedge, who knows what might answer?

The Fetch as a Question of Humanity

Strictly speaking, changelings don’t have to feel bad about killing fetches. Not only are they manifestly not human, they are creations of the Gentry. They are living reminders of what a changeling has lost, and of the ongoing power the Gentry wield over the world. Destroying a fetch is not like killing a human being, not in any moral or literal sense.

It is possible for a fetch to adopt humanity, in a way. If a fetch displays human traits, and treats other people with respect and empathy (both of which can be learned), then in what meaningful way does it differ from humanity? One changeling might say it *doesn't*, and try to come to some kind of resolution. Maybe the changeling helps the fetch adopt a new identity, or maybe the changeling, altered by her time in Arcadia, moves on, letting her fetch have the life the Gentry took from her.

Another changeling might claim that aping humanity is irrelevant. The fetch is an automaton, a living (or at least animate) lie of the Gentry, and destruction is perfectly justified.

Both changelings are “right.” Both positions are defensible. Both have the potential for powerful stories, especially if the changeling makes her decision but then has to deal with other Lost who “know better.”

The Fetch as a Hard Lesson

The changeling cannot recover what she has lost. Teaching her that is, perhaps, the harshest use of the fetch in a **Changeling** story, but it is potentially a powerful one. A changeling might escape Arcadia, fight her way back through the Hedge, emerge bloodied and victorious in a place she recognizes, track down her fetch, kill or assimilate her, and expect to have “won.” She hasn’t. She cannot reclaim the time the Gentry took from her, nor can she obviate her durance. The best she can do is heal and move on.

That can mean any number of things for a changeling, but confronting the fetch is perhaps the best way for a character to symbolically confront the version of her that the Gentry took. She can look on what she might have become, had she not been kidnapped, and decide where to go from there. She might decide to destroy the fetch and reclaim her life. She might come to terms with the fetch, allowing her to keep her old life and go forth to forge a new one. She might take a much bitterer road — destroy the fetch, but remain apart from her old life. The underlying point is that the fetch represents the answer to a hard question: What does the changeling do about her pre-durance life?

Resolution

When a changeling finally confronts her fetch, what is the outcome? How does this story end? The player — and thus the character — has some options.

Kill the Fetch

The obvious answer is violence. As discussed, the changeling has every reason to want to destroy the fetch. This is probably the simplest resolution for a fetch-centered story in **Changeling: The Lost**, but that doesn't mean it's wrong or can't be satisfying. Killing the fetch might be cathartic, or it might grant the changeling a strong insight into what it means to be human...and how much of her own humanity she might have lost.

From a game-mechanics perspective, this result is much like any other fatal combat. The fetch falls apart into its constituent parts, the changeling might lose Clarity, and the story moves on. A blast of Glamour might accompany the death of a fetch as the magic holding it together is freed, or it might simply collapse into a bloodless heap. The changeling might refresh all Willpower or Glamour as a feeling of victory comes over her, or she might feel oddly empty; after all, a piece of her soul was used to make this thing and she just smashed it. In any case, the Storyteller should resist the temptation to make this scene just a simple combat. The fetch might be defiant and evil, sure, but what if the fetch is honestly confused as to why the changeling is attacking? What if the fetch begs to live? Can the changeling still pull the proverbial trigger?

Forgive the Fetch

The changeling might decide to accept the fetch for what it is — an attempt to copy the human being the changeling was. If the fetch is still trying to behave in a humane (and human) fashion, the changeling might well decide to forgive the fetch's impersonation. After all, the fetch really didn't have a lot of say in the matter.

This kind of resolution should probably take the form of an intense scene between the changeling and the fetch. If the rest of the motley is there, that's fine, but don't let more talkative players steal thunder from the character in question. The changeling needs to come to some kind of closure with the fetch, and that involves figuring out the practical ramifications of "live and let live." Put another way, if the changeling and the fetch are, in many ways, the same person, who gets to keep the house? Is one of them going to leave town? Are they going to try to share the life, which is probably destined to become a train wreck and therefore a great source of drama?

Beyond the temporal considerations, though, they should come to some kind of resolution on the time the changeling spent in her durance. What did she miss? If she had children, the fetch can fill her in on the milestones and important events that happened during her absence. If the fetch has been performing the changeling's job, she'll need to know about new faces at the office and any promotions (or demotions) that happened while she was away. It might be better to walk away from some facets of this life and start fresh, but might the fetch not see that as unfair?

Reclaim the Fetch

Fetches are made, in part, of a piece of a person's soul. Suppose the changeling wants her soul back?

If a character wants to merge with her fetch, she needs to understand it. She needs to find where it was created and, if possible, learn how. She needs to figure out what it was made from — detritus in the Hedge? The abducted person's clothes? The skin and bones of an unfortunate animal? Whatever the Gentry had in its pockets at the time?

The changeling needs to understand what the fetch has been through, but also needs to come to terms with it herself. She needs to reconnect with the people in her life and be honest with at

least one of them about where she's been, which probably means confessing that she's been gone at all. She needs to forgive the fetch as described in the previous section, but then reclaim the piece of her soul from it. Does that mean actually cutting open the fetch and removing its heart? That's a simplistic, but visceral, way to represent the act. The changeling could also physically connect with the fetch — a kiss, an embrace, or just a hand held to the fetch's heart.

What happens to the changeling if she reclaims this piece of her soul? Any mechanical benefits are up to the Storyteller, but the experience should be transcendent. The character has accomplished something few of the Lost ever bother to try, and that should carry some kind of reward. Maybe the changeling permanently increases her maximum Clarity, or becomes invisible to Huntsmen for a given period of time. Maybe she can teach her method to other changelings. After all, what would it mean if fetches learned they aren't necessarily doomed, false people? What would it mean if changelings learned they could take back so much of what the Gentry stole?

The Loyal

Arcadia is a place of grand beauty, but great suffering. Most changelings would pay nearly any price to avoid being forced to return, an attitude that has shaped changeling society into one that stands in opposition to the True Fae. This singular focus makes that society equally unsuited to dealing with threats from within. The society of changelings prides itself on welcoming without ostracizing, valuing every Lost's experiences as equal. When internal threats arise, they're difficult to address with any degree of nuance.

For all their intrigue, courts are built on a fundamental, unifying premise: haven against the life stealers and lie smiths. Communal defense is an eminently human reaction to shared danger, providing magical and social protection in the form of Mantles. Those who defy the courts are more than mere traitors when they're revealed: They are betrayers of the sacred compact, transgressors against the *concept* of safety and mutual survival that binds changeling society.

No one motive forces a changeling to eschew the safety of the courts, though commonalities emerge that allow classification for colloquial parlance. In general, these courtless are called loyalists, though only a few truly remain loyal to the Gentry (and some aren't truly courtless). Greed motivates some, a refusal to play the games of the court others. Still others are consumed by shame and addiction, bound interminably to the True Fae. The tiger that stalks the courts has three stripes: Bridge-Burner, Privateer, and True Loyalist.

Whatever their varying motivations, a confirmed loyalist faces exile or swift, sure execution in the best-case scenario...and a harrowing, vitriol-filled public execution in the worst. They feel the kiss of cold iron, knowing none of their executioners ever want to think, *there but for the grace of Fate go I*, because that line of thought leads to Clarity's disintegration.

The Courtless

Not all courtless are loyalists, but courtiers tend to see them that way. Changelings who just want to go about their business without joining a court and have no particular agenda rarely interact much with player characters, unless the characters *themselves* are courtless, focusing more on reclaiming their old lives than finding a new purpose. The courts impose a stigma of suspicion on these changelings, condemning them, even if for nothing more sinister than sticking their heads in the

sand when they could be helping their fellows. That doesn't mean the courts are necessarily right — but if it's hard to identify a real loyalist *within* the courtly structure, how much harder is it to do so in the wild? Fear motivates this stigma more than anything, and this dynamic could be an interesting one to explore if the troupe likes.

Distinguishing Between the Loyal

Most of courtly society doesn't distinguish between loyalists. All who refuse to engage with the base premise of changeling society could potentially be loyal in the eyes of the courts, and the reasons don't truly matter. Bridge-Burners, at least, are usually open about their motives and heresy — while they endanger all others around them by openly refusing to adopt a Mantle and engaging in scorched-Hedge tactics, their hearts are against the True Fae, and therefore in the right place. The courts paint privateers and True Loyalists with the same broad brush of betrayer, though, and they generally tend to be far more insidious. Privateers sell their fellow changelings to the Gentry or to slave traders at the Goblin Markets, and the reasons are mercenary. Whether on retainer or on an ad hoc basis, a privateer is beholden only to her profit motive. True Loyalists, by contrast, serve the Others directly, but for an infinite variety of reasons. Of the three, True Loyalists are perhaps the most pitiable, and simultaneously the most reviled. Nobody wants to hear the means that justify an end in enslavement.

Bridge-Burners

“Our memories of this world allowed us purchase to return from the Hedge. All acknowledge this, yet few recognize the converse: The belief of our fellows allows the Others purchase here.”

Loyalist. The mere appellation rankles the Bridge-Burners — if anything, their hatred of the Others eclipses everything else. The courts utilize the tools and methods of the enemy, making Bargains and singing sagas of opposition. For the Burners, playing the game at all is playing it on the enemy's home turf. They seek an ultimate end to Arcadia's relationship with Earth, hence the name *Bridge-Burner*.

They wear that name as a badge of honor, because some bridges should never be crossed. The Burners range anywhere from "courtless with mildly controversial opinions" to "terrorist dream-murderer." Belief, dreams, pledges, emotion — these are sources of power and Glamour for the True Fae, the reasons they abduct humans beyond the Hedge. The logic of the Burners is undeniable: Cut the Gentry off from the source of their might, deny them crossings of the Hedge, and they will cease to find humanity interesting. Destroying the supply train of an invading army is a time-honored military tactic, because it works. Poison the wells, burn the bridges, and your enemy withers and quits the field.

To that end, the Bridge-Burners annihilate anything they think might attract the Fae, their goals ranging from encouraging science without wonder, to getting a local school board to eliminate music programs at elementary schools, to acting as ad hoc muses for architects using the Brutalist style (they're particularly proud of the role they had in the J. Edgar Hoover Building the FBI used as a headquarters for a half century). They hunt and kill any fetches they find, and attempt to eradicate any site that might have some sort of Arcadian resonance. Skilled oneiromancers, they raze the dreams of lucid dreamers and those who have suffered the poisons of the True Fae.

Bridge-Burners become rabid and terroristic promoters of hard logic, science, and technology that defies the Hedge. They don't eschew magic, however: Theirs are the Contracts that manipulate memory, belief, and dreams. None of the Bridge-Burners truly care if their actions render a mortal incapable of empathy or creativity. It stops the True Fae and prevents them from taking people. This is *war*. Casualties are expected and acceptable. To that end, Burners are also some of the most media-aware Lost, aggressively seeking out hunters and attempting to sway other Lost with propaganda. It's not unusual for urban changelings to receive a Burner mass text with a cheerfully vague call to arms. The real message is easy to grasp: If *we* can find you, so can They.

They're loathe to admit it, but it's fear, righteousness, and fanaticism that motivates the Bridge-Burners. The fear that drives them is that of the Wild Hunt triumphant, of the full might of the True Fae turned against the changelings. Their righteousness is that of the zealot: such certainty in their cause that Clarity is rarely an impediment to their impossible task of war against Arcadia. Their fanaticism is that of the hardened survivor, of someone who has seen true war.

History

The Bridge-Burners, as a unified philosophy, have their origins in the Age of Enlightenment. The concept of using occult architecture and mortal science as defenses against the Fae has existed since a group of Wyrdbuilder masons sprung up in the Dark Ages, but the Burners grew from seeds sown by Thomas More and Sir Francis Bacon. The idea that reason could triumph over superstition was the keystone binding the Bridge-Burners together. Even then, the Gentry had no problem abducting skeptics and early scientists, but the Bridge-Burners felt this was an issue with the worldwide problem of belief and wonder. This belief, they proclaimed to crowds in freeholds, was a bright and shining beacon to the Others, a blazing signal fire seen from Arcadia's Plutonian shores. The upswelling of returning Lost during Victoria's reign was proof enough of that. From their metropolises of London and Paris, Bridge-Burners attempted to convince traditional Seasonal Courts to favor Summer. Even if the True Fae didn't cease in their attempts to abduct mortals — even if the Bridge-Burners never made a dent in the numbers — the 20th century gave the Bridge-Burners far more weapons with which to fight the Arcadians. Even as belt-fed machine guns chattered and flung iron at a rate magic could never match, ancient changelings pulled themselves into movie sets that replicated the days of antiquity. The biggest successes came early, before Hollywood clamped down on set design: Anyone who looks closely at the special features of Cecil B. DeMille's *The Ten Commandments* will catch a glimpse of a fleeing motley.

The Bridge-Burner's Tale

All your life, you dreamed of armor, a glittering shell protecting you from the world. In your dreams, you sat astride mighty destriers, sword and shield in hand. One night, you realized that you were in a dream, but you didn't wake up. The Others came seeking a vassal, and you came to know the true horror of war.

You fought your way clear and destroyed the thing that looked like you, but you knew you'd been taken because of your dreams. You dreaded falling asleep, even as your husband commented on the change in your behavior. So you sought in the dreams of others instead. And one night, you found yourself back on the tournament field, but the champion's face was your daughter's.

That night, as she sank into fitful, sweating sleep, you slipped into her dreams. So vibrant in their fever pitch, shuddering under the weight of sickly madness, they were a grand and inviting beacon. You saw the thorns creeping in. If you didn't act, they would have her as they had you. That's why the songbirds no longer sing in your garden; you crushed bones and captured death screams, bound skin and feathers in a dreamcatcher lined with iron spikes (the scars on your hands still haven't faded). As your daughter tossed, you hung the catcher above her head.

In the morning, you plucked the small bit of bloody gray meat from the iron spikes and chewed it thoughtfully while you caressed the fresh scar on her forehead. She would never dream again, but that was a small choice to pay for her safety.

Carey Ives

"Don't be afraid, little one. I won't let them take you."

Background: Ives has stalked several suburban towns of the Midwestern United States since the early 1980s, catching the dreams of young and imaginative children in a rusty iron dreamcatcher. Of this much the local courts are aware. Few know Ives' history — taken by the Others from her parents' farm during the Great Depression, returning to the world during the Summer of Love, raising a family with a husband who knew nothing of her troubles. In Arcadia, she served as the faceless challenger, jousting for her Keeper to face champions from every kingdom and draining them of life and Glamour when they fell, with a helm's visor serving as her only expression of self. Once she returned, she could not bear to endure the way the freehold embraced the trappings of fae nobility, and rejected its aid. Ives' separation from the courts and her growing fear for her child led her to do the unthinkable. Yet once her child was safe, the fear returned, and so Ives went.

While the mutilation of children's dreams is what she's known for best, Ives has participated in other Bridge-Burning activities, sometimes literally — burning down magnet schools, slashing art galleries after hours, and murdering fantasy authors. She's well-known at this point, but frighteningly good at penetrating courts, a talent that lends credence to her frequent arguments of courtiers becoming complacent.

Description: Ives is in her mid-50s, and her mortal Mask shows it. She gets by on the largesse of her fellow Bridge-Burners, who banded together to keep one another fed and clothed with truck-stop meals and thrift-store clothing. Her fae mien has featureless black armor in place of skin, everywhere but her hands. Her calloused fingers, perpetually stained with rust and dried blood behind the Mask, wield weapons and craft traps as well as they suck the life out of people.

Storytelling Hints: She's the quiet one in back, and she enjoys it when they whisper *Bridge-Burner* as she passes. In the beginning, she did this to keep her daughter safe, and in her heart she knows it's wrong, but she can't turn back now. The freeholds could never protect anyone, just keep them still and placid. Only by making the Others uninterested in this world can she be safe from them. Only by being what they didn't like to see will she be free.

Seeming: Darkling

Kith: Leechfinger

Court: Courtless

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

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

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Larceny (Breaking and Entering) 2, Stealth 3, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Empathy (Oneiromancy) 1, Intimidation 4, Socialize (School Systems) 1, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Anonymity 2, Defensive Dreamscaping, Dreamweaver, Fleet of Foot 3, Glamour Fasting

Willpower: 6

Current/Maximum Clarity: 3/6

Needle: Traditionalist

Thread: Family

Touchstones: None

Aspiration: To stop children from dreaming

Initiative: 5

Defense: 5 (6 in dreams)

Size: 5

Speed: 14

Health: 8

Wyrd: 3

Glamour/per Turn: 12/3

Frailties: Must engage in formal courtly ceremony when it's appropriate (minor taboo)

Favored Regalia: Mirror, Sword

Contracts: Dreamsteps, Glimpse of a Distant Mirror, Know the Competition, Oathbreaker's Punishment, Red Revenge, Touch of Wrath

Privateers

"Yah, yah, I know. Don't make this harder on the both of us. 'Cause in the end, you'd do the same right back to me, 'twere your ass up against the wall. Besides, I'm not the one you should be 'fraid of."

If fear is the common motivating emotion behind the Bridge-Burners, avarice is the equivalent among the privateers. Humans, changelings, even the more exotic breeds once mortal that stalk the night: a privateer will acquire them. Put simply, privateers drag their kidnapped victims across the Hedge and sell them to Goblin Market slave-stall owners — or even to the True Fae themselves. As mercenaries who sell their own kind to the Gentry or goblins in exchange for profit, privateers are universally loathed. While a changeling might forgive the Bridge-Burners for their excess and pity the loyalists even as he hates them, a privateer's actions are

unforgivable. Even in liberal courts, Bridge-Burning or True Loyalist behavior can result in exile, but privateering carries a sentence of a headsman's cold iron.

The agreement is a simple one, usually brokered between the prospective privateer and her benefactor. Some Keepers use privateers as ad hoc Huntsmen, but more often it is the Huntsmen themselves who enlist privateers, ferreting out the weaknesses of their target's fellows. Some privateers sign a contract of marque for Glamour, others for mortal power or rewards. Such rewards can be lucrative, and a Huntsman can offer much. No few privateers merely dabble in the profession, engaging in slave trading for a healthy sampling of tokens and rare weapons made of Faerie's essence, or temporary protection from other Huntsmen. Depending on the changeling, bargaining for freedom isn't out of the question, but most privateers prefer to honor a deal made for capturing a changeling — breaking a vow to the Lords of Faerie or even mere goblins can be bad for one's health. Besides, they say, isn't it better to define the terms of a relationship with the Fae in contracts and Glamour than to live like a fugitive, forever burdened by fear?

Like their long-ago mortal counterparts, privateers are themselves protected from the Gentry by contracts of marque, free from a Huntsman's reprisal. Few begin their careers serving one of the Gentry close to losing all Clarity, but Clarity rarely survives a prolonged privateer lifestyle. Much like its historical namesake, privateering tends to be a temporary avocation. Eventually, the contract of marque becomes too demanding, or their Lost victims ken to the danger in their midst — or they simply either run out of victims or fall to madness, whichever comes first.

Most freeholds don't talk about it, but a bout of privateering in the histories of long-lived Lost isn't considered unusual. Courts rise and fall with the seasons, but the times between a draped mantle of protection are vulnerable and trying. Powerful, elder Lost can behave with striking mercy at times toward a suspected privateer, motivated not by a sense of shared experience and community but by guilt.

Other Motives

Out of all the groups of changeling antagonists, privateers are perhaps the most directly inimical to the Lost's safety and way of life. It's for this reason that so many privateers hook up with hunter cells without even a shred of irony, stalking nightmares that walk with human faces. Driven to war against creatures worse than any tale told by Keats or the Brothers Grimm, changeling hunters are rare, but frighteningly effective — because privateers see their mortal cellmates as useful cover. No few Lost have been herded into the Hedge to escape a harrowing encounter with cold iron only to find a privateer waiting for them.

Other privateers aren't themselves hunters, but they know it's not just the Gentry who will pay a pretty penny to get their hands on a changeling. They act as hirelings for any faction or individual with mystical resources to offer who wants the Lost for their own obsessions or nefarious purposes. Anybody with a desire selfish or desperate enough can find a use for captive fae magic, and privateers are already well-positioned to do the dirty work.

History

When humanity created the revolutionary concept of privateering to supplement the navy in the late 15th century, it spread through Arcadia like wildfire. Hundreds of privateers, given official

protection and pledges of service, plagued the Elizabethan Lost. For a time in the early 18th century, entire courts collapsed in cities serving as transatlantic hubs, their protections replaced by a loose confederation of privateers out for themselves, snapping up newfound Lost and returning them to the Hedge. Still, these privateer utopias could not sustain themselves in anarchy; the Huntsmen offered especial bounties on their best privateers, and wars among the Lost depopulated freeholds across entire countries.

Few of the so-called utopias survived after the Chain Wars, as changeling talespinners would later call them. The last of them was Puerto Vallarta, surviving until the 1980s, when privateers preyed on transient Lost and rich Americans fulfilling mortal needs deemed improper by society. On sands overlooking the Bahía de Banderas, privateers took men whose chief crime was dreaming of freedom. Like all the others, this utopia was consumed from within, whittled down until a single roving motley put a final end to the last privateers. Even today, the words *Puerto Vallarta* inspire crackdowns on Hedge travel in a freehold; no one wants to see the privateer utopias rise again.

The Privateer's Tale

Hands reached to you as soon as you escaped the Hedge. Others just like you, but while your wounds were freshly bloodied, their hands had long since scarred over. They took you in, taught you the way of the world that lay beside the real one. Soon, you felt the weight of mantling on your shoulders. You were to have a role, a place in the freehold.

But that meant a crown to swear fealty to. You said yes to a king once, and this time you were smart enough to say no. You knelt once, never again. And that was it for your time as a courtier.

Except now you're back. You met someone who didn't ask obeisance, just a fair exchange of goods for services. He's in the Hedge, though you've recognized him at Market before. Gold, Glamour, protection — you can have it, but you have to work for it. What did he want? Not what, but who. The weak. The arrogant.

You're not a role in someone else's story. You're freer than anyone else.

True Loyalists

"What do you mean, you don't understand? You do, if you think about it. You just believe it's a choice, a lack of willpower or misplaced loyalty. And you have to believe that none of those things actually matter."

Svikari. Bradwr. Quisling. *Traitor*. No matter the language, none are more reviled than the willing collaborator, the fifth columnist whose loyalties lie with the occupiers rather than the occupied. Survivors of literally inhuman treatment, changelings can at least *understand* the motivations of Bridge-Burners and privateers, even if their actions are still roundly condemned. Yet for True Loyalists, they feel only confusion and contempt, a reflexive outpouring of rage toward those who would willingly reenter servitude and bring others with them. Only the rankest Lost would prefer the durance to freedom. Only the weak would fall back into slavery.

The most dangerous loyalist hates and fears the Gentry as much as anyone else. They believe themselves immune to further predation. They've escaped, like everyone else, surviving Arcadia with the twin scars of seeming and kith. Every changeling is a survivor, yet many Lost are

victims still. Arcadia's a place of enchantment and horror, but it follows the oddly predictable whims of the True Fae. Predictable yet dangerous is often preferable to facing the unknown, a truth many changelings refuse to admit at the end of the day. They're defended by the courts that spin a tale of dominance and struggle, where a changeling must expend great effort and risk to maintain her status.

(Your Keeper would take you back. They always do.)

Next are the Lost whose long duration of abuse and habit found them lacking some part of their psychology or physiology, rendering them dependent on their Keepers. Sustained by the inimitable nature of Arcadian magic, a changeling may find himself deeply uncomfortable in the now-foreign magical atmosphere of Earth, unable to function without some unique presence or substance. For every Lost glad to be rid of the terrible beauty of their Keeper, another wakes up sweating and shaking, crying at his loss. Still another, the flowers of her hair wilting, feels the pollen of spring wash over her and compares the inadequate lovemaking to Arcadian flora. Without a motley-mate of the same kith, it's difficult to explain.

(The Huntsmen know, though. They have a knack for finding these things out.)

Last and saddest of all are the changelings who fall to regret, who come to deny the essential part of their humanity that dared yearn for freedom. Some indelible defiance led the Lost to escape Arcadia, and it's this that True Loyalists lose sight of, themselves lost in a lack of Clarity. For all their agency and increased responsibility, the lure of a love too beautiful to deny or the dizzying highs of a duration with purpose overshadows the horrifying memories of the lowest suffering. In time, these changelings feel their memories of their Keepers growing rosier, a feeling of being incomplete without them. This stripe of loyalist desires the company of others when they return to blessed Arcadia, to the roles they have been molded and broken and rebuilt to fulfill. Back to Arcadia, away from the cold, cruel world, back to fill the hole they left and set right their long absence.

History

True Loyalists have existed as long as the Lost have, for as long as changelings have crossed over the Hedge and looked back with longing. They were not reviled for all of that time, though; when courts were weak or not present, the percentage of Lost falling back into rhythm with their Keepers was far greater than in the modern era. It wasn't until changelings truly began to form a society of their own that the numbers of loyalists dwindled.

The psychology of the Loyal is indelibly, ineffably human, however; so long as the Fae drag humans to Arcadia, some will long for it, long after they've left. Keepers and Huntsmen sense these psychological breaking points with the frightening accuracy of someone who knows the Lost intimately. The changeling's new life becomes one of subtle coercion, gentle threats, and then outright intimidation, an attempt to bring the Lost back into the circle of his Keeper.

Unforgiving attitudes still hold fast among the courts, though some have recently shown signs of being more sympathetic to the plight of the loyalist, trying to bring them into the fold rather than condemning them outright.

The Loyalist's Tale

Every day since you crossed the Hedge, your flame grew dimmer. You wished that were a metaphor, but embers burn where your heart once beat, and each night they

smoldered down to ash. No one in the freehold could help you, though they were all sympathetic to your plight. The goblins at Market could get you what you need — the wax of azure bees — but they asked for your seventh-born son. You weren't even sure you could have a *first*-born, since your genitals are hot enough to melt plastic.

Summer's warmth sustained you a bit, but you knew you'd never see spring again. As you watched the fireflies dance in the evening, you saw their flames mirroring your own. You remembered how Prince Yonder's seneschal smiled as the pyreflies burrowed under your skin and turned your meat to sweet smoke. As they danced, the pyreflies spoke to you, in the language of flickering flames.

"Your light shines so prettily this side of the Hedge," they said. "But the Prince's hall grows dark."

You knew what was asked of you. One by one, the fireflies flared out and fell. Their tiny bodies plopped against a wrapped package sitting amid the grass. Inside was a lump of something blue.

Storytelling the Loyal

True Loyalists and privateers differ from Bridge-Burners in that they're more insidious. They degrade the cohesion of changeling society from within, rather than representing an external threat. Still, for all that, Loyalists and privateers aren't necessarily any more dangerous than anyone else in any given freehold. What they do, however, is heighten **Changeling's** mood of paranoia and trust by necessity. It's important for the Storyteller to make loyalists neither glaringly obvious nor ubiquitous, lest they completely undermine the feeling of security a freehold and court provide. True Loyalists threaten the changeling's own narrative of their experiences in Arcadia, while privateers tend to be far more impersonal about their motives. Not all privateers like the True Fae; some would be consumed by their hatred, if they weren't consumed by their avarice. Not all True Loyalists serve the True Fae out of love — some receive exotic goods or other payment for leal service.

Hedge Ghosts

It's easy to get lost in the Hedge. It's easy to wander among the brambles, hoping for a break in the growth and a glimpse of familiar ground that never comes. It's easy to stumble into a pit lined with walls that weep real tears, sadness slicking the surface so you can't climb back out. It's easy to crash through the branches into an open area, only to find you've wandered into a circle of hungry trolls arguing over which protein goes best with their stew. (Surprise, it's you.)

It's easy to *die* in the Hedge, and the dead tend to stick around.

Not all Hedge ghosts, however, are former changelings or humans. Emotions shape the Hedge: strong impressions of fear and pain, joy and rapture, feelings that can grow so overwhelming that they awaken as their own entities. Travelers passing through the Hedge also leave pieces of themselves behind, bits of their souls that snag on the Thorns. A potent enough Icon may detach itself and continue wandering, or a hobgoblin seamstress may gather Icons up and sew them into something new, made entirely out of other scraps of souls.

Creating Hedge Ghosts

Hedge ghost creation is similar to the rules for other ephemeral beings in the **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook** on p. 122, with a few notable differences. First, the Storyteller decides on the Hedge ghost's Wyrd (not Rank), ranging from 1 to 10. Wyrd determines how many dots the Storyteller can spend on other traits, as follows:

[THIS IS A CHART]

Hedge Ghost Wyrd

Wyrd*	Trait Limits**		Attribute Dots		Maximum Glamour Numina
	Total Frailties				
1-2	5 dots	5-8	10	1-3	One minor
3-4	7 dots	9-14	15	3-5	Two minor
5-6	9 dots	15-25	20	5-7	One major, two minor
7-8	12 dots	26-35	25	7-9	One major, three minor
9-10	15 dots	36-45	50	9-11	Two major, three minor

*Wyrd is the Hedge ghost's Supernatural Tolerance trait; for every two dots of Wyrd it possesses, impose a -1 modifier on attempts to forcibly bind it

**These represent permanent dots, not temporarily boosted ones.

[END OF CHART]

The term "Hedge ghost" is what changelings have come to call these spectral beings, but they are separate entities from traditional ghosts; their Anchors are strange, and they don't often interact with the mortal world.

Glamour

While ordinary ghosts and spirits use Essence to fuel their powers, Hedge ghosts rely on Glamour. These entities harvest Glamour in much the same way changelings do: by leeching it from the emotions of passing travelers, or by consuming goblin fruits and other Hedge bounties. Hedge ghosts can harvest Glamour from ambient emotions (p. XX), but they can't reap it. They can only harvest Glamour from mortals or other Hedge ghosts, but a changeling may voluntarily give up Glamour to a Hedge ghost with a touch.

Dreams are also a potential source of Glamour for Hedge ghosts. While they can't access all the benefits of oneiromancy, Hedge ghosts may attempt to influence their victim's dreams, manipulating whatever story the dream is playing out to evoke a particular emotion. This may involve the Hedge ghost calling up a particular fond memory for the dreamer to relive, or causing someone the dreamer loves or hates intensely to appear, or dredging up their deepest fears and letting the nightmare unspool.

To enter its target's dreams, the Hedge ghost must find and breach its target's Bastion through the Gate of Horn (p. XX), or pass through the Gate of Ivory directly into a sleeper's dreams by touching the target's physical body or dream form. It enters dreams in its usual form. Regardless of which gate it passes through, it uses the following rules. A Hedge ghost caught in a dream when a Bastion is destroyed (p. XX) must escape in the same way a changeling would or suffer the same consequences.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Finesse + Wyrđ – Resolve

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Hedge ghost not only fails to control the target's dreams, but actually gets trapped within them until the target wakes up naturally. The Hedge ghost is only an observer. It can't deliberately evoke emotions or harvest Glamour, although the dreamer might experience nightmares naturally due to its presence, and it takes one point of lethal damage plus one for each dot of Supernatural Tolerance its victim possesses.

Failure: The Hedge ghost is unable to enter the target's dreams.

Success: The Hedge ghost enters the target's dreams. When the target wakes, the ghost receives points of Glamour equal to the number of successes the Storyteller rolled.

Exceptional Success: The Hedge ghost enters the target's dreams and finds a trove of emotionally resonant elements at the surface of the target's thoughts: fears and hopes, the best and worst days of her life, the faces of her loved ones. The Hedge ghost receives two points of Glamour for every success instead.

Attributes and Skills

Hedge ghosts use a condensed set of Attributes for their rolls, based on the Power, Finesse, and Resistance categories for mortal characters. Hedge ghosts that were previously living characters may take an average of their Attribute ratings in each of the three categories.

Power represents the raw ability of the Hedge ghost to impose itself on the world around it. Use Power for rolls that require Strength, Intelligence, or Presence.

Finesse represents how deftly the Hedge ghost acts, when fine control is required. Use Finesse for rolls that require Dexterity, Wits, or Manipulation.

Resistance represents how easily the Hedge ghost avoids or rebuffs attempts to control or harm it. Use Resistance for rolls that require Stamina, Resolve, or Composure.

Hedge ghosts don't possess Skills, but don't suffer unskilled penalties as long as the action they're attempting makes sense for their nature. The Storyteller rolls their Attribute + Rank for most actions, or Attribute + Attribute for actions like surprise and perception.

The Storyteller can spend Glamour to boost an Attribute on a one-point-per-dot basis for the scene. She can't boost a single trait by more than half its Wyrđ, rounded up; boosting takes a turn, and she can only boost one Attribute per turn.

Advantages

Hedge ghosts don't have a Clarity or Integrity trait. Because their traits are simplified, Hedge ghosts calculate derived traits differently from other characters.

Corpus: Hedge ghosts' physical forms are often malleable, and don't suffer injuries the same way changeling bodies do. Instead of Health, Hedge ghosts have Corpus, equal to Resistance + Size, which acts like Health boxes when the Hedge ghost is injured. Corpus boxes don't have wound penalties associated with them.

Willpower: Willpower is equal to Finesse + Resistance, up to a maximum of 10. Normally, Hedge ghosts regain Willpower at the rate of one point per day, but time can run strangely in the Hedge. Rather than a 24-hour cycle, Hedge ghosts' Willpower may return based on an event that occurs regularly: when the thistleflower unfurls its petals, when the seven sable horses of Lady Rosewing reach the crossroads, or at the briarwolf's howl upon waking.

Like changelings, Hedge ghosts also have Threads. However, Hedge ghosts' Threads don't stem from personal motivations, but instead reflect the circumstances behind their creations, the places they haunt, or the drives of their creators. If a player character causes a Hedge ghost to affirm its Thread, the player gains a Beat. Hedge ghosts who affirm their Threads refresh their Willpower following the Thread rules on p. XX.

A former human or changeling who died in the Hedge retains the character's Vice or Needle trait. Once per chapter, the Hedge ghost may regain all spent Willpower by fulfilling its Vice or Needle.

If the Hedge ghost is a being born of the Hedge or crafted by the True Fae, it regains one point of Willpower per three points of Glamour stolen from its victims.

Initiative: Initiative is equal to Finesse + Resistance.

Defense: Defense is equal to the lower of Power or Finesse. Hedge ghosts apply Defense against all mundane attacks, including firearms.

Speed: Speed is equal to Power + Finesse.

Size: Hedge ghosts can be any size. Human and changeling ghosts are usually Size 5, while Hedge ghosts whose origins lie in the Hedge itself use half their Wyrd, rounded up, as their Size.

Injuries

Physical attacks on a Hedge ghost that would normally cause lethal damage only cause bashing damage unless the attack utilized a bane frailty. Despite appearing to the naked eye and being solid, a Hedge ghost doesn't have any internal organs to injure. Hedge ghosts lose one point of Glamour for each aggravated wound they suffer.

A Hedge ghost that loses all Corpus from lethal or aggravated wounds explodes into a burst of Glamour, but if it had any Glamour points remaining, it can reform in the Hedge once enough time has passed for it to regain Glamour points equal to its Corpus dots.

Hedge ghosts heal at the same rate as changeling characters (p. XX). The Storyteller may also spend Willpower to heal a Hedge ghost's wounds taken in combat. One point of Willpower heals two points of bashing damage or one point of lethal damage, as an instant action. It takes five Willpower and a day's rest to heal one point of aggravated damage.

Aggravated wounds healed by Willpower leave silvery scars and other permanent markings on the Hedge ghost's form. They patch themselves up by memory, sometimes stitching wounds with scraps of clothing caught on the Thorns.

Frailties

Like changelings, Hedge ghosts suffer from frailties (p. XX), which function much like the bans and banes of other kinds of ephemeral beings. Unlike changelings' frailties, the consequences of

a Hedge ghost's frailty could be something other than damage and penalties, such as disincorporation or entrapment for a time, especially with major frailties.

These frailties are connected to the means of the Hedge ghost's creation. The ghost of a changeling who died seeking a way out of the Hedge must stop and try any doorknob she spies. If the Weeping Groom can be made to laugh, he loses his form until the next sunrise. The Ragdoll Ghost falls to pieces if its foe possesses a patch from the same clothing it's made of. Whispering Kate will speak the location of someone's long lost love if they bring her petals from roses that dried on her grave.

Cold iron is an additional bane frailty for all Hedge ghosts. An item made from cold iron inflicts one level of aggravated damage per turn while it's in contact with the entity. Weapons made from cold iron deal aggravated damage.

Influence

Hedge ghosts have a degree of Influence over the world, which they can leverage to create situations that provide them with Glamour. They begin with dots in Influence equal to half their Wyrd, rounded up. That value is also the maximum rating for an Influence, but a Hedge ghost can split its dots to have more than one Influence. A Wyrd 6 Hedge ghost that froze to death in the Hedge, for example, might have Influence: Cold •• and Influence: Lethargy •. Hedge ghosts may reduce their number of Numina granted by Wyrd to increase Influence dots, at a cost of 1 Numen per dot.

Influence is measured in both scale and duration. To use an Influence, compare the Hedge ghost's Influence rating to the total dots of the intended effect and how long it is to last. The total must be equal to or less than the entity's Influence rating in order to attempt the Influence.

The entity pays the listed cost in Glamour and rolls Power + Finesse, with success creating the desired effect. If the Influence alters the thoughts or emotions of a sentient being, the target contests it with Resolve or Composure (whichever is higher) + Supernatural Tolerance.

[THIS IS A CHART]

Influence Effects

Level Effect Cost

- Strengthen The Hedge ghost can enhance its sphere of influence. 1 Glamour
- Manipulate The Hedge ghost can make minor changes within its sphere of influence. 2 Glamour
- Control The Hedge ghost can make dramatic changes within its sphere of influence. 3 Glamour
- Create The Hedge ghost can create a new example of its sphere of influence. 4 Glamour
- Mass Create The Hedge ghost can create multiple examples of its sphere of influence, of a number up to half its Wyrd, rounded up; or it can create one example permanently, though it can't permanently alter the mind of a sentient being. 5 Glamour

[END OF CHART]

[THIS IS ANOTHER CHART]

Influence Durations

Level	Duration	Cost
0	One minute per success	N/A
•	10 minutes per success	N/A
••	One hour per success	+1 Glamour
•••	One day per success	+2 Glamour
••••	Permanent	+2 Glamour

[END OF CHART]

Manifestation

Hedge ghosts don't need to spend Glamour to manifest physically and visibly inside the Hedge, but they must have the Dematerialize Numen (below) if they want to lurk unseen there.

If a Hedge ghost's Glamour pool is depleted, it takes one point of lethal damage to its Corpus for every hour it goes without replenishing Glamour in the Hedge.

While Hedge ghosts do try to draw in mortals who pass by Hedge gates, they rarely venture into the mortal world itself, nor are they likely to enter Arcadia. This is partly because the Hedge is *home*; it's where they hold the most power, and in many cases, Hedge ghosts are made from the stuff of the Hedge itself. They also see what becomes of creatures who catch the Gentry's fancy, and have no wish to become (or in some cases, return to being) a True Fae's bauble. Hedge ghosts entering the mortal world or Arcadia act at half their effective Wyrd, reducing all traits and losing access to Numina and Influences accordingly. They take one point of lethal damage to their Corpus for every *turn* they go without replenishing their Glamour once it's depleted in the mortal world, or bashing in Arcadia.

Ephemeral Entities in the Hedge

The Hedge has no Twilight state. Hedge ghosts that dematerialize are just incorporeal and invisible. A Hedge ghost that ventures into the mortal world doesn't fall into a Twilight state there, either, but it dematerializes automatically even if it doesn't know that Numen, and must spend three Glamour points to materialize for one scene; it can only do so if at least one of its spheres of Influence is present.

Other ephemeral entities who end up in the Hedge automatically materialize even if they normally couldn't.

Common Powers

All Hedge ghosts have four supernatural powers that help them navigate life in the Hedge.

Path Through the Thorns: For visitors to the Hedge, stepping off the paths into the Thorns is a dangerous, and often deadly, action. Hedge ghosts are no longer susceptible to the confusion that sets in as the Thorns press close and the Hedge shifts around the traveler. Spending 1 Willpower allows the Hedge ghost to face in the direction she needs to go and pass through the Thorns unscathed.

Reach: A Hedge ghost can spend 1 Glamour while standing in front of a Hedge gate to reach across it into the mortal world for the scene. It can use any of its Influences, or Numina with the “R” tag, on targets within (ghost’s Wyrds) yards/meters of the other side of the gate, even if it’s closed. Characters capable of perceiving Hedge gates can sense the ghost’s reach with a successful Wits + Composure roll.

Sense Glamour: Hedge ghosts spend much of their time in pursuit of Glamour. They're drawn to it, whether in living beings, in goblin fruits, or in items imbued with it. A Hedge ghost in need of Glamour senses it when a source is within (Wyrds x five) yards/meters.

To Market, To Market: Goblin Markets are held all throughout the Hedge. By spending 2 Glamour, the Hedge ghost knows where the closest one currently running is located. Some ghosts offer this as a service to travelers, asking for payment in Glamour or goblin fruits to make up for what they spend to acquire the information.

Hedge Numina

Like the other Numina listed in the **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook** (p. 136), *how* a particular Numen manifests depends on the entity using it. A Hedge ghost using the Sign Numen might shape its message in a tangle of brambles. A Hedge ghost's Blast mimics the feeling of Thorns tearing at a changeling's soul.

Below are Numina specific to Hedge ghosts. All Numina are activated with a Power + Finesse roll and an instant action, unless otherwise indicated.

[FORMAT THESE AS NUMINA/DREAD POWERS]

Clarity Drain

The Hedge ghost attacks the changeling's Clarity, shaking his ability to trust his own perceptions. This Numen costs 2 Glamour to activate. The Storyteller rolls a Clarity attack against the target with dice equal to half the target's Wyrds, rounded up, in place of the Numen’s usual activation roll.

Dematerialize

For 3 Glamour, the Hedge ghost fades from sight and becomes incorporeal. It may still use its Influences and any Numina that don’t require touching the target or being perceived, but it can’t physically interact with anything — even other incorporeal creatures.

Entrap

The Hedge ghost calls brambles, thorns, and vines from the ground, or uses an otherworldly voice to stop its victim from a distance. The Numen costs 2 Glamour to activate, contested by the victim's Dexterity + Supernatural Tolerance. If the Hedge ghost succeeds, one opponent within a number of yards or meters equal to the Hedge ghost's Finesse suffers the Immobilized Tilt with a –4 penalty; the Durability of the “item” holding her is equal to half the Hedge ghost's Wyrds (rounded up) +1 for every 2 additional Glamour spent, and the Hedge ghost is free to take other actions while its prey is restrained.

Failed Token

Tokens the victim carries lose their effectiveness. The Hedge ghost spends 3 Glamour + 1 Willpower to activate the Numen. The victim contests with her Supernatural Tolerance. Success

means supernatural abilities tied to the token stop working for the remainder of the scene; using the token as a mundane weapon suffers a two-die penalty.

Keeper's Calling

The Hedge ghost makes its target believe her Keeper is just on the other side of the brambles, seeking to recapture her. The Numen costs 2 Glamour to activate, contested by the victim's Composure + Supernatural Tolerance. If the ghost is successful, the victim believes her Keeper is nearby for the rest of the scene: The voice is exact, the scent of her Keeper's perfume is just as she remembers it, the rustle of her skirts sounds like it always did.

Stolen Masks

The Hedge ghost steals the target's appearance. The Numen costs 1 Glamour to activate, contested by the victim's Presence + Supernatural Tolerance. If successful, the Hedge ghost becomes an exact replica of its victim until the next sunrise or sunset.

[END OF NUMINA]

Example Hedge Ghosts

The Lingerin Dead were living, once. They were humans who had the misfortune to enter the Hedge, and never found their way out. They were changelings who veered from safe paths and wound up face-to-face with wandering nightmares. They are all that was left once the briarwolves were done feasting, or after the loyalist's silver blade slipped into their hearts. These ghosts are the impressions and raw emotions of lives once lived, and none of them can get home. A stronger ghost might still have a purpose it hopes to fulfill, and haunts its old entrances to the Hedge hoping one of its motley (or someone reminiscent of them) will come through and help them carry out its final acts.

Hollow-haunts are anchored to particular Hollows in the Hedge, in the same manner as ghosts are bound to houses in the mundane world. A Hollow's residents tend to fiercely defend it, but a particularly cozy or well-situated Hollow can attract the attention (and the envy) of other Hedge denizens. Some Hollow-haunts want a Hollow badly enough to go to murderous lengths to claim it for their own. Other times, the Hollow's original inhabitant isn't ready to give up its space, and continues defending its Hollow long after death.

The Phantom Hitchhiker of the Trods is an urban legend among changelings, especially in freeholds whose cities are host to major trods. The Lost in these places tell stories — often ones they heard from a Wisp who knew this Gargoyle who knew this Wized — of motleys traveling along a trod who suddenly found themselves joined by another traveler. She's always a quiet girl, polite and a little shy. Sometimes she simply walks alongside them awhile before she vanishes just as mysteriously as she arrived. Sometimes she asks to borrow a jacket, or begs a bite of food. A few stories say she's mentioned her freehold, and when the motley's gone to tell the Lost there about the encounter, they learn she disappeared decades ago. She headed into the Hedge and was never seen again.

The Ragdoll Ghost was created in the Hedge and, in a sense, created *from* the Hedge. A faerie seamstress meandered among the Thorns, plucking bright scraps of Icons from among their jagged points. When she had enough, in all the colors and emotions she liked best, she sewed them together with thread-of-gold and shaped them into a doll. Its stuffing is a mix of thistledown and duck feathers and tufts of changeling hair left snagged among the brambles. The

ghost awakened when she sewed the last stitch, its thoughts a jumble of feelings and memories from its many lives. The seamstress is long gone, but the Ragdoll Ghost still wanders, drawn to those who travel the Hedge, hoping it will find someone whose soul contains a piece of its own.

Hobgoblins

The Hedge is a liminal space, the in-between realm where aspects of Arcadia and the mortal world coexist and bleed together. Hobgoblins, the denizens of the Hedge, are as numerous as the stars in the sky. They are strange and lovely and terrible, some born of the Hedge or twisted by it, others crafted by the True Fae and forgotten, discarded and left to fend for themselves among the brambles. Many were beings from the mundane world who made one too many fae deals, or found a way into the Hedge and became trapped there, the Thorns leeching away what they used to be and warping them into weirder, *truer* versions of their old selves.

Hobgoblins can be as tiny as a mote of dust or as vast as the sky. Many are innocuous tricksters, intrigued by the Lost that pass by their nests and wanting nothing more than to pluck a strand of hair to satisfy their curiosity. Others are predators, seeking out the satisfying crack of mortal bones between their hundreds of teeth.

It's not always clear which is which.

Many hobgoblins carve out Hollows, pushing back the Thorns to make a safe haven and a home for themselves. These might look inviting to a weary traveler, but that is often precisely the point: Lure in the prey, ply them with sweets and songs until their lids grow heavy, then strike.

Creating Hobgoblins

Storytellers create hobgoblins for their adventures using the rules for creating Horrors, presented in brief here, and in full in the **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook** starting on p. 140.

Hobgoblins are amalgams of both nightmares and fairy tales, and are never, ever entirely what they seem. However, not all hobgoblins have their hearts set on baking passing changelings into pies. Some dwellers in the Hedge might become allies, or have need of the motley's aid. Having a hobgoblin and her Dread Powers on the characters' side can be just as interesting a tale as going toe-to-cloven hoof with her.

Concept

What inspirations from fairy tales and folklore might inform the hobgoblin? Are there aspects of the characters' stories that the hobgoblins could play on? Their backstories and durances, intrigue within their freehold and courts, and their goals and Aspirations all are potential fodder.

Hobgoblins have Aspirations, too, though they are wildly different than those of most mortals. All hobgoblins should have at least one Aspiration; like player characters, they may have two short-term and one long-term. Some might put changelings in danger, especially if a short-term Aspiration is along the lines of "make a cloak from Ogre skins." Others may make the hobgoblin more relatable, and give him a human side, like "free my children from the Witch of the Wilds." A hobgoblin may keep the same or similar Aspirations after fulfilling them, for goals like "suffer not a mortal to leave my shop without making a deal."

Wyrd

Hobgoblins have a Wyrd rating from one to 10 dots, just like changelings, that measures their raw supernatural power. This value determines how many maximum dots are available to spend on the character's Attributes, Skills, Dread Powers, and Merits.

[THIS IS A CHART]

Hobgoblin Wyrd

Wyrd	Trait Limits**		Attribute Dots			Skill Dots	Dread Powers
	Contracts		Merit Dots		Max Glamour/Per Turn		
1	5 dots	15-18	10	3	2	3	6/1
2	6 dots	19-22	15	3	2	5	7/2
3	7 dots	23-26	20	3	2	7	8/3
4	8 dots	27-30	25	4	3	9	9/4
5	9 dots	31-34	30	4	3	11	10/5
6	10 dots	35-38	35	4	3	13	12/6
7	10 dots	39-42	40	5	4	15	15/7
8	10 dots	43-46	45	6	4	17	20/8
9	10 dots	47-50	50	7	5	19	30/9
10	10 dots	51+	55	8	5	21	50/10

**These maximums represent permanent trait dots, not traits boosted by Dread Powers or other effects.

[END OF CHART]

Hobgoblins can't harvest or reap Glamour from humans. They must rely on goblin fruits, making deals, and the Bottle Glamour power (below) to replenish their pools. A goblin who makes a deal for Glamour in exchange for something else doesn't need Bottle Glamour to receive it; the Wyrd ensures the transaction is possible, adding the paid Glamour directly to its pool through an agreed-upon method of sealing the deal.

Attributes and Skills

When assigning the hobgoblin's Attributes and Skills as determined by his Wyrd, the Storyteller does not have to assign points based on the Physical, Social, and Mental categories, but instead should let the hobgoblin's abilities and backstory guide him. Consider which traits makes the most sense for the character and distribute points accordingly.

Dread Powers and Contracts

Wyrd also determines the maximum number of Dread Powers and Contracts the hobgoblin may possess; each dot of a Dread Power with multiple levels counts as a separate power. A list of generic Dread Powers appears in the **Chronicle of Darkness Rulebook** on p. 144, and a list of new ones for hobgoblins specifically is below. Hobgoblins always spend Glamour, rather than Willpower, to activate Dread Powers.

Hobgoblins may only learn Common Arcadian Contracts and Goblin Contracts.

Merits

Merits can help flesh out the character. Does the hobgoblin have Allies, or oathbound changelings who act as Retainers? How might a hobgoblin's Library appear within the Hedge, and what books appear on those shelves? Money from the mundane world isn't all that useful in the Hedge — what form would the wealth of a hobgoblin with high Resources take?

Advantages and Frailties

Hobgoblins' Sizes and Speeds vary widely. Some are no taller than a blade of grass, while others only have to crane their necks a bit to see what's at the top of the beanstalk. How quickly (or whether) the creature can move might depend more on their present environment than the length of their stride. What form they've taken matters, too: The *each-uisge* moves at the same Speed on land or water when it's a horse, but in its human form, it's much slower.

A hobgoblin's Health is its Size + Stamina. Its Initiative Modifier is its Dexterity + Composure. Defense is the lower of the hobgoblin's Wits or Dexterity plus its Athletics Skill.

Unlike most Horrors, hobgoblins *don't* add Wyrd to their Willpower dots, nor can they spend more than one Willpower point in a turn. Since they use Glamour to fuel their powers instead, their Willpower works just like a changeling's does.

Use the hobgoblin's most appropriate Finesse Attribute + Wyrd for a Clash of Wills (p. XX) if its powers come into conflict with other supernatural abilities.

Hobgoblins have frailties just like changelings do (p. XX), and like all fae, cold iron is one of them. Handling or touching cold iron is extremely painful, and weapons made of cold iron inflict aggravated damage on hobgoblins. Deciding whether the hobgoblin has other frailties is also helpful in rounding out the character. They aren't required, but may provide additional insight into the hobgoblin's backstory, or give the motley an interesting angle to pursue.

Hobgoblins belong in the Hedge, and generally stay there. A hobgoblin reduces the total needed successes to win any navigation contest in the Hedge by one (p. XX). Goblins may venture into Arcadia to deal with the Gentry or captive changelings, and the Fae conscript goblins into their service and whisk them away there. A goblin in the mortal world suffers the Deprived Condition; goblins with Wyrd 6+ must bring a piece of the Hedge with them, and can only stay until the sun next crosses the horizon without other magic to keep them from vanishing back to the Hedge.

The Storyteller may always dial these traits up or down according to the purpose a hobgoblin serves in the story.

Dread Powers

Dread Powers are the inherent supernatural powers hobgoblins possess. Many of the descriptions for the Dread Powers listed below don't have dice pools assigned to them; tailor the pool to the hobgoblin using the power. Consider how the hobgoblin's backstory, disposition, and appearance would affect the way the power manifests. *How* does it wield the power? What does it look and feel like to the target? To observers?

Likewise, range requirements and other restrictions are left to the Storyteller to determine, depending on what makes the most sense for the hobgoblin. A serpent-like hobgoblin may have to wrap itself around its victim to squeeze the Glamour out, while a pixie can dart in, steal a drop of blood, and flee to her treetop nest to siphon off the changeling's Glamour.

Some hobgoblins must perform certain tasks before they can harm their victims, though many try to find ways to hew to the letter of the law rather than its spirit. For example, the Man with the Crystal Smile has to warn his prey before the chase begins. However, he tends to couch his warning in such sweet patter and flowery language that a charmed changeling might miss the threat. All that matters is that he deliver it, not whether it's acknowledged.

[PLEASE FORMAT THESE AS A LIST OF DREAD POWERS]

Bottle Glamour

The hobgoblin can store Glamour for later, either pulling it from its own stores or stealing it from elsewhere. It can spend Glamour equal to the amount it wants to bottle + 1 to store its own reserves, in anything from a literal bottle, to a song, to a weapon. Alternatively, it can spend 1 Glamour and touch a target with her own Glamour pool to steal points equal to the hobgoblin's Wyrd, and those points are squirreled away. Goblins can trade or sell Glamour, use it for powers or tokens when their own reserves are empty, or use it as an ingredient in strange fae sorceries.

Conjure Dreams

By spending 2 Glamour, the hobgoblin warps its territory within the Hedge to resemble the setting of a victim's recurring dream. This dream may be good or bad, with the hobgoblin attempting to either keep the victim in a place they don't want to leave, or chase them endlessly through one they can't escape. Once per hour, the target may roll Wits + Composure + Supernatural Tolerance, contested by the hobgoblin's Resolve + Wyrd, to see through the illusion.

Fairy Swarm

The hobgoblin is (or becomes) one of a swarm or hive. By spending 1 Glamour, she calls the others to her to surround and attack the target. Swarming serves a variety of purposes: simply to annoy the victim, to distract him from taking another action, to obscure his view, or to drive him away from a particular area. Physical attacks may range from the creatures plucking out strands of hair to biting and stinging, depending on their natures. The creatures act like a hive mind, following the instructions of the one who summoned them.

Lethe's Embrace

The hobgoblin siphons off the target's memories, storing them for later use. The hobgoblin spends 2 Glamour and makes eye contact with or touches the target. The victim rolls Wits + Resolve to contest the effect. The victim may be able to recover the lost memories, perhaps by tracking down the hobgoblin and shattering the vessel, or by visiting the Goblin Markets and buying any items made from them.

Much Depends on Dinner

The hobgoblin conjures a banquet full of rare delicacies and succulent treats. Anyone who sees or smells the delicious offerings is instantly, ravenously hungry, and is drawn to the table, where they eat their fill. Once per 15 minutes, the victims may roll Wits + Composure + Supernatural Tolerance, contested by the hobgoblin's Presence + Wyrd, to try to break free of the compulsion. Upon coming out of it, they learn the foods were only the husks of long-dried goblin fruits, the salads nothing more than dead leaves. If they're lucky, the pie fillings were mud rather than spoiled meat or poisoned apples.

The Path Not Taken

Leaving the path through the Hedge is one of the most dangerous things a traveler can do. The hobgoblin spends 1 Glamour and creates the illusion of a path running parallel to or branching off from the true path to lure victims off their courses. The false path ends in an area the hobgoblin controls: often a Hollow, sometimes its belly.

Pied Piper

The hobgoblin plays an instrument, sings a song, or performs some other entertaining or mesmerizing action, and people in its vicinity are compelled to follow where it leads. It spends 1 Glamour to activate this power. Victims may make a Resolve roll to attempt to break free. Those who fail the roll follow the goblin for a while before they may roll again. The Storyteller determines the interval. It may be as simple as waiting 10 minutes, but may also be more appropriate to the scene: when the goblin's song ends, for instance, or once they've been led up one side of a hill and down the other.

[END OF DREAD POWERS]

Hobgoblin Deals

While hobgoblins can sell Contracts to changelings (see Goblin Contracts, p. XX), they also offer goods and services to changelings, mortals, and other creatures in desperate need of magical solutions to impossible problems. These deals accrue Goblin Debt more slowly than Contracts do, as they're mainly one-time uses or events and can't be invoked at will like Goblin Contracts. But the funny thing about magical solutions is that they tend to attract repeat customers.

Mortal needs may not always feel as epic as those out of fairy tales, but can seem no less insurmountable: An office worker faced with filing 10 years' worth of paperwork in a weekend might dearly wish he had to spin straw into gold instead. For the price of a favor, a hobgoblin can take care of it before dawn. A warehouse worker walks a dozen miles a day picking orders. Her feet are sore, her back aches. When she buys a pair of shoes from an old-fashioned cobbler at the local flea market, it's like she's walking on air. Only, the soles wear out within a few weeks. Before he'll repair the shoes, the cobbler exacts a promise from her.

Each hobgoblin deal taken adds one point of Goblin Debt to the person's tally. These include tasks the hobgoblin completes over the course of a night or two, or items that produce a single, minor magical effect. Items of this sort can only be used a few times before they break or run out. The wine that forces anyone who drinks it to tell the truth turns to vinegar at the next full moon. The mirror will show your true love's whereabouts only twice, then it shatters.

Changelings can shed Debts incurred this way the same way as they do with Debt gained from invoking Goblin Contracts. Mortals don't have the same ability; Goblin Debt accrues until, at 10 points, the mortal becomes a hobgoblin herself, gaining the Hedge Denizen Condition (p. XX). Paying down the Debt before that point requires the mortal to part with something or someone dear to her: her firstborn child, memories of her grandmother, the use of her voice for a year and a day, etc.

Some hobgoblins consider their Debts paid in full if the mortal completes a very specific task: learning the hobgoblin's true name, finding where he buried his heart, or other nearly impossible feats.

Example Hobgoblins

Following are some hobgoblins for use in your adventures. Many of the Dread Powers listed here can be found in the **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 144-148.

Briarwolves

[Ragged, hungry panting]

Background: Countless fairy tales and folktales tell listeners about the danger of wolves. They're the ultimate hunters, the hungry beasts that stalk nighttime forests and snatch disobedient children into their gaping maws. How much more frightening, then, are the wolves who live among the brambles, whose hunting grounds are the fear-tinged woods of the Hedge?

No one is quite sure where the briarwolves came from. Some theories posit that they were once wolves from the mundane world who wandered their way into the Hedge and couldn't get out. The Thorns tore at their pelts, and the fears of changelings who grew up on tales of wolves' cunning and cruelty twisted them into something even more terrible.

Or perhaps they were the hunting hounds of the Gentry. The True Fae are notorious for discarding what no longer holds their interest, and a fickle master may have loosed his kennels on the Hedge. Or perhaps the Hedge itself crafted them, pain and fear given form and fur, and charged them with keeping those who have lost the path from finding it and escaping.

No matter the truth of their origin, briarwolves are among the Hedge's most frightening hunters.

Description: Briarwolves are part wolf, but have eerily human features. Their hands end in wickedly clawed fingers. They stand on two legs, but can run just fine, and just as fast, on all fours. Their eyes are human eyes, always. Briarwolves smell of dirt and meat and old, dried blood, and their mouths are full of too many teeth. When they're on the hunt, their howls cut to the bone.

Storytelling Hints: Briarwolves are pack animals. When one catches a scent, they all gather to stalk their prey. What they like best, the moment they wait for, is when the prey starts running. The pack ramps up to that, surrounding their quarry, baying from all across the Hedge, crashing about in the Thorns, and stopping to sniff and slaver just outside where their victims have holed up.

They eat meat, but like it best when it's marinated in the victim's terror and pain. The first time they catch their prey, the briarwolves draw blood, but set their victim free. Such victims rarely get far, with another briarwolf appearing out of the night to swipe with its ragged claws or snap with its sharp, sharp teeth. They repeat this until the victim can run no longer, then fall upon him and feast.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Claws) 5, Stealth 5, Survival (Tracking) 4

Social Skills: Empathy (Prey Reactions) 3, Intimidation 3

Merits: Acute Senses, Arcadian Metabolism, Danger Sense, Iron Stamina 3

Wyrd: 4

Glamour/per Turn: 9/4

Willpower: 5

Aspiration: To hunt down the weak and taste their fear

Initiative: 8

Defense: 6

Size: 5

Speed: 15

Health: 9

Frailties: May not step onto a trod uninvited (taboo)

Weapons/Attacks:

[START TABLE]

Type	Damage	Dice Pool	Special
Claws	2L 10	Armor piercing 2	
Bite	3L 9	Armor piercing 2	

[END TABLE]

Contracts: Cloak of Night, Wayward Guide

Dread Powers: Jump Scare, Natural Weapons 2, Prodigious Leap

Deep Cave Monster

[Ominous rumbling, like the earth shifting...or a stomach growling]

Background: The Deep Caves are narrow tunnels lined with razor-sharp gems. Their caverns twist far into the ground, and the path changes around the traveler, making it easy to get lost within. Perhaps they've always been there; stories warning away those who come to the Hedge seeking treasure have spread for years. The Lost and the fae avoid them when they can, no matter how tempting the gems might be, because the caves are alive, and hungry. Those who venture inside rarely make it back out.

Description: The Deep Caves have entrances all across the Hedge. For the most part, they appear the way an average cave does: openings in a rocky outcropping or mountainside, leading below ground. But bright gems with razor-sharp edges stud the walls, ceilings, and floors of the cave. Once a changeling hears the rumor that the gems are *teeth*, it's hard to see the cave entrance as anything other than a hungry maw.

Storytelling Hints: For changelings who know better than to enter the Deep Caves, it might take extraordinary circumstances to convince them to venture inside. However, word about the dangers hasn't reached every freehold, and plenty of unwitting motleys have gone into the caves over the years in search of treasure and wonders. Few are ever heard from again.

Stories tell of the Deep Caves cutting a deal with the sun, the rain, and the wind, so when the heat beats down in the daytime, the cool dark is inviting, and at night the caves are a place to get out of the elements. On days when it downpours, the Deep Caves are warm and dry, and the gems reflect the light from any lanterns, candles, or flashlights the changelings shine on them. Down they lead, promising riches to anyone who returns with their pockets laden with jewels.

What those changelings don't realize is, the caves only *look* inviting.

Then they try to eat you.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 8, Dexterity 3, Stamina 6

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: None

Physical Skills: Brawl (Crushing) 10, Stealth (Hiding in Plain Sight) 6

Social Skills: Intimidation 8, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Demolisher 3

Wyrd: 6

Glamour/per Turn: 12/6

Willpower: 6

Aspiration: Do rocks salivate? This one sure seems to.

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Size: 10

Speed: 0

Health: 16

Frailties: None

Contracts: None

Dread Powers: Chameleon Horror, Immortal, Maze, The Path Not Taken

System: Characters who venture into the Deep Caves do so at their own peril. Refer to rules for navigating the Hedge (p. XX) to explore the tunnels. The Storyteller determines how often players need to roll, whether it's after a certain amount of time has passed, each time the tunnels branch, or when the rumbling echoes start sounding like a growling stomach. Any dramatic failure fully alerts the Deep Caves to the intruders and their whereabouts, and a chase begins (p. XX).

The base number of successes required for characters to escape (and for the Deep Caves to begin digesting them) is 8. Should the Deep Caves win the chase, characters within take one point of lethal damage for every turn that they're trapped.

What happens next is up to the Storyteller: Perhaps the Deep Caves are willing to strike a deal. Maybe there's a reliable trick to getting a sentient cave to spit someone back out. Perhaps once her Health track is full of lethal damage, the character passes out and awakens hours later, lost in the Hedge and feeling rather...*digested*, with her Glamour pool depleted.

Liza Cantwell, Age 9, Goblin Queen

"Kneel before the queen!" [dissolves into giggles]

Background: Liza's been in the Hedge about a year now, left here by someone who took so many Goblin Contracts and gathered so much Debt she became a Goblin Queen herself. To shed that Debt, she found a little girl to take her place. The woman tricked Liza into following her into the Hedge, then left her there to become the new Goblin Queen. Liza missed her parents at first, but when she gets sad, the pixies entertain her and make her laugh again. Sometimes they lead her on a chase, and the Thorns cut her. It probably should hurt, but it doesn't, really, and she doesn't feel so sad afterwards.

Description: Liza is a nine-year-old little girl, wearing a finely made but very dirty dress. Changelings who have met Madam Thimblestitch might recognize her handiwork. She also wears a woven crown of flowers, held in place by her tangled hair. Liza still carries her backpack, which contains her last few school assignments, a library book, and a handout about stranger danger.

Storytelling Hints: For a kid who's spent a year as Goblin Queen, being fawned over by her faerie retainers, Liza is a pretty even-keeled kid. She gives orders and expects them to be carried out, but she doesn't fly into rages or demand impossible things of her subjects. She can come across as a little cold, but she's lost a lot of herself to the Thorns.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 2, Composure 1

Mental Skills: Crafts 1, Investigation 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Expression 2, Persuasion 2, Streetwise (Hedge) 3, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Enchanting Performance 2, Interdisciplinary Specialty (Hedge) (**Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 45), Library (Investigation) 2, Staff (Attendants; Occult) 1

Wyrd: 2

Glamour/per Turn: 11/2

Willpower: 3

Aspiration: To rule all of Faerie

Initiative: 5

Defense: 5

Size: 4

Speed: 8

Health: 6

Frailties: Falling raindrops (bane)

Weapons/Attacks:

[START TABLE]

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Goblin Queen's Scepter	1L	4

[END TABLE]

Contracts: Glimpse of a Distant Mirror, Murkblur

Dread Powers: Beastmaster, Much Depends on Dinner, Snare

Madam Thimblestitch

"Oh, let's get you patched up."

Background: Gossips at the Goblin Markets say Madam Thimblestitch was once a seamstress for one of the Gentry. So long ago even she forgets when it was, she displeased her Lady, who turned her out to live in the Hedge. Whatever her offense was is long forgotten, even by Madam Thimblestitch herself. Now she wanders about, collecting scraps from the Thorns and sewing them into little monstrosities.

Description: Madam Thimblestitch is old and white haired, with pointed ears and needle-sharp teeth. Her hands are nimble, her fingers calloused. She wears fine clothing, fit for a lady's court, and every piece of it her own work. A handful of little ragdolls often follow her around, all of them made from the scraps of souls she plucks from the Thorns as she walks about the Hedge.

Storytelling Hints: The seamstress is pleasant to talk to, and is quick with an invitation to tea. She is happy to impart information, especially when it comes to trading court gossip. She is always sewing, though some of the scraps of Icons she works with are hard for changelings to witness her stitching together. Madam Thimblestitch is unable to resist commenting on the quality of her companions' clothing. She'll *tsk* over imperfections and offer to fix them up.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 6, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 5, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Crafts (Sewing) 5, Politics (Courts) 6, Streetwise (Hedge) 5

Physical Skills: Survival 2

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize (Conversation) 6, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Allies 4, Etiquette 2, Inspiring, Sympathetic

Wyrd: 5

Glamour/per Turn: 10/5

Willpower: 8

Aspiration: To clothe the finest lords and ladies

Initiative: 10

Defense: 4

Size: 5

Speed: 9

Health: 7

Frailties: Must collect any Icon, token, or other such scrap she sees (taboo); must comment on companions' clothing and offer to repair any flaws she sees (taboo)

Contracts: Blessing of Perfection, Walls Have Ears

Dread Powers: Hypnotic Gaze, Influence 2 (Ragdolls), Pied Piper

Moss pocket

"You sound like someone in need of some better luck."

Background: Moss pocket once owned a fine house in the Hedge. It had secret rooms and reading nooks, and a little squirrel-faced woman who brought him tea every afternoon. A canny group of changelings tricked him out of the house and the secret rooms and the reading nooks, and even the little squirrel-faced woman, and Moss pocket was forced to leave with nothing but his satchel full of parchment and ink.

The changelings are long dead, and even though Moss pocket's house now stands empty and encroaching brambles threaten its lawns, he can't go back: The changelings held the deed, and he doesn't know who they passed it on to. Instead, he makes deals with anyone he can, hoping to trade up and up and up until he finds the person who holds the faerie deed to his faerie house, and swap them their heart's desire for his own.

Description: Moss pocket appears as a young man, with owl-like features that actually include feathers on his face. His coat rustles with all the parchments tucked into its pockets and his satchel clinks with jars of ink and pens.

Storytelling Hints: Moss pocket is very polite, and tries to be helpful. He'll chat with the motley to see what they need, and always, always has something in his many pockets he's willing to trade.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Investigation 2, Politics 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Larceny 2, Stealth 2, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Empathy (Desires) 3, Persuasion (Deals) 4, Socialize 3, Subterfuge (Misdirection) 2

Merits: Eidetic Memory (**Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 44), Fast-Talking 3, Fixer, Pusher

Wyrd: 4

Glamour/per Turn: 9/4

Willpower: 6

Aspiration: To restore his estate to its former cozy glory

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Size: 4

Speed: 8

Health: 6

Frailties: None

Contracts: Know the Competition, Sight of Truth and Lies

Dread Powers: Bottle Glamour, Lethe's Embrace, Miracle, Reality Stutter

Weapons/Attacks:

[START TABLE]

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
------	--------	-----------

Thornknife	0L	4
------------	----	---

[END TABLE]

Trod Trolls

"Where do you think you're going, kid?"

Background: Like their cousins of legend, the bridge trolls, trod trolls demand tribute, favors, or tasks from those who wish to pass. Many of them make their homes in Hollows close to a trod, where they can hear the footsteps or hoofbeats and carriage wheels of approaching travelers. The trolls move out to block the road, and refuse to let the travelers continue on their journey until they've paid their way. This tribute can take many forms: a sack of goblin fruit, favors owed, or anything else the troll might need, or senses the changelings value.

Some changelings refuse to pay the tribute and instead attempt to leave the path, skirting into the Thorns to avoid the troll and his reach. Doing so is risky: Leaving the path for any reason often leads to disaster, landing the changeling somewhere dangerous and unfamiliar. The trolls know this, too, and choose spots to block where abandoning the road is especially ill-advised.

Description: Trod trolls are huge. No, bigger than that. They're large enough to plunk themselves down in the middle of a trod and leave no room for a traveler to squeeze by on either side and still remain on the path. Often, they change their skin to resemble the road itself, so they blend in from a distance. They might be the pale gray of cobblestones, the dusty beige of a dry dirt road, or the deep, dark brown of a muddy road after a rainstorm.

Storytelling Hints: Trod trolls tend to be surly and a bit smug. They aren't very smart, but they don't have to be: They're big and heavy and they're not kidding when they threaten to pitch you into the Thorns if you defy them. Sometimes, they'll set up shop near a Goblin Market. This way,

they encounter travelers who are more likely to retrace their steps and buy what the trolls want from the Market, rather than returning home and finding another trod.

Trod trolls are generally solitary creatures, content with limiting their socializing to the people they meet on the road. However, sometimes they work in pairs, the second one hiding until his partner has engaged the passers-by, then sneaking onto the road *behind* them and blocking their escape route so the changelings are forced to pay up immediately.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 1, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Investigation 2, Occult (Trods) 1

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

Social Skills: Intimidation (Looming) 5, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Iron Stamina 3

Wyrd: 4

Glamour/per Turn: 9/4

Willpower: 6

Aspiration: To amass a fortune

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Size: 7

Speed: 13

Health: 12

Frailties: Must attempt to solve a riddle asked of it (taboo); sunshine from the mortal world (bane; if a trod troll dies from its bane, it turns to stone)

Weapons/Attacks:

[START TABLE]

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Fists	2B 11	
Thrown boulders	2L 10	

[END TABLE]

Contracts: Might of the Terrible Brute, Paralyzing Presence, Seven-League Leap

Dread Powers: Home Ground (Trods), Regenerate 1, Surprise Entrance, Unbreakable

Wandering Nightmare

[Everything gets dark and terribly, terribly quiet.]

Background: Once upon a time, a changeling plagued by the dreams of his time in Arcadia made a bargain with a denizen of the Hedge. The hobgoblin took the dreams from the changeling, sealed them up in a green glass bottle, and set off back to his Hollow. But along the way, the hobgoblin tripped and the glass bottle broke, setting the nightmare free.

It discovered it quite liked being an entity all its own, and set out in search of others like it. Turns out, there *were* no others like it, so the Wandering Nightmare did the next best thing: It sought out dreamers, and pulled their dreams into its own. Only sometimes, gathering dreams means absorbing the dreamer as well.

Description: The Wandering Nightmare is a roiling, roaming cloud of fear. It sticks low to the ground, rolling in like a thick fog. It tinges the landscape as it moves, leeching the color out of its surroundings. At night, it's even harder to spot, creeping up on those who've made camp and staying out of their firelight as long as possible. Sounds are muffled within it, and the world outside the Nightmare appears to move much more slowly than it does inside.

Storytelling Hints: The Wandering Nightmare consists mainly of feelings and instincts. When changelings are caught up in it, a deep sense of dread settles in, as though something is about to go spectacularly wrong. Often, this is true, as the nightmare takes hold and dredges up the Lost's fears. The Wandering Nightmare doesn't only present its current victims' dreams, but also cycles through fragments of other nightmares it has absorbed, including flashes of the dreams that originally called it into being.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3,

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Occult 3

Physical Skills: Stealth (Darkness) 5, Survival 3

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression 3, Intimidation (Dread) 8

Merits: None

Wyrd: 4

Glamour/per Turn: 9/4

Willpower: 6

Aspiration: To absorb nightmares into itself

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Size: 6

Speed: 13

Health: 9

Frailties: An act of true courage (bane)

Contracts: Overpowering Dread, Tumult

Dread Powers: Chameleon Horror, Conjure Dreams, Know Soul, Mist Form

The Wild Hunters

When the True Fae retreat from the corners of Arcadia to hold court and play their games, the land returns to what it once was. Sometimes escaping changelings stumble across these empty realms before they cross into the Hedge, these undeveloped lands devoid of living civilization, a theatre stage with scattered props and sets but no lights or actors. Most often, changelings view them as cold woods, chilled enough to see their breath illumined in moon- and starlight, a midnight land rife with barrow mounds and watchful eyes. These eyes are both hunter and hunted, air and darkness assuming thought and form by will or whim. They are the Huntsmen: they were in Arcadia before the Gentry, and they will be there after the Gentry leave.

But in this time and place, the Gentry rule the lands beyond the Hedge, and even those verderers of the woods must acknowledge their authority. When the Lost stubbornly refuse to be found, the True Fae venture into the deepest thickets to call upon the Huntsmen, who are never far from their masters.

Never Far from the Queen

Everything has rules. Rules and reliability. The crossbow and its quiver of 20 darling daughters are reliable. They do what you expect of them. You're reliable. Your snares will catch, your sword will draw blood. The woods are treacherous. Without rules and order, the woods will consume you. The woods define you, and they are all you need.

The Gentry make their own rules, however. They come into the woods, magic billowing before them, fog parting in the forest. When they come upon you, they make a swift motion with the surety of sovereignty, removing your heart and sundering grace. Into that cavity pours the desire of the True Fae, a Title representing their desire for the Lost who has forsaken them, and you become their Huntsman. Whatever desires you had before are muted — you now share the same desire for a changeling as the Keeper, and you wear the livery of your queen. Your quarry doesn't believe in rules. Your quarry isn't reliable, except in one key respect:

Changelings run. They always run. And so, the Huntsman follows.

The Herald

Often, the herald comes as the first sign of the hunt. The bird of prey alights on a changeling's windowsill, looks her in the eye, and then she hears the voice. *Come home*, he says, and she knows the Huntsman has her scent and draws nigh. *Follow me and spare yourself the chase. Your lover pines for you, your master fades without your song, there are contracts to sign and slaves to eat; the kingdom dies without your smile.* Sometimes the Huntsman's herald is their pet briarhound or hookshrike, in which case their love for their companion is the only thing that persists past the loss of their heart. Only their fury can match it, so woe to the changeling who injures the herald.

By the time the herald comes, the Huntsman has been observing their prey for weeks, perhaps months. Goblin contacts willing to inform on the changeling have been paid for their silence, either with Glamour or cold iron. The verderers have walked beside her on the street, watched her sup Glamour from emotions, eaten the same spicy pork from the same local Burmese place that she has. The herald is an announcement of the hunt, but it also flushes the prey out from her complacent routine. It reminds her that she is not safe, and she never will be, and only the rarest

and strangest changelings resist the panic that follows so stark a reminder. One who does, and who clings stubbornly to defenses and a routine, finds the attempts to flush her out never cease. The heart that beats inside the Huntsman is that of her — their — Keeper, and they know how to hurt her in manners most intimate.

The Wild Hunt

A Huntsman never ceases. They can die, after a fashion — they're canny and tough, but they're creatures of flesh and Wyrd like anything else touched by Faerie. When you prick them, they bleed rather a lot. They meet attempts to wrong them without revenge, however, for their heart's desire is to see a changeling in fetters, dragged through the Hedge and brought back to Arcadia's Plutonian shore. Even slaying the Huntsman will not end her suffering, for only a chill cavity rests between their ribs, and so long as their heart beats in their stolen Bastion, they reform somewhere in the Hedge within a month's time to start again. And even when the heart itself is destroyed and the Huntsman is no more, the animating Title's fire flits back to the Keeper whence it came, and can be sewn into a new Huntsman to start the cycle anew.

In the colloquial among the Lost, the phrase "Wild Hunt" represents this dread reality: The hunt against them never ends, a furious host will chase them to the ends of the Earth, and a Huntsman may be coming for them at any time. Huntsmen will pay off privateers, command goblins, and even treat with mortal forces to harass their prey.

The Panoply

Their sword, their powder horn, their boots: that's what matters. A Huntsman's identity is partly sublimated into their tools — any other feeling was largely lost with their heart. "The One-Eyed Highwayman," the freehold calls them, and their eyepatch and tricorne are more central to their self than whatever other name they might once have used. Most Huntsmen have at least two tools to their name: some item of attire, and a weapon.

This is how you know them: by their tools, often archaic, always perfectly maintained, never useless. Everything else changes from moment to moment — height, gender, clothing, personality aside from the demeanor of the hunter coolly stalking his prey — but the implements, the tools, the panoply stays the same. The Mask that obscures a changeling's true nature also shields a Huntsman's panoply from seeming out of the ordinary. A musket seems like a perfectly mundane item to carry, though someone walking down the street open carrying isn't necessarily abnormal these days anyway.

A Huntsman for All Seasons

Huntsmen interact with Court Bargains in ways as unique as they are troubling. The verderers of Arcadia cannot circumvent a Bargain, but they're frighteningly good at negotiating loopholes.

When a **Spring** monarch rules, a Huntsman can smash and whip and do violence to the Lost all they like — so long as that afflicted Lost is the one they're seeking. It's a desire that, literally, sits right where their heart should be.

They cannot circumvent **Summer's** Bargain, but Huntsmen are stealthy predators who know the capabilities of their prey. The wise, keen Huntsman builds traps for their foes, not the other way around.

Recognizing the Huntsman as a pawn of the Others by the Bargain of **Autumn** depends on the strength of the local court's king or queen. Given that a Huntsman's standard means of flushing out their prey involves a warning from their herald, the season's demand rarely goes unsatisfied.

Avoiding the chill fury of **Winter** is difficult, for without their heart, a Huntsman's emotions are greatly muted and they cannot truly mourn. However, the focus of a Huntsman is to capture their target and return them to Arcadia, not to kill. The verderer avoids the Bargain by using nonlethal methods.

The End of the Chase

Inevitably, the chase ends.

The Huntsman drags their quarry through the Hedge toward Arcadia. Clad in iron or a Huntsman's snare, a changeling cannot escape as she normally does, and the Huntsman can track her more easily within the Hedge anyway. The verderers do not hesitate to resort to violence and cold iron, but they sometimes seem more sympathetic than they do outside the Hedge, because they are near their hearts.

This is their secret: to anchor them and allow them to manifest fully in the mortal world as creatures of Wyrd and flesh, the True Fae must hide the heart of a Huntsman within a Bastion. For months, even years, alien emotions plague some mortal's sleep, thoughts of hunting in some dark and deep wood. A Huntsman can borrow some of the Gentry's talent for oneiromancy and Hedge shaping, but they are forever blind to the Bastion that holds their heart — the one thing they cannot track down even with all their cunning, no matter how earnest their hidden longing.

Only in the Hedge can a changeling sway the Huntsman from their mission, if temporarily. The Huntsman's natural inclination for order clashes with the obsessive excitement of the changeling's proximity to Arcadia and the fulfillment of the Keeper's heart that beats within. The Lost can see, and feel, this tension — it cackles like fatigue, electricity behind their eyes, from a dark cloud above the Hedge's canopy. If the changeling can convince or trick the Huntsman into letting her find the Bastion where their heart waits, escape becomes possible. Within the Bastion, a changeling may swear an oath (p. XX) with the Huntsman, heart to heart, if they're willing; but the changeling must overcome the Fae's desires that spill out from within in a battle of wits or will. As a Wyrd-witnessed declaration of true feeling, the oath allows the Huntsman to express their own desires once more, asserting their own needs and wants over the Keeper's and wresting back control of their fate for a short while — for the scene, no longer. Once that time is over, the Fae's desires return to the fore, but the oath remains.

Finally returned, the Huntsman's heart can expunge the Keeper's Title, though even then the oath is still intact — presuming the heart can be found within the tempestuous mortal Bastion. What a motley will do with the purest, powerless representation of their tormentor is anyone's guess. Letting the verderer live is dangerous, of course, because an oath broken hurts the changeling just as much as it does the Huntsman, and an oath is forever. The sworn are irreversibly connected, for good or for ill. But killing them alerts the True Fae as surely as a road flare, and paves the way for a new, unknown adversary to take the Huntsman's place.

Calling the Hunt

Create Huntsmen as hobgoblins (p. XX), with exceptions as follows:

Concept

A Huntsman has no story of their own, unless a changeling returns their heart or happens to find one wandering free in their native Arcadian fringes. The concept for a Huntsman on the move is a combination of the Fae Title they carry (p. XX), their panoply, and one core Aspiration that defines them. Everything else is mutable. A Huntsman's panoply consists of two pieces of signature equipment, one of which is almost always a weapon, plus one for every three dots of Wyrd they possess. Some Huntsmen also have a favored herald companion.

The Huntsmen's own Aspirations range from personal desires, such as "Regain my heart" or "Impose order," to strange yearnings that hearken back to their time in the forests of old Arcadia, such as "Hunt a creature that cannot die" or "Ensnare the moon." This Aspiration is only available when the Huntsman is in the Hedge. They also have two other Aspirations that are always available, which they inherit from the Fae Title that fills them; one of these is always the Fae's craving (p. XX).

Dread Powers and Oaths

Unlike hobgoblins, Huntsmen cannot learn fae Contracts. They can learn any of the Dread Powers that appear in the **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook** on p. 144, as well as a few unique ones of their own, below. All Huntsmen begin with the following Dread Powers for free: Among the Sheep, Command the Herald, Heart of Iron, and Hunter's Panoply.

Huntsmen also cannot make goblin deals. However, they can swear fae oaths, as long as a changeling or one of the Gentry initiates them.

Advantages

Huntsmen do not suffer the frailties of other fae creatures, which is one reason the Gentry risk sending their Titles into the world this way. A Huntsman can stay in the mortal world as long as they like and suffer no ill effects. Huntsmen can reap Glamour (p. XX) from mortals but can't harvest it. They can also consume goblin fruits and other such sources to regain Glamour. While carrying a Title, they can perform oneiromancy inside Bastions but only with subtle shifts (p. XX), and they can shape the Hedge as well as any changeling.

Use the Huntsman's Resolve + Wyrd for a Clash of Wills (p. XX) if their powers come into conflict with other supernatural abilities. A Huntsman gains a dice bonus equal to half its Fae master's Wyrd, rounded up, to contest attempts to force or convince them to act against the Fae's wishes. When a changeling drops her Mask, a Huntsman adds the changeling's Wyrd as bonus dice to track her; see p. XX. In the Hedge and Arcadia, they always gain this bonus.

Huntsmen have an easier time of navigating the Hedge than even the True Fae do, reducing the total needed successes to win any navigation contest there by one, or two among the Thorns (p. XX).

Sample Dread Powers

Below is a list of common Dread Powers that Huntsmen wield.

[PLEASE FORMAT THE FOLLOWING AS A DREAD POWER LIST]

Among the Sheep

Thanks to the Fae taking up residence inside its soul, a Huntsman may take any roughly humanoid form, including that of any kind of human being, for 2 Glamour, although they cannot impersonate specific humans. Their Size is always between 4 and 6. However, every Huntsman has the same tell (p. XX) as the Gentry Title they carry, though it manifests more subtly; and although the Mask protects their panoply from looking out of place in the real world, a Huntsman's panoply never changes.

Apex Predator

The Huntsman has mastery over lesser predators. By spending 1 Glamour, it can conjure up a swarm of small animals or birds as appropriate to its nature. These animals will obey its commands, and it can communicate with them clearly. It can also use this power on a single, larger animal.

Command the Herald

All knights require a herald, and the Huntsmen are the knights of the Gentry. The Huntsman has a specific form of remote viewing it can practice: command of a small, specific creature that it has touched. The choice of herald is appropriate to the Huntsman's nature — inevitably, predators such as cats or raptors of some sort, hunting hounds, etc. Using this ability requires 1 Glamour per hour. The creature remains aware of its surroundings while surveilling, and can speak with the Huntsman's voice. It's unfailingly loyal, and nothing can persuade it to betray its master under any circumstances.

A Huntsman's herald could be any kind of animal or bestial fae creature; goblin beasts conscripted this way can survive without ill effects outside the Hedge until this power ends.

Heart of Iron

Despite their doubly-fae nature, or perhaps because of it, Huntsmen have no fear of cold iron. They often use it in their tools.

Hungry Heart

The wild, ravenous essence of the Keeper can't truly fill the void at a Huntsman's core; without their heart, they constantly feel that something is missing, and they rely on their trusty tools to help reclaim it. By spending 1 Willpower when they attack a changeling or True Fae with a panoply weapon, they may steal Glamour from the victim's pool equal to successes rolled if the attack hits, adding it to their own up to their usual maximum. This power doesn't work on hobgoblins or anything else born from the Hedge.

Hunter's Panoply

All Huntsmen keep their panoply in the finest condition, despite their tools and weapons consisting of the same pure Wyrd that makes up their bodies. On all relevant actions involving their tools, be it attacking or setting traps, a Huntsman's rolls gain the 8-again quality. They can call dropped or lost tools back to hand as an instant action by spending a Glamour, but actions they take that *would* use a tool they're currently missing lose the 10-again quality. A Huntsman regains a Willpower whenever they achieve an exceptional success on a roll using their signature panoply.

Hunter's Senses

The Huntsman has incredibly honed senses for changelings. Against the Lost, they gain a +4 bonus to all perception rolls, and apply 9-again to the dice pool. This increases to 8-again within the Hedge or Arcadia. If the changeling enters into a bargain (p. XX) with a human, the Huntsman must win a Clash of Wills with her to use this benefit.

Inescapable Snare

The Huntsman creates a snare that entraps victims. It can take any form, depending on the shape the verderer assumes and the nature of the Fae Title it carries — sticky webs, paralyzing arcs of lightning, a chilling shout, or just a good old-fashioned net. By spending 1 Glamour, the Huntsman denotes an area of up to 10 square yards/meters, and can attempt to grapple any victims in the area using the snare, using its own Attributes and Skills with a +3 bonus to the dice pool. The bonus increases to +5 if it uses one of its panoply tools as the snare. A Huntsman's snare counts as iron for purposes of negating the effects of fae magic, such as portaling and Contracts.

Kindred Spirits

In some ways, a Huntsman is as much the victim of a durance as any changeling ever was, though some serve willingly. They have uncanny insight into the minds and hearts of changelings, knowing where to find the cracks in the Lost's hearts that let Faerie seep back in. By spending 1 Glamour, the Huntsman automatically learns a changeling's Needle, Thread, Aspirations, and current and maximum Clarity. By spending an additional Glamour, they learn the circumstances of and Condition (if any) associated with the character's most recent Clarity damage, or the identity and face of the changeling's closest Touchstone. Subsequent Glamour points can reveal older Clarity wounds and additional Touchstones. If the Huntsman uses their knowledge against the victim, they earn an exceptional success on a roll of three successes or more.

Surprise Entrance

No matter how secure their victim thinks she is, by spending 1 Glamour the Huntsman may suddenly appear in the scene, whether they lunge from the crowd, burst through the wall, or emerge from the woods following the sharp report of a musket. Any character witnessing this entrance must succeed on a reflexive Resolve + Composure roll or gain the Shaken Condition. If the characters have actively taken appropriate measures to keep the Huntsman out (barring and locking the door, setting traps in the woods, etc.), it takes the verderer one full turn to break through, giving the characters time to react. If not, they're just *there* as a reflexive action and can take one more action before anyone can react.

Watchful Gaze

The canny Huntsman knows that total stealth is less effective than letting their prey know they're on the trail, but not when they'll strike. The Huntsman spends a Glamour and makes eye contact with a changeling, rolling Presence + Resolve contested by the victim's Composure. If successful, the victim gains the Paranoid Condition. The changeling doesn't need to know the one making her feel watched is a Huntsman for the power to work, and may chalk the feeling up to any number of circumstances. A Huntsman may use this power through their herald's gaze as well.

The True Fae

Half a hundred aliases describe them: Gentry, Good Cousins, Kindly Ones, Fair Folk, and more. These are lies frightened women and men tell, hoping to appease the vanity of capricious gods. Such false names obscure true ones that no one dares speak, lest careless and impertinent utterance draw Their attention from across the Thorns. The Lost use the word “fae” to describe anything that comes from the Hedge or beyond it — hobgoblins, tokens, even themselves. But the *True* Fae are those noble, mercurial, unknowable beings that stride, larger than life, across Arcadia and rule its lands with the divine right of conquerors.

Most changelings see “Keeper” as synonymous with “Gentry,” but in truth, Faerie is home to countless Others who have no interest in humanity. They wage glorious wars over heart-bound trophies, pitting goblin hordes against one another until blood stains the sky. They plumb the ragged edges and dusty corners of their realm, seeking new voids to fill with their boundless selves. Fae explorers prowling the cold, empty wasteland beyond the borders of *their* Arcadia were the first to discover the Huntsmen in their barrows there, but grew bored with these new playthings until their brethren found a way to put them to better use. A changeling desperate enough to escape her Keeper could reach out to its rival who keeps no human prisoners for a hint to its weakness, though she may decide the price isn’t worth paying after all.

A True Fae is not a person, but a Name wrapped in a tapestry of vows and deals. Deep in the mists of forgotten time, the Fae bargained with Arcadia itself, declaring that they would exist — that they would own the land entire and claim it as a vessel for their Wyrd, dreams, and facets, in exchange for a web of arcane rules so complex no one of them could ever know them all. At their core, the Fae are ravenous beings that must *possess*. They want, and in their all-consuming wanting they strike bargains to sate their desires, whether for slaves, kingdoms, secrets, or spoils. Changelings who live and labor among them usually see only the tip of the Gentry iceberg, but those brave and foolish enough to delve more fully into Faerie’s mysteries catch a glimpse of the truth: A True Fae’s Name is its heart and its undoing, and all the vast kingdoms and beauteous treasures with which it surrounds itself are made of promises. And promises can be broken.

Names and Titles

A True Fae’s Name is its core, and rarely manifests in a comprehensible way unless its Titles have all been stripped away or lost. A Title is one of many roles a single Fae agrees to play, one face of many that it wears, granting it limited omnipotence within the confines of that role. The Princess of Red Crowns is able to nail her hats to the heads of her victims, to conjure up her great and terrible Crimson Keep, because she holds that title. She possesses near-infinite power when it comes to nailing hats to people's heads, dragging off wicked children to her Keep, and so on, but unless she is also the Tlatoani of Crashing Serpents, she has no especial control over dragons or violent thunderstorms. No matter what form a Title takes, its nature always bleeds through: Every manifestation of the Princess, on Earth or in Arcadia, features elements of torture, blood, and nails, for example, whether she appears as a blood-drenched madwoman with a hammer or a children's rhyme about the perils of going out of doors while hatless.

The True Fae are the lords and ladies in their palaces of crystal and moonlight, but they are also the palace and the masked servants and the forest in which the castle sits. What the courts call the “Keeper” is just one Title’s manifestation, and even if a changeling kills it, the oaths it made would simply cast a new piece of itself in that role eventually and pick up the Wild Hunt where it left off. Only breaking the deals that created a Title in the first place can permanently unravel it, although another Fae may devour it and claim it for itself.

A given Title might become a Keeper for any number of reasons, and might not be one forever. A changeling's captor might abandon her for 10 years not to inflict the torture of loneliness but just because its Keeper Title got distracted with something else for a while and forgot it was a Keeper. Some Fae take people for the exquisite flavor of their emotions, or the prizes they can extract from human dreams. With their ability to weave dream symbols into real objects, they pluck the most valuable jewels of dreamstuff from the minds of slumbering mortals and steal them away to adorn their crowns. A beloved memory, a childhood fear, or even the certainty itself that one is only dreaming and can wake at any time — a True Fae may covet these, and only the dreams of humanity can provide. Other Gentry might love humans for their ability to present a spirited challenge or entertain them, or might simply prefer human servants to goblin ones for the smell. One Fae might plot to take more human prisoners than another, for no reason other than to compete. Some Titles may even *need* to capture humans as a term of their deals to exist, which means a changeling might escape by finding loopholes in those deals.

Sign on the Dotted Line

The Others have built a kingdom that conforms to their every whim, but without their age-old pledges they would be nothing. More importantly, they can't take power away from rebellious changelings without taking power away from themselves — an inconceivable notion. Their tangled webs of pacts and obligations are what empower the Lost to oppose and evade them.

All the world-shaping power and casual immortality a True Fae possesses comes from pacts it signed when it came into being. The Contracts it wields are like a changeling's writ large, inscribed into not only itself but its domain, too — even the crystal gardens that sing enchanting songs and the treacherous bogs that devour trespassers are Contracts. The signature that seals the deal is the oath a Fae swears, and the terms of this oath are complex secrets woven into its realm and the role it plays among the other Gentry. Pacts it swears upon its Name are existentially binding, and bestow the grandest and most fundamental parts of a Fae's nature that persist across all of its Titles. Breaking these pacts condemns it to true destruction. Lesser pacts it swears upon a Title bestow smaller-scale powers only that Title can use; breaking these pacts won't kill a Fae, but it might destroy the Title or render one of its powers useless.

A True Fae makes deals with entire Regalia, gaining nigh-limitless power over their themes within the bounds of the Title that uses them. In exchange, it must keep a physical representation of each Regalia it masters, though not always a literal one. A Sword could very well be a weapon, but it might also be a hunting hawk, a thunderstorm, or a bulldozer. It could even be a jagged cliff that juts out into the sea — anything that expresses *force* and *forthrightness* within the purview of the Title that commands it. Some changelings think the Fae have access to more than six Regalia, deriving ever more esoteric powers from treasures rare and peculiar.

An Arcadian realm is like a theatre: The scenery and costumes and faces change, but the framework remains apparent, if an actor just changes her perspective. Anyone wishing to oppose one of the Fair Folk *can* do so on its terms, dueling with pistols or plotting with its goblin courtiers, and in many cases that's the only apparent way to do it. But these are uphill battles, fought with great sacrifice to little permanent effect. A changeling who learns the true nature of Titles and their oaths can quest and scheme to discover the terms or physical key to such an oath. Clever manipulation of the Title's manifestation, destroying the Regalia outright, or appropriating it and overriding the oath by swearing a more powerful one on someone else's true name can force the Fae to break its pact and take power away from it.

The Fae war among themselves for countless inscrutable reasons, constantly enmeshed in rivalries, enmities, and shifting alliances. One impetus lies in the Gentry's ability to consume each other's Titles and add them to their own complement of roles. If a True Fae loses all its Titles and its Name is obliterated, it ceases to be; but if even one of its Titles persists as part of another Fae, it could reconstitute itself someday, regaining a Name through some convoluted set of pledge clauses and happy accidents.

True Fae Traits

A True Fae never appears in a game as anything but the manifestation of one of its Titles, or its Name if it has no Titles left. Characters can't interact with the full breadth of one of the Fair Ones any other way. A manifestation could be a character, or it could be a sky citadel, or an enormous clockwork machine, or a flock of platinum birds. Regardless of its form, a Title has most of the same traits that a changeling does, although all of its Attributes and Skills may not be applicable in certain forms. The Storyteller doesn't need to create traits for every Title that belongs to a True Fae; only ones the characters will meaningfully interact with.

Each Title has its own set of traits. As a result, it can be difficult for changelings to know whether two Titles they interact with are part of the same creature. The motley might be able to bargain with a powerful goblin for a rare Gentry genealogy or somesuch, but the most reliable way to tell is to existentially threaten or get rid of one Title and see which other Fae react. These kinds of broad scale dealings with the Others are rare, worth devoting several stories or an entire chronicle to resolving.

Build a Fae antagonist with the rules for creating changeling characters (see Chapter 3), with the following considerations and exceptions:

- **Character Concept and Titles:** A True Fae Title has three Aspirations just like changelings do. Whenever it fulfills an Aspiration, it gains a Willpower point instead of a Beat, which goes away at the end of the scene if not spent, unless it was earned pursuing a craving or a changeling.

Aspirations for the Gentry range everywhere from the humanly impossible to the unthinkable cruel. If the Title is a Keeper, one of its Aspirations should reflect its desire to capture — or recapture — a changeling. One Aspiration should always reflect a craving of some kind, something the Title wants to possess more than anything, such as “the love of a human” or “one million loyal subjects;” this Aspiration stays no matter how many times it's fulfilled. Highly abstract Aspirations like “become a star” are valid for the Gentry, but the Storyteller should make sure a route to such an Aspiration exists and has something to do with characters the Fae can interact with; for instance, to become a star, the Title might first need to transform seven humans into eternal blue fires and then consume them on Midsummer's Eve. The star then becomes just another manifestation of the Title.

A True Fae has between zero and five Titles. The Storyteller should decide up front how many total Titles the Fae has, even if he's only creating traits for one of them; this determines how powerful each Title is. A Fae with zero Titles is like a cornered rat, consisting only of a Name, and is desperate to make deals and pick off weak Titles from other Gentry to survive. A Fae with five Titles is a god even among faeries, with power over every Regalia and a massive Arcadian domain.

Gentry have many kinds of Names, from a simple “Ayesha” or “John” to the sound of waves breaking against an ice shelf, or a picture of the *wadjet*: the Egyptian symbol of magic. Strange sounds and images don’t especially protect True Fae’s Names. Once heard (or otherwise experienced) a substitute is as good as the Name itself, provided the speaker witnessed the faerie’s real Name and uses the substitute with an honest, true intent.

Titles are abstract (and even enigmatic) concepts, but they always refer to an emotion, sensual experience, or object. One may be the Prince of Weeping Rats, while another is the Acolyte of Screams on the Mountain. Every manifestation incorporates the Title in some distinct way. This shape or theme is called the Title’s *tell*. The Prince of Weeping Rats appears as a rat-headed crying man holding a scepter, or becomes an endless, filthy high rise, whose human-looking tenants weep whenever the ruling rats eat their food or steal unattended children.

- **Wyrd:** Determine Wyrd before the rest of a True Fae’s traits, as many traits derive from its Wyrd rating.

Even the weakest of the Gentry is powerful compared to most changelings. Each of a True Fae’s Titles has a Wyrd rating of 5, plus one dot for each Title the Fae possesses (including this one), to a maximum of 10.

A True Fae begins any scene with a full Glamour pool in Arcadia, and otherwise recovers Glamour in the same ways that changelings do. *All* True Fae suffer from Glamour addiction outside Arcadia or the Hedge; if they fail to regain at least their Wyrd rating in Glamour each day in the real world, they suffer the Deprived Condition. If they fall to Glamour 0, they lose Willpower and then Health at a rate of one per day until they regain at least their Wyrd rating in Glamour.

True Fae suffer from frailties just as changelings do. They also suffer the bane of iron, as detailed on p. XX.

- **Attributes and Skills:** Rather than prioritizing categories, a Fae Title receives a number of dots equal to five times its Wyrd to distribute across Attributes, and the same number to distribute across Skills. A Title has no Skill Specialties.

- **Faerie Template:** True Fae don’t have kiths, courts, or anchors. They don’t truly have seemings either, but each Title can use one seeming’s blessing and bears something of that seeming’s trappings regardless of the form it takes.

In Arcadia and the Hedge, a Title has free rein to treat reality as though it were shaping dreams (p. XX) or the Hedge (p. XX), performing any oneiromantic or Hedgespinning act that fits within the legend of its identity, and treating other characters as though they were important eidolons. It automatically succeeds at these actions unless the target of its shaping magic spends a Willpower point for the chance to resist.

A Title also has access to every Contract in (Wyrd – 4) Regalia (see Chapter 3). One of these must match its associated seeming. In the real world, it can use its Regalia and can itself take any form, but can’t otherwise shape reality.

- **Merits:** Fae Titles can have any Merits available to changelings, where they make sense. A Fae’s Social Merits must specify whether they apply in Arcadia and the Hedge, or in the human world. A Title has Merit dots equal to twice its Wyrd rating.

- **Advantages:** Calculate these as changelings do, but True Fae don't have Clarity.
- **Mask and Mien:** The Mask hides a True Fae in the real world, but imperfectly; the Title's tell always shows through in some fashion.

Names and Pledges

Names have power. A Fae that knows someone's true name can weave that name into a nightmare tailor made to drive them into its waiting arms. Anyone a True Fae successfully targets with a Contract while speaking or otherwise utilizing her true name gains the Persistent Obsession Condition pertaining to that Fae, with a context chosen by the target's player.

A changeling who learns a Fae's true Name can speak it aloud to empower herself when she acts against any of its Titles, achieving exceptional success with any successful use of a Contract that targets that Fae.

The Gentry can make pledges just like changelings can (p. XX), but they must invest more than just Glamour. A True Fae can seal any statement, even those of changelings and other fae creatures, but to do so it must swear the sealing upon something it considers one of its possessions. This could be a captive changeling, a hobgoblin servant, a dream trinket or token, a Huntsman who wears its livery — anything that isn't just a manifestation of one of its Titles is fair game, as long as the Fae considers it property. If the subject of the sealing follows through on her promise, the Fae must give her the possession upon which it swore.

A True Fae's Title or Name can swear a personal or hostile oath to any fae creature, including a changeling, but to do so it must swear upon itself. If it breaks the oath, it doesn't gain the Oathbreaker Condition. Instead, it permanently loses access to one of its Regalia and becomes vulnerable to lethal attacks during the scene in which it broke its word. If a Title loses its last Regalia this way, the other party may choose to kill the Title permanently; demand any three tasks or wishes from it and then allow it to regain its last Regalia; or force it to inhabit the Regalia's physical key, allowing the other party to wield it as a token. Such items retain their power even in the real world, but changelings are cautious with them, since dormant Fae Titles have been known to wake under unpredictable circumstances. Changelings who break Fae oaths gain the Oathbreaker Condition (p. XX) as normal, but the Wyrds may demand disproportionate restitution for the betrayal.

Any Title can make a bargain by swearing upon the Fae's true Name. Fae bargains work differently than changeling bargains do. Both parties must agree to perform a task, give up a possession, abide by a rule, or something equally concrete and clearly communicated. For the True Fae, the consequences for failing to uphold its end is permanent destruction. A non-Gentry party must swear upon something crucially important to her — her own name (and thus her life), perhaps, or that of a loved one; a favorite memory; her Hollow or home; or something else. If she fails to uphold her end of the bargain, whatever she swore upon is forfeit to the Fae to do with as it pleases, and the Wyrds back up the claim.

Since Gentry pledges have such dire consequences when broken, the Fae don't make them often or lightly. Convincing one of the Good Cousins to make a pledge is difficult at best and usually requires a changeling to set up an untenable situation for it first. A Fae in mortal danger always has the chance to try to make a pledge and save its life before it's consigned to oblivion, but it can't force the other party to agree. Of course, the True Fae aren't above extracting binding promises from others without *actually* pledging anything in return, if they can pull it off.

Vulnerability and Death

A True Fae never takes bashing damage from anything other than its banes (including iron), and takes lethal damage only from banes unless an attacker speaks its true Name or it breaks an oath, as above. Only cold-iron weapons can deal aggravated damage to the Gentry.

The intricate web of promises and deals that govern a True Fae makes it vulnerable in other ways, too. If a changeling finds a Regalia's physical representation and learns one of the rules that binds its Title to the Fae, she may be able to manipulate the situation such that the Title breaks its oath, as detailed above. Changelings can purchase these rules from goblins in the know, deduce them from patterns they observe after spending a long time with a Title, trick it into telling them through clever pledges, etc.

As an example, the Storm King of the Bloody Throne wears an ersatz crown and rules its domain with an iron fist. It has sworn an oath to do so forever. But the Contract that binds it to its Name says that it is a usurper, and will rule only as long as the land has no true monarch. Only one who can remove its Sword from the stone in which it's embedded can be the true monarch, so the Storm King hides stone and Sword both deep in the belly of a dark forest, guarded by goblin beasts. When a changeling braves the forest, defeats the beast, finds the stone, and pulls out the Sword, she becomes the true queen of the land. Since the Storm King has now broken its oath to rule forever, its fate is in the new queen's hands.

One Thousand and One Stories

The following examples of the Gentry can serve as inspiration for players looking to create their characters' Keepers or for Storytellers looking for principal antagonists.

Grandmother, Grandmother

Deep in the Wood, past Bone Hill and over Rickety Bridge, sits a cozy little cabin in the middle of a broad clearing. It has a little garden in the back full of dream-a-drupe and stabapples, a pen for the piglins and milkbeast, and a stout stone tower rises from one corner. It's here that Grandmother, Grandmother raises "her" children. She takes them from the mortals, you know; the ones who are neglected or abused, or just plain running wild and in need of a firm hand. Grandmother has specific ideas about what a family looks like, and she molds her changelings into the roles she sees fit: The Eldest Who Can Do No Wrong, the Gifted Child, the Black Sheep, the Forgotten Middle Child, and so on. Grandmother's vision rarely matches the personality of the youths she takes, but then, that's where the conflict comes from.

Grandmother, Grandmother's domain encompasses the clearing, the cottage, and a vast tract of dark, spooky woodlands surrounding it. The woods are strictly forbidden to all of Grandmother's "children," and are fully stocked with dangerous beasts, ghosts, and any number of fairy-tale-appropriate dangers. They also contain the only paths from Grandmother's domain to the Hedge and thence, back to Earth.

Grandmother herself is the manifestation of this Gentry's third Title: a sweet, smiling old woman who always resembles the archetypal grandmother figure in whatever culture she's preying on. When she's angered, though, the façade slips: At first, it's just a flash of sharp teeth or burning reptilian eyes, but when she reveals herself in her full fury, Grandmother, Grandmother is a true terror. Spindly, twiglike limbs belie an unholy strength; papery, wrinkled skin deflects blows like armor; and cruel needle teeth and razor claws dish out horrifying corporal punishment.

Grandmother is choosy about the mortals she abducts: always children, never older than 16 or 17, and all from home-life situations that could charitably be described as "troubled." Street kids and those stuck in the foster-care system, children from abusive households, even latchkey kids Grandmother sees as "neglected" are all likely targets. Once she's lured or taken them back to her cottage, Grandmother introduces them to their new "siblings" and puts them in a twisted, fairy-tale version of a family drama. Over the years, "her" kids are shaped, willingly or not, into changelings reflecting these roles: The Bossy Oldest Child becomes a Fairest while the Forgotten Middle Child becomes a Darkling, and the Wild Child who spends all her time getting punished might end up an Ogre or a Wizened.

At any given time, Grandmother, Grandmother likely has anywhere from three to five children in the cottage. Inevitably, some of them escape (though almost never all at once — it seems like every time new children arrive, at least one big brother or sister is already there to show them the ropes). Others die. Still others turn 18. Exactly what that means is something the kids debate in hushed, after-bedtime whispers. Some say Grandmother lets you go, since you're an adult and all. Others say she takes you into the forest and sacrifices you to something even more horrible than she. Still others say that, if you're still there on your 18th birthday, you're trapped forever, a True Fae in your own right.

Grandmother, Grandmother adheres to a decidedly old-school style of parenting: Good children get smiles and sweet treats (goblin fruits that encourage docility and pliability), while bad children provoke her wrath. Bad children are sent to bed without supper, given extra chores, or, as a final resort, sent into the Wood to cut their own switch. Since this is the only time Grandmother allows any of her children to go past the eaves of the forest, it's often the best chance they have to escape. The Darkling might abandon her brothers and sisters to run while she can, while the Fairest refuses to leave them behind. The Ogre takes that switch right back to Grandmother and dares her to do her worst.

The Man with the Ergot Smile

From dream to dream he walks, all dapper suits and bright red umbrella. His back is always to the dreamer, always looking toward the huge, thorny gates that loom on the horizon. It doesn't matter if he sees you, though — once *you've* seen *him*, he infests your dreams, hollows them out until all you can dream of is him, the gates, and the other poor souls he's put his mark on. The more of those he gathers, the more those gates creak open, and every night you wake up screaming.

The Man with the Ergot Smile is an exiled True Fae, cut off from his Titles and dominions by dint of some unfathomable Gentry conflict. The terms of his exile are a Contract, as are all things in Arcadia: When 100 madmen dream as one, the Man may return to Arcadia, and not before. The Contract never said this had to occur naturally, and so the Man with the Ergot Smile slips from dream to dream, planting the seeds of his nightmare and nurturing them as patiently as any gardener. When his poisonous dreams finally bloom, he will go home.

All too aware that being fully embodied is a vulnerability, the Man with the Ergot Smile avoids the physical realm and its attendant dangers. Instead he lives in the world of dreams, skipping from mind to mind along hidden paths and Dreaming Roads, never staying too long in one dream realm. He resembles a man, slim and average height, dressed in a slightly old-fashioned black suit with a black bowler hat. The only color about him is a crimson umbrella he carries like a walking stick. Dreamers only ever see him from behind as he looks expectantly toward the gates

of Arcadia, but lucid dreamers or changelings hunting him report that his face is startlingly ordinary — until he smiles, and the world cracks around you and Clarity runs like melted wax.

Though he no longer rules a realm within Arcadia and thus cannot take new changelings, the Man with the Ergot Smile once held dominion over a vast and twisty sanitarium, wherein he broke down captive mortals utterly, just to see what they would build themselves back up as. His patients ended up with any seeming, depending on what kinds of tortures he devised and how they managed to endure them.

Signs and portents follow the Man with the Ergot Smile, signs that echo the realm he once ruled. When the Man is active in the area, admittance at the local mental hospitals spike sharply. Incidences of dancing plague, sudden dissociative states and St. Anthony's Fire trail in his wake, and a trained occultist can use those signs to follow him and pinpoint his likely next victim.

The Three Androgynes

Once upon a time, we told stories of wicked fairies in the woods, because the woods were dangerous and it was folly to go there. Now, we do not fear the forest anymore, for we have gone to stranger places by far: the seas, the skies, and very nearly the stars. What stories do we tell to warn our young and innocent away from them? We tell stories of silvery ships and strange, gray beings, child-sized but wise beyond knowing. When you're someplace you shouldn't be, someplace that transgresses, they appear in a beam of blinding light, carry you off through a hole in the sky, and peel back your layers amid a galaxy of thorny stars.

Whether the Three Androgynes have always been as they are now, adapted themselves with the rise of UFO folklore, or indeed are a new Gentry altogether, born of stories of flying saucers and alien experiments, no one can say. Their realm is an endless starship, all sleek chrome and art-deco fins, containing a multitude of sterile laboratories, operating theaters, and prison cells — or perhaps "zoo enclosures" is more apt. Most of the alien beasts held within are part and parcel of the realm itself, but the Androgynes pride themselves on their extensive collection of humanity. They curate it carefully, always seeking the broadest spectrum of humankind they can acquire.

The Three Androgynes themselves (and even within the nebulous concept of Gentry identity, they're recognized as a single being) are the archetypal "grays" made popular by everything from science-fiction TV shows to late-night radio programs: about three feet high, slender, with bulbous heads housing enormous, solid-black eyes made all the more striking by their tiny, almost rudimentary noses and mouths. They sometimes sport silvery, one-piece "uniforms" and sometimes appear nude (though all three lack any indication of sex or gender). They're always together, whether they're flying their craft from the control deck or slicing an experimental subject into cross sections and rearranging the internal organs just to see what happens.

Mortals the Three Androgynes take have one purpose: to be guinea pigs and test subjects for bizarre anatomical experimentation. Some become Beasts or Ogres when their Keepers splice their genes with those of other creatures. Others become Elementals or Darklings, partially replaced with advanced mechanical prostheses or reconfigured into nothing human at all, with vast cosmic knowledge forced into their minds. Still others are rebuilt to be flawless, hailed as Fairest success stories and paraded about on display. A few are forced to participate in experimentation on *other* subjects in a perverse kind of medical school; these changelings become Wizen.

For all that it seems to fly about the cosmos at great speed many light-years from earth, it's no harder to escape the Androgynes' realm than any other Arcadian domain. Some changelings simply fling themselves out an airlock and force themselves to endure the agony of vacuum until they "land." Others manage to slip the containment fields on their cells, steal a small shuttlecraft, and reverse-engineer the alien control surfaces so they might escape via "wormhole" back to earth; or take control of the ship itself and crash it unceremoniously into the Hedge.

The Year of Plague

Under a sullen red sun, the cracked and blistered earth gives up foul vapors and poisoned waters. The dead lay uncounted in their heaps, and the dying are too ravaged by disease to seek shelter or dig graves. Changelings scurry about, seeking succor or escape or a way to stop the plague. The sun rises and sets, the seasons turn, and a year later the board resets. All is as it was, forever and ever, plague without end.

The Year of Plague is an unusual Fae Title, in that its domain isn't a region of Arcadia so much as it is a span of time: specifically, a year of terrible epidemics and plague outbreaks. Every 365 days, the Year "resets," returning to a zero state shortly after the outbreak. The exact plague and its environs change every year: Sometimes it's London in the midst of the Black Death, or a Ghanaian village during the 1918 influenza pandemic. Other times it resembles no earthly place or disease at all.

The Year of Plague seldom manifests a character to speak with, preferring to observe its changelings at a remove. On the rare occasions that it does, it's a tattered, empty thing of red rags and a medieval plague doctor's mask, from which noxious vapors spill endlessly. When it needs to act directly, whether to fetch new changelings or rein in a study subject grown unruly, it prefers to act through goblins or a Huntsman, which naturally follow the same plague doctor motif as they don his livery.

The Year of Plague casts a wide net for its changelings. Anyone who survived a brush with a deadly disease is a potential candidate, as is anyone living in the outbreak zone of an epidemic. The Year often takes doctors and humanitarian-aid workers, opportunists and scavengers, and throws them all into a nightmare scenario to see how they adapt and react. Its changelings become Wizen when they try over and over to cure the incurable, or Ogres when they decide the best thing to do is put everyone out of their misery. They may unite survivors and spread hope to become Fairest, or eschew the company of others altogether to protect themselves and become scavenger Beasts.

Naturally, most of the "plague victims" in the Year of Plague are puppets, mere extensions of the Year itself and thus of no use to its studies. Every cycle, though, the Year claims a number of mortals. Sometimes it takes a small cadre and places them together to examine their group dynamics; other times it takes a larger number and scatters them across its domain so it can see how they try to survive on their own. Anyone who has not escaped before the year is up is lost in the resetting: perhaps unmade entirely, or perhaps reduced to one of the automata set dressing the next incarnation of the Year. Escape might come when a character realizes that civilization is but a thin veneer over chaos and ceases playing along, embraces the disease as his way out, or leads the survivors to work together and find a loophole. Actually curing the disease would likely end the Year entirely, ejecting any changelings still within back to the mortal realm.

[FICTION]

It Happened to Me, Part VI

Wendy:

Adopting children is, theoretically, difficult. There are lots of interviews, and social workers asking how secure your income really is. And the occasional insinuation that a child might prefer to be with someone more like them. It's less difficult when the children don't...exist, exactly. A handful of children can disappear if you take them to the right neighborhood. But it gets harder again when you try to take them to the hospital or put them in school. Peter had a broken arm. June couldn't read. Robin thought I was a fairy. Summer couldn't speak English. And Michael wanted me to like him so badly it hurt my heart. They sang like birds, and could, to our mutual discovery, be both at once. Bird-children, running from someone who hurt them so badly I hear them crying in their sleep every night, huddled together in my bed. She kidnapped them, and took away everything they could have been. I've had my worthiness questioned. I've been told that none of the things I am are important. But no one ever really took them away, no one pulled them out of my heart. At least I can give a little of that back to them. They don't actually look much like me, or each other, but most Americans can't tell the difference. Especially not with hapa kids.

I hadn't specifically wanted children. But I had some time on my hands, a landlord who was willing to look the other way while I sorted out some "runaways" I found sleeping outside, and nothing worthier to be doing. But four children, one teenager, and an adult can't stay in an efficiency forever. Not without something to prove I wasn't just another kidnapper. So the six of us decided that I had a handful of runaway cousins. We would be close enough family that I could maybe get custodianship while we tried to find birth certificates. To see if they had parents who knew their birth names.

I thought my inquiries and public records searches had been subtle. But then, I've never done this before. After a few days, I was sure I was being followed, but I couldn't think of by whom. ICE would have just busted down my door. The FBI would have detained me. The woman who came to my door smelled like wildflowers and sun, and her hair moved in a breeze that I couldn't see.

The conversation that followed made my head feel fuzzy, and faintly exposed. Like I might have said some things I wouldn't have otherwise said out loud. Some things I wouldn't have admitted. But then she took off her face and gave me a happy smile, and offered us a place to stay. A stipend. A line on some better papers. It would be easier if they were my own kids on paper, then she could earmark the stipend as alimony for my bank. It all made sense at the time, and at the end we were crying and hugging, and I felt better than I had in a lifetime.

It was only a couple of months later, as I was waiting for Summer to come out of a dressing room, that it really hit me. I was wholly responsible for five children who had never been safe in their lives. One who could barely remember the world his siblings brought him back to, who just followed Summer and Peter out of love. They needed everything, and almost nothing. They could feed themselves and clean the house and walk around safely in any weather. They could only sometimes speak without breaking into birdsong. They got spooked by crowds of people and guarded their food like they thought someone might take it. And I was getting paid to keep them out of trouble and socialize them into human society. It was my literal job to raise them up right. After several deep breaths, I emailed my old Mandarin teacher, put Peter in charge of making dinner, and went to go have my panic attack somewhere out of their line of sight.

I drove around aimlessly for nearly an hour after taking them home. *Home*. And wound up back at a coffee shop near the bay, chairs and tables scattered over a balcony that jutted out over the

rocks. I used to live near here, back before everything. The coffee was still overpriced and under-brewed, but the familiarity was nice. I half recognized the man sitting out on the balcony from old runs. He walked slowly, sometimes talking so softly I could only see his lips move as I ran past. Harmless, if a little creepy. I guess kids have made me a soft touch, because when he gave me a plaintive, lonely look, I walked over.

I didn't have time to scream, so I sent Peter 15 texts, and drove home in the sudden downpour. With a man who wouldn't stop whispering about the end of the world. I tried not to notice when the lights cut, but when a finger streaked along the windshield I started shaking and didn't stop until I opened the lobby door to what had only been my home for a handful of months. There were the three women arguing, with hardly room for a shadow between them. Staring directly at them, a man who smelled like lightning striking, who flickered like the world was dropping frames. Then he was pressed amid the women, tightly grasping their shoulders.

Clear your mind, Wendy. Get his attention. John trailed behind me like a lost thing as I strode towards them. My brain was screaming, pitched high and terrified for everyone I would lose if I didn't step just right. If Peter missed even one of the neighbors I sent him to. If the blonde didn't extend her trust, and help me ground the women who were already fading under his touch.

"Well, isn't this a sweet tête-à-tête." His voice kept tuning like a broken radio, words hissing around the static.

We were in a wide, tile-floored atrium. The kind designed by someone who's never lived along a heavily trafficked apartment hallway. Noisy. Sound muddled as it bounced back and forth between the tile and the glass, shoes squeaking and rain pelting and people yelling as softly as they could over the din. I cracked the heel of my boot hard against the tile three times. The echo was as loud as I could have hoped it would be. Everyone who was left inside stilled and stared.

"I think you should leave. You're making those women uncomfortable." *Focus on the moment.* "Get out of our building." People were shuffling between me and the doors outward. I listened for the click, and heard an anguished howl from outside. Someone pounding on the glass doors trying to get in. I couldn't look. His laughter was like breaking glass.

I took another step forward, clacking my boots again, and pushed the blonde's arm. "Grab their hands," I whispered, "they need an anchor." I shoved her close enough to them that she would need to grab hold of them to keep her balance. She almost let herself fall anyway, finally landing hard against the taller woman's collarbone.

The three women all shuddered a little at the touch, and the two dazed ones began to shake off whatever hold he had on them.

"Not today, Satan." And Preeti slammed her fist against the back of his head.

Smoke billowed up from the floor in hot waves, and the glass above us shattered, shards crashing down around us.

[END FICTION]

Chapter Six: All the Kingdoms of the Earth

*For there we loved, and where we love is home,
Home that our feet may leave, but not our hearts,
Though o'er us shine the jasper-lighted dome:
The chain may lengthen, but it never parts!*

Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., *Homesick in Heaven*

Eighty-Nine Dreams of Home, the Yuanfen Pavilion

Hong Kong

Hong Kong stands between. The mountains and the sea. The mainland and, first Britain, then the world at large. What China was, what China might be. Convenient geography and imperial disunity turned a lightly inhabited set of islands into a thriving, stable economy, one that plays host to an ever-increasing number of immigrants. It's beautiful there, even through the waves of smog drifting down the Pearl River delta. The high mountains are dotted with nook shrines and parks, neighborhoods nestled amidst them, connected by stairs, tunnels, and long bridges latticing the landscape.

The 89th Pavilion is where a changeling might find themselves if they missed China, but not the People's Republic of. It's easier, in some ways, to be a magical creature here. The supernatural is so common that it's a subject of idle conversation. Ghosts make regular appearances in soap operas, fox shrines are tucked away next to train stations, and astrology booths are packed in the Lady Market alongside knockoff Sanrio pajamas and tissue-box covers. So someone returning from Arcadia (or xian jing, 仙境) might find an unexpected level of social acceptance. Really, it would be more embarrassing for your family if you didn't at least come back to explain yourself. The student organization you just joined might be the more dangerous association.

Historiarum Obscura

Returning home, to your identity, is complicated. It, and you, remember each other as if fixed in time, everything as it was when you parted ways. But, of course, neither of you are the same. Now Hong Kongese changelings have yet another dual identity to balance — western or Chinese, fae or human. Hong Kong isn't quite either, and neither are you.

Circumstance underlined how liminal the golden delta could be. Once upon a time it may have been merely a few thousand kilometers of coast and peak, interrupted by the odd fishing village and wooded valley. Striking, and home to the occasional pirate, emperor in exile, or political dissident, but remote. Chinese changelings largely gravitated to larger towns. Rural life was too close to the Hedge and too far from anyone who might truly understand their experiences. When the trading door opened a crack, Hong Kong offered a more compelling option. New industries were stirred up by trade with the Portuguese and the British. There were new lives changelings could establish, away from the long shadow of a disappearance and a quietly disapproving family.

Even before it became the opium gate, Hong Kong started...diverging from the mainland. While mainland China was reinvesting in tradition, Hong Kong was getting more diverse, more adventurous, more mixed, and more religious. But, despite the best efforts of missionaries smuggled into China, Christianity didn't replace folk religion so much as be absorbed wholly

into it. Converts followed regional blends of Confucianism, Taoism, ancestor veneration, Buddhism, and their preferred selection of pantheistic immortals. And when the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom swept through southern China, it was in the name of one of those syncretic Christianities. Christians, as a whole, received a large portion of the blame for the United Kingdom's intervention in the Taiping Rebellion, and converts quickly became unwelcome in their communities. Christianity was inferior, western, and unpatriotic. Worse, it came with opium as a price tag.

Following two opium wars (exacerbated by the Taiping Rebellion), the United Kingdom collected Hong Kong at the point of a gunboat. Chinese changelings, who had been quietly filtering into a growing community, found themselves abruptly cut off from the rest of their home. Some had begun putting down roots, but the Dragon Court was established to govern a transient population: temporarily embarrassed craftsmen and scholars, who were simply working towards what they needed to restore their family's regard. Suddenly, the western shipping trade was more than just business.

British rule offered security and oppression in equal measure, providing a continuity of infrastructure and economy that withstood a century of civil unrest in China, on the back of *causing* its fair share of that unrest. Human Han Chinese immigrants were increasingly shut out of Hong Kong's governance, but few western changelings identified strongly enough with Hong Kong to return there. Despite devastating losses of life in the many wars and armed conflicts that followed, that imbalance meant that Hong Kongese changelings retained a great deal of sovereignty. Actively against the will of those few British changelings who returned (or chose to emigrate), intending to install themselves as the supernatural as well as mundane authority in Hong Kong. But the Seasonal Courts were deeply unpopular among the far more populous and better organized Hong Kongese changelings. Each new wave of colonialists tried to reintroduce the western courts (occasionally with a light dusting of "oriental" influence). The British would appoint leadership from within their own number, then attempt to "reconcile with" the local courts. There was even an attempt to deliberately stamp out Chinese courts and enforce a European standard following WWII. But British societies were routinely ignored. They were constantly denied access to people, trods, the spoils of visits to the Hedge, and were effectively sidelined in city politics. In time, their members gradually joined the Dragon Court instead. There, at least, leadership wasn't hereditary. They had an outside opportunity to advance.

Hong Kong wasn't intended to be a sanctuary city, but stability (regardless of the cause) is good for business. So when the people's revolution started, the British didn't turn away anyone who happened to have financial stakes in Hong Kong, or valuable higher education. Once the first wave settled in, anyone who had something to lose found a reason to visit family on the other side of the demilitarized zone. Like human refugees, the changelings that fled the PRC left with nothing. Any hint that a "visitor" might plan not to return was met with violence, and a dual-fae nature was no more likely to save your life than innocence was. Fleeing to British Hong Kong might seem like giving up sovereignty for safety, but that only seems like a bad deal if you haven't spent a century trying to maintain a family line while navigating other people's wars. Forced to build yet more new identities, changelings wrapped themselves in human culture, and integrated.

Now, Hong Kong is an ambivalent part of the emerging Pearl River Delta megacity, part of China, but not quite. Sovereign, but only until 2047. Beijing is making its presence known in ways both large and small. Journalists disappear, though less frequently than in mainland China.

Phones are bugged, though less obviously and flagrantly. Pro-China government officials are elected by improbable margins, but not to every post, and they don't always win. Changelings are finding that their societies are being infiltrated, too, by citizens eager to remake Hong Kong's court into a mirror of Beijing's.

The Dragon Court

The Seasonal Courts never stuck in the 89th Pavilion.

The trouble was that everything about the Western Court structure was wrong. It bore little resemblance to the Confucian imperial court, and few Hong Kong residents thought of themselves as anything but Chinese. The five phases divide the year into a different number of seasons, each with a different community function and emotional resonance. Later, the revolution made western trappings a dangerous affectation. And, of course, four is the unluckiest number, a preemptive admission of defeat when the courts of Hong Kong should be doing what they can to compound the luck of their changelings.

Escaping Arcadia in the first place was evidence of good fortune, and a careful changeling has the potential to build a stable future on that seed of luck. Accordingly, the Dragon Court offers stability, and the aura of luck. Power is never transferred from society to society, but held in balance by the nine children of the dragon. There are three societies — Morning, Day, and Night — who each contribute three delegates to the court. The selection of delegates is a private decision held within each society, but societies are encouraged to choose delegates who are willing to squabble amongst themselves: changelings as devoted to the health of the city as a whole as they are to the roles their society fills in Hong Kong. The eldest of all delegates is considered the first among equals, and holds largely organizational authority. A changeling may find, as they age or as their life circumstances change, that their affiliation will as well. Status in one society doesn't carry over to others, but changelings will remember where they last heard your name.

The Dragon Court is more a throwback to a romanticized past than an authentic tradition carried from the Qin dynasty, but the Romance of the Three Kingdoms holds roughly the same place in Chinese pop culture that Arthurian legend holds in the west. It's a narrative that unites a very diverse community, grounding them in the same Confucian ideals that pervade mundane society. Modern Hong Kongese changelings are as likely to find it comforting as confining.

Society of Morning

The Society of Morning holds domain over birth, growth, and discovery of the new. They are the most likely to actively search for changelings stumbling out of Arcadia, and to pump them for information about experiences or knowledge gained there. They are messengers and seekers after novelty for its own sake. They are eager to find information, and are confident that the usefulness of that information will be made clear in the course of its discovery. Restless pursuit yielded distressing news, though. They have reason to believe societies from Beijing are attempting to infiltrate all three of the Hong Kong Societies.

Changelings who join the Society of Morning tend to be idealistic and driven, but easy to anger or distract.

Mantle Effects: The Morning Mantle is as bright and sharp as a sunrise. The air around the courtier smells of new things — doors and windows thrown open for the first time, in a long-

empty house. The courtier herself flickers, dancing in place like a flame, eager to be moving, eager to consume.

Your character gains a Glamour point whenever she gains new knowledge through reckless pursuit.

- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls for gathering information on a new (to you) subject.
- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls related to instability or impermanence.
- Regain a point of Willpower when your character tells a truth that implicates a coworker or friend.
- Automatically succeed on attempts to persuade another changeling to share information relevant to the safety of your Freehold that they defend against mundanely; this prompts a Clash of Wills against supernatural defenses.
- Once per chapter, you may deflect one of your negative Clarity Conditions onto someone else by revealing an unknown truth about them; this doesn't heal any Clarity damage for you or grant a Beat, and they don't take any Clarity damage.

Society of Day

The Society of Day holds domain over marriage, fruition, and moderation of opposing forces. They are the most likely to be mediators in changeling conflicts, and the architects of large-scale projects. The most involved in day-to-day maintenance of Hong Kong, they tend to cultivate the sources Morning changelings use to gain new knowledge, and find a place for those people in the 89th Pavilion. Many changelings have Day to thank for their homes and jobs. Many changelings owe Day favors.

Changelings who join the Society of Day tend to be practical and ambitious, but overconfident.

Mantle Effects: The Day Mantle is warm and thrumming, welcoming but demanding. The ground beneath the courtier's feet feels sturdier. The air smells strongly of industry and sweat and ripe fruit. No matter how relentless the pace, the courtier himself seems peaceful and measured — planted solidly in the earth.

Your character gains a Glamour point whenever he successfully resolves a conflict between two changelings.

- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to continue a project someone else started.
- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to repair something that was nearly thrown away.
- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to mediate between hostile parties.
- Reduce the Glamour cost of Contracts by one when using them to extend or improve an existing public work.

•••• The industry of the world turns on your finger. Once per chapter, automatically find whatever minor or uncommon mundane tools are necessary for the task at hand.

Society of Night

The Society of Night holds domain over death, retreat, and the stillness of contemplation. What Morning seeks and Day maintains, Night uses. They search the records created by Morning and Day to think up new defenses, new weapons. They take point in pursuit of Huntsman and the Fae, and often shadow the Morning changelings who deliberately return to the Hedge. Night does not need to actively recruit; the most martially inclined changelings find them. Individual Night members often work more closely with changelings from other societies than they do with one another.

Changelings who join the Society of Night tend to be persistent and intelligent, but controlling and critical.

Mantle Effects: The Night Mantle is luminous and studded with stars. A dry chill fills the air and presses into your bones, pausing the frantic heat of the day. The courtier may shake in the wind, but her hand never falters while acting in the darkness.

Your character gains a Glamour point whenever she follows a hunt to its logical conclusion.

- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to research a problem your Freehold has encountered before.
- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to shadow or investigate a new informant.
- Regain a Willpower point when your character deliberately makes a difficult choice that inflicts a Condition on her.
- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots when concealing a defensive fact about yourself or your Freehold.
- When attacking a target you have previously pursued out of premeditated violence, your character deals aggravated damage.

Faces

Summer Wong

Summer grew up knowing she was special. The only surviving daughter to doting parents, she was beautiful and British educated, and fluent in Canto, Mandarin, Korean, and English. And so lucky. Why wouldn't she be offered a free fortune while strolling through Temple Street, under the flickering neon? But the booth was so much bigger on the inside, and her feet caught in the brambles underfoot. Her older sisters were waiting for her, with a heavy banbi embroidered with foxes. There were so many favors she owed them, for all the luck they had generously saved up for her. By the time she snuck back out of her sisters' house, her waistcoat had sunk into her skin, and her long brush tail swept the pavement behind her. Her parents were accepting, but distant with a daughter they remembered mainly as a failed actress. After all, she dropped out sight when most would-be actresses were building their modeling careers. After a few months of fruitless casting calls, a pale man who claimed to be an old school friend offered Summer a

strange job: Play a humei in a period soap opera, and sneak in an extra line or two he'd text her each morning, for pay so good she could move back out of her parents' home.

Xiaoming

He doesn't like to be tied down with labels. He's a companion, and a friend. Someone to bring home for lunar new year, when you can't stand another question about why you don't have a boyfriend. Someone who has just enough of an opinion about Beijing politics, but not so much as to scandalize your grandmother. Sometimes he's a law student, or wealthy from the import of some fruit you don't remember the name of. But he knows what you are, and he is, too. He keeps your secrets for as long as you want him to, as long as you don't expect to be exclusive. He travels a lot, and he thinks you'd get lonely if it was just him in your life. But what was it you were saying about your college friends? When exactly did they get it into their heads to *protest* the People's Republic? Xiaoming is certainly a spy, though for whom it's not quite clear. He has friends in Day, but also in Morning, and he spends an awful lot of time in Beijing these days.

Eddie and Alexia Siu

Eddie and Alexia technically separated about 10 years ago, but by that point their businesses were so intertwined that it didn't seem worth the trouble to actually get divorced, or move out of one another's buildings. She owns the house they still live in, he owns the Macau casino her restaurant is in. Really, it's more convenient this way. They split over society membership, actually. Eddie's human, but a builder, and Day gives him as many odd, lonely souls as he can find jobs for. Alexia came back to him, but with some aggression for which she needed Night to give her an outlet.

Places

Mei Ho House

Mei Ho House is a public-housing project turned historical building turned youth hostel, built on the remains of a catastrophic fire. These days, students can rent rooms in the same building where the KMT and CPC rioted over who could (and should) successfully unite China. That frustrated anger and lust for justice burned into the bones of the building. Emotions run hot here. Fights start faster. Arguments get pointed, and political. Just don't stay too long, or you'll regret what you said. The Society of Night rents here, and owns more than its fair share of the coffin homes throughout the city (packed full of Filipina domestic workers and intrigue.)

Ladies' Market

Tung Choi Street's Ladies' Market is an infamous tourist trap. A place to buy knockoffs of questionable provenance and DVDs of wuxia movies that came out yesterday. But you'd be surprised whose voices the songbirds sing in. Or what charms, exactly, the woman with no eyes is giving to certain men who walk past. If your mooncake has a curled message inside, the Night Society may be trying to warn you of something.

Tangerine

Seven million people are fighting for the same 100 square miles — so no one you know can afford an apartment in Hong Kong, let alone a whole single-use building. Tangerine trades in fashionable food culture during the day, and subcultures at night. Latte art and queer book signings, galaxy cakes and slam poetry, fairy cakes and actual fairies. Make it on the text chain, and you'll know when the meetups are. Meet other changelings under the watchful eyes of your

friends (rather than your employers). Meet your fetch in neutral territory. Dance with anyone you'd like, so long as you buy a few drinks and keep it civil.

Night Market

The Temple Street Night Market is an enduring monument to both a vigorously fusion food culture and the shared desire of humans and hobgoblins to siphon money off the drunk and impulsive. Share your noodles, studded with pomelo and pale blue mushrooms, with the little girl in a paper crown. Have a six-eyed fortune teller identify whether you are beset by the ghost of an ancestor, or if this is your strife year. Exorcise a demon and get your pocket picked listening to quail-faced opera singers. Haggle for a tea set with an auntie whose hair is the color of cobalt and celadon. Talk politics with the shop cats.

Lantau Island

Buffeted by strong winds and heavy fogs, and dotted with high, impassable peaks, Lantau Island is more nature park than business center. It's so picturesque you might almost overlook that entrances to the Hedge are particularly permissive here. It's easy to see how resistances could vanish into the valleys between Phoenix and Sunset peaks, both accidentally and on purpose. In fact, during WWII it was a major base of operations for the Chinese resistance. From hiding places in those deep glades, they conducted raids, ambushes, and resupplying missions into both Japanese and Fae-controlled territories. These days, a few formerly British changelings maintain a sparsely attended Seasonal Court in exile out in the hills.

[MIKE: THERE ARE A BUNCH OF NORDIC CHARACTERS IN HERE. I CHECKED THEM BY CHANGING THE TEXT TO GOUDY OLD STYLE IN WORD, AND DIDN'T SEE ANY WHITE BOXES. IF THEY'RE ACTUALLY A PROBLEM IN INDESIGN, THOUGH, LET ME KNOW AND I'LL CHANGE THEM.]

The Council of Elves

Reykjavík, Iceland

It is not a large city, numbering around 130,000 people, but the name Reykjavík still carries weight among the world's freeholds. It is not an old city, having only seen just over two centuries, but the Lost have been here for much longer.

As the capital of Iceland, Reykjavík started seeing conurbation in the 19th century, but it was in the 20th century that most of it was built. With a reasonably mild climate, the place is green in summer despite being just south of the Arctic Circle. It was the center of the cordial Allied occupation during WWII, and afterwards, the winds of fortune were at the city's back, making it a wealthy place. With hot springs and a lively nightlife, it is a popular tourist destination. It is also a place where over half the population are at least ambivalent to the existence of "the hidden people" and elves.

It is not a place without conflict, though. Like other European countries, xenophobia has been on the rise lately, and there's an underlying current of sentiments that foreigners want harm to come to Iceland.

Glossary

Álfheimur: Arcadia

elf: changeling

Elf-Kings: True Fae

Hidden: All the peoples touched by Arcadia in general; the Fae-Touched in particular

lag, (pl. lög): court, literally “community” or “society”

troll: hobgoblin

Historiarum Obscura

In 874, the Norse arrived in Iceland, driving out the Celtic Christian Papar monks. In 891, Gyða Hjalmsdóttir became the first Icelander to escape from Álfheimur — Arcadia. The changeling Council of Elves reckons its founding from this year. That and following events are all recorded in the Álfasögur, penned by Gyða herself from 892 to 1056, and then by other changeling hands until the modern era.

In 921, enough changelings — or elves — had escaped from Álfheimur to found the First Council of Elves, and they waged war upon the Svartabeinar tribe, of which nothing more is known, until the Svartabeinar were driven from Iceland. In 1007, the First Council fell apart amidst strife related to Iceland's conversion to Christianity, and the Second Council of Elves was convened in 1009 after a short, but bloody, period of war among the elves.

In 1262, Iceland fell under the Norwegian crown, and representatives of the Council of Elves traveled to Bergen to swear allegiance to King Hákon Hákonarson. It was here that the elven maiden Iðunn was said to have placed the king under a spell, dooming him to a swift death if his lust for conquest could not be tamed. He died the next year.

A long period of Norwegian and then Danish rule followed for Iceland, and the Lost grew stronger in number and power, wielding their magics with subtlety and grace to protect their own. In 1597, the young twins Brynja and Skúli returned from the Hedge, and their cunning trickery and heroic exploits became one of the most enduring and fondly remembered legends of Iceland's elves. It was they who overthrew the corrupt King Eiríkur and founded the Third Council of Elves, and they are often associated with the council in art and poetry.

Since the fall of the corrupted Second Council, life was relatively easy for Iceland's changelings. Against the Gentry — known here as the Elf-Kings — the council provided a relatively unified front, cemented by tradition and a cordial relationship with their mortal neighbors. Terror and loss mars Lost lives wherever they may be lived, of course, but less here than most places.

All that is now changing. The lög can no longer depend on their numbers being mostly Icelandic, and the isolated, pastoral lifestyle that the Council of Elves was founded alongside has been swept away. For the elves, change is not a good thing — “things were about as good as they could get” is the consensus, and any change is only going to bring danger. And the danger has manifested itself — as the population of Iceland grew more and more urbanized, more changelings have been captured by Huntsmen or Loyalists. Today, most Icelanders, elves included, live in Reykjavík and its surrounding region, and the Elf-Kings have a far-smaller area to cover to find their escaped pets.

Icelandic folklore says that elves are invisible or hidden in such a way that they can choose to whom they appear. They would be surprised to find that elves are living among them as normal people. The council has generally had good relations with mortals. The mortal population of

Iceland has mostly left alone those places that elves considered their property, or sacred. In return, the council has done what it could to help with different issues, such as making sure the fish were tasty and plentiful. This informal compact still stands, but the council is worried that it won't last much longer, as fewer and fewer Icelanders report believing in elves each year.

Dotted across Iceland are portals to the Hedge in large numbers, each marked with a pile of stones to make them easier to find. Many of them were created by individual Lost, and open near their personal Hollows. This practice makes it easier to find a Hedgeway in Iceland by far, and even some mortals can direct a visitor to a stone pile believed to be a home to elves. This practice has endured in part because mortals respect these markings, and avoid disturbing them. The council keeps relations with some mortal experts to let the mortal population know which places are claimed, and some among the Lost also act as publicly known “elf experts.”

Hobgoblins are called trolls among Iceland's Lost, and they are larger and more powerful than hobgoblins elsewhere. However, if the rays of the mortal sun strike a troll, it turns to rock.

The Seasonal Lög

The Council of Elves is a loosely organized community made up of four wings: the Seasonal Societies, or lög. Each lag is a part of the greater whole, and each is responsible for administrative duties during their season. The lög do not have strict leaderships, instead convening for trials where different courses of action are debated and judged based on precedent, and then decided by an arbitrarily selected jury.

Two lög are decidedly more powerful than the others: Summer and Winter are the two main seasons of Iceland, with Spring and Autumn being minor in comparison. The Summer and Winter Lög each have about twice as many members as Spring and Autumn, and they administer the council's affairs for twice as long. Because of this, Spring and Autumn often try to set aside their differences and join up to get an equal say.

Spring

Iceland is no longer what it once was. It once was poor, but now is wealthy, though not as much as it was before 2008's economic crisis. It once was alone, but now is part of the world. It once was a pastoral, farming-and-fishing culture, but now it is a modern and technologically advanced country.

The Spring Lag embraces the new and scoffs at the old. They are technophiles, addicted to their smartphones and Facebook pages, and consider themselves part of a wider, European changeling society — the capital city of which is Reykjavík, of course. They are the ones who communicate elven needs to the Icelandic authorities via a select few “elf experts,” and they are the ones who clean up the Winter Lag's mess by cataloging all felled trolls and removing the remains — a troll caught in sunlight, dead or alive, turns into stone, and these stones must be cleared away.

The Spring Lag does not believe in tradition. Tradition holds progress back, they say, and look how much better and more comfortable everyone's lives are now! Things were boring before — life was tedious, and led to nothing but an early grave.

Your character gains a Glamour point whenever he convinces someone to abandon a pre-established plan.

- Gain the benefits of the Direction Sense Merit (p. XX).

- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to research something new with modern technology.
- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to sway a crowd into abandoning a longstanding tradition.
- Regain a Willpower point whenever you resolve the Fragile or Volatile Condition (p. XX) for a plan you created with a Build Equipment action.
- Your character can speak and understand all present-day mundane languages, but must still learn how to read and write them normally.

Summer

Summer is the season of toil. There are fields to till, fish to catch, and firewood to chop. The house must be repaired, and all other practical concerns must be attended to, because even though the weather is mild and relatively pleasant now, winter will come. But it is also the time to enjoy life, and to sit under a sunlit sky and relax.

That is what summer means in Icelandic culture. In the modern age, all these things are no longer true — surviving winter means getting in a car and going to work, just like all the other seasons. Nevertheless, the past and its trials is not too far off, and even culture cleaves to the past more than mortals do.

The Summer Lag is generally friendly and helpful, but also stubborn and hidebound. They embrace modernity in their own fashion, and strongly support what they consider to be traditional Icelandic values: democracy, equality, rule of law, and isolationism, both from the world and from mortals. They are the workhorses of the Lost, doing all the practical details that need to be done, balancing budgets and maintaining the elven census, along with lists of elven properties and how much tax each changeling owes to the Council.

Your character gains a Glamour point whenever she takes a big risk to fulfill an obligation to perform a task.

- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to uphold a law or rule.
- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to shield mortals from the truth of fae magic.
- Once per chapter, you may spend a Willpower point to grant your character additional dots of the Allies or Status Merit (p. XX) equal to her Mantle dots, to a maximum of five per ally group or organization, for the scene.
- Increase your character's effective Resolve by one when using it to contest mundane or supernatural persuasion attempts.
- Once per chapter, you may redistribute your motley's total current Willpower points among all willing members in any combination.

Autumn

They are the last outpost before all hope is gone. Autumn is a melancholy season, filled with wistfulness and regret and beautiful decay. Things die, and it is the Autumn Lag's role to play to put all the Council's affairs in order, because they will all die before the year is up.

Cheerful is one thing the Autumn Lag is not. While they know they will survive winter, they believe that the Elf-Kings will come riding out from Álfheimur any day now and end the little haven the Lost carved out. Russia will invade some day; there will be nuclear war, and the Gulf Stream is going to turn around, plunging Iceland into eternal chaos. Or, as some think, the EU is going to destroy Iceland and salt the earth.

They are not the most practically-minded lag, but they make that up in art and entertainment. They are the beautiful lag, focused on aesthetics and emotion. Their administration is marked by rites and remembrances, holy days and festivities — and above all, by a pessimistic mood. Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you might die.

Your character gains a Glamour point whenever he succeeds at an unnecessarily risky action.

- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to research something that happened in the past that's relevant to current events.
- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to convince someone to admit their feelings about something they're reluctant to share.
- Once per chapter, you may reroll an Initiative roll and choose which result to keep.
- Once per scene, regain a Willpower point when your character suffers a dramatic failure.
- Whenever your character suffers a wound penalty, you may increase that penalty by one to allow an ally to increase her Initiative by your character's Mantle dots, once per turn. This effect is cumulative, but your character can't suffer a wound penalty that exceeds -5.

Winter

In Iceland, respecting nature is something every child learns. And while all seasons can be lethal to the foolhardy, or the very unlucky, winter is the season that can most easily kill. While the cities and settlements are safe, only those with the experience to survive and the knowledge of when not to take the risk should brave the wilderness in winter.

The Winter Lag embodies this duality, the calm and uneventful days when the farmer and fisherman stay indoors, and the unexpected death when things suddenly go wrong far away from help. They are the warriors of the Council of Elves, fierce and patient, given to sudden outbursts of violence, and just as suddenly calming down again. More than anyone, they hearken back to the Viking ancestors of the Icelandic people, and their casual view of violence and violent sense of fun.

Under the Winter Lag, practicalities are neglected — that's what the other seasons are for — while celebration, contemplation, and sudden death are in focus. This is when the Council of Elves stages expeditions into Álfheimur to rescue other Lost, and this is when changelings fight one another in duels to the death, or murder one another with little reason. The other lög generally do not like the Winter Lag, seeing them as a throwback to less-civilized times, but they accept that winter must have its due, even though they resent it.

Your character gains a Glamour point whenever he definitively wins a significant fight.

- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on rolls to navigate the Hedge.
- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to survive in extreme environments or endure deprivation.

- All of your character's physical attacks deal +1L damage as long as the fight is one on one and your character started it.
- Increase your character's effective Composure by one when using it to contest mundane or supernatural attempts to change your character's emotional state.
- Your character never suffers the Beaten Down Tilt (p. XX), for any reason.

Faces

Armslength

Half elf and half Greenland shark, Armslength is a taciturn and distant, but generally friendly person. If they ever had a gender, it was never strongly held, and they left it behind in Álfheimur — what is the point of bothering to have a gender identity for a shark person who will never belong in society anyway? Social constraints are for other people.

Armslength is torn between resentment at the cruelty and abuse faced at their Keeper's hand, and gratitude for the ability to breathe underwater, which leaves the ocean open to explore. It's a hatred tempered by the acknowledgement that their love for the ocean would always be a distant love without being captured.

Armslength is peaceful, more given to using their stature and razor-sharp upper teeth for intimidation than for violence. They often butt heads with Masked Jórunn over matters of war and dueling. They belong to the Autumn Lag, and generally only show up on land to participate in council trials.

Masked Jórunn

When she was in Álfheimur, Jórunn was her Keeper's mirror, and she was changed in face and body to be an exact replica of her Keeper. When she escaped, she did so by posing as the Elf-Queen, and after she escaped, the first thing she did was make a mask. Nobody has seen her face since then but her.

As one of the more notable members of the Winter Lag, Jórunn is a wrathful and warlike influence on the Council of Elves. She never forgives a slight, and she seizes on and supports every suggestion of martial action.

Krzysztof Kowalczyk

Out of all of Reykjavík's Lost, nobody is as thoroughly Icelandic as Krzysztof. Though he is a Polish immigrant and speaks with a thick accent, he loves Iceland with all his heart. He uses the most ingrown old turns of phrase, and cooks all the traditional dishes for the Autumn Lag's festivities, despite being of the Summer Lag himself. He loves nature, and spends a great deal of time outdoors.

He is a popular man, surrounded by friends, lively and quick to laugh, a workhorse who takes more than his share and who expects hard work from everyone around him. He is made of solid ice, and vapes constantly.

Rúna Tryggvisdóttir

Seven feet tall, long-limbed, and excruciatingly thin, Rúna is the most accomplished programmer and computer expert among the Council of Elves. As a member of the Spring Lag, she constantly argues in favor of integrating more and more technology into the council's workings. She's

abrasive and arrogant, and does not do any physical labor if she can avoid it (“I’m so thin and fragile, you just want to break me!”) despite being no less strong or sturdy than most elves. She does not get along with Krzysztof at all.

Rúna has been known to dabble in illicit activities, but it goes further than most people expect. She is involved in money laundering and fraud, and has also made decent bank hacking foreign governments and selling their information. Despite being a lazy creature at heart, Rúna is fiercely loyal to her community. She’ll die for them if need be — she just won’t do any work for them.

Places

Hafnarhúsið

Meaning Harbor House, Hafnarhúsið was established in the mid-20th century as a permanent headquarters for the Council of Elves. Outside, it is a small and unassuming structure, just a normal house overlooking the harbor, but inside, it serves as a mixture of administrative building and social club for Reykjavík’s changelings. Here, beings made of living song converse with the big bad wolf over a beer and a video game to the sounds of their comrades practicing swordfighting. And, in the basement, sits the courthouse of the Council, in use to settle any and every elven matter throughout three of the four seasons.

Rauðhólar

The Rauðhólar, or Red Hills, are a series of volcanic craters in the Heiðmörk nature reserve, and elven folklore holds it to be the site of the old Svartabeynar stronghold. Today, the Council of Elves considers it a cursed area, ever since it was used as a gravel pit during World War II. The Svartabeynar buried their dead in the craters themselves, and now that the craters have been damaged, the dead rest uneasily. While mortals are quite safe, elven visitors occasionally simply vanish without a trace, and some who have traveled there at night report strange lights and sounds.

Þingvellir

As the seat of Iceland’s government for almost 900 years, Þingvellir was also where the Council of Elves convened for a long time. These days, the place, 40 kilometers away from Reykjavík, is a major tourist destination, and one of the main sources of anger and frustration at the mortal population by the Council. They have as much right to it as anyone, they believe, and the mortal tourists have forced the Council to meet elsewhere to keep their privacy.

The Autumn Lag in particular points to this sad state of affairs, Iceland’s heart and soul turned into a tawdry spectacle for visiting masses, as a sign of the times. Þingvellir, they say, is proof that Iceland has lost itself and is on its way to the grave as a nation. Might as well move the Alþingi to Geneva and get it over with, they grumble.

The University of Iceland

While most Icelanders think of elves as being mainly concerned with wilderness regions, the Spring Lag actually holds the University of Iceland as its most sacred place. Dozens of trods dot the campus, and many Hollows can be found in the local Hedge, where members of the Spring Lag can spend time in quiet and solitude while surrounded by the atmosphere of progress and sacred higher learning.

When spring arrives, the Spring Lag prefers to convene the Council for trials here at night, annoying many other elves, who would prefer to meet more privately and comfortably in the safety of Hafnarhúsið. However, on this, the Spring Lag will not give in — they are often pragmatic and not overly concerned with matters of sanctity, but this place is genuinely holy to them, and they hold it in reverence.

Hard-a-Lee

Ipswich, Massachusetts

Massachusetts' north shore is full of fishing towns. Old, New-England-style saltbox houses are both residences for the year-rounders and tourist attractions for the summer crowds. Ipswich, founded in 1634, boasts poets and politicians among its notable citizens. Visitors come to stroll through the John Whipple House for a glimpse of life in colonial America, sun themselves at Crane Beach, or get their fill of fresh seafood at any of several clam shacks. While many of the town's permanent residents now commute into Boston for work, the fishing industry is still alive and well. More than a few families have been going out on the sea for generations.

A significant portion of those seafarers aren't entirely human.

In caves and coves along the shore, fae-blooded people — whose Masks hide webbed fingers and gills and scales from mortal sight — mine the earth and the Hedge for faerie metals, which abound in the area. The changeling freehold of Hard-a-Lee does regular business with them, trading for the precious material and acting as both brokers and bouncers when outsiders come seeking the treasure. Though the freehold's founders were locals, a high percentage of the Lost currently in town started out as summer people, taken by the Gentry in the midst of their vacations.

Historiarum Obscura

Though white colonists gave them names like "Asrai" and "knucker," taken from European folklore, these piscatory fae were known to the Agawam tribe long before John Winthrop the Younger sailed in on the *Arbella*. Chief Masconomet's people traded with the fae, though little remains of the items crafted from that era.

Stories from English colonists in the late 1600s tell of kelpies lurking about the shores of the Ipswich River, selkies splashing about in Plum Island Sound, or beautiful Asrai women leaving their cold, cold handprints on enamored fishermen's arms. Most of these tales were shrugged off as superstition, but it didn't deter curious sorts from lurking about on the shore, hoping to stumble across a selkie's discarded skin.

As the town expanded, keeping themselves separate and hidden from the humans became nearly impossible. Far simpler, realized the faerie miners, to hide in plain sight as townsfolk. But how would a passel of fishlike fae take up residence in such a small town without being noticed?

With a shipwreck, of course.

They crafted their vessel from driftwood and lashed it together with seaweed. The sails were made from the full moon's shimmer on the Atlantic. The ship never even sailed into Ipswich Bay — only its pieces, and its waterlogged "passengers" appeared, the morning after a fierce nor'easter. All was lost in the wreck, they claimed: the ship's manifests, the cargo, their worldly

goods, the captain and crew. The people of Ipswich took them in, and helped them get back on their feet. And so, the fae came to the fishing town.

Not only did they live and work among the mortals, the fae took human lovers and spouses. The descendants of those families tend the mines to this day, venturing underwater or deep within the Hedge to coax rare fae-tinged minerals and metals from the earth.

Such substances attract attention.

As trinkets and tools made from the faerie metals spread beyond the North Shore — through the colonies and, eventually, the states; to other parts of the world via ship and train and air; to other *worlds* via trods and other magical means — the collectors began to appear. Wized Artists came seeking new materials to work with. Elemental Helldivers offered their skills in the mines in exchange for somewhere safe to call home. Fairest commissioned pieces that matched their own beauty.

Like many poorly kept secrets, the proliferation of the metal drew more dangerous parties to Ipswich as well. A delicate crown, woven from thin strands of the metal and adorned with seashells, was gifted to a fine lady of the Gentry. Exactly *who* presented it to her remains a subject of much speculation, but the result was an influx of the True Fae and their emissaries venturing forth from Arcadia to acquire more of the precious metal.

The presence of the Gentry in Ipswich has, over the years, become akin to hurricane warnings for mortals: a real and imminent danger, but one that's survivable, and whose damage can be mitigated with the proper preparation. In 1873, the freehold of Hard-a-Lee was formed as just such a precaution. The freehold takes its name from a sailing term describing the command to steer into the wind. The changelings who made their homes in and around Ipswich, who survived their durances and made it out of the Hedge, were damned if they were going to flee to avoid their former captors. Nor would they allow anyone to be retaken.

The sea shanties that record Hard-a-Lee's history sing of the changelings and the Asrai banding together to rebuff Huntsmen who'd come demanding tribute. The result was a bargain with the Gentry: In exchange for a regular delivery of the metal, the True Fae would take no servants from among the residents of Ipswich — human or Asrai.

But there's always a loophole.

Hard-a-Lee was still a relatively small freehold until the mid-1900s heralded a rise in tourism. An influx of summer visitors meant the Gentry had new victims they could claim — after all, the summer people weren't permanent residents, and therefore weren't protected under the terms of the bargain. The Queen of Summer Tides has tried to renegotiate the deal in years past, but to no avail. Now, many of the freehold's members are people who were taken while their families visited on vacation. They returned through the Hedge to find their loved ones long gone, back to their homes and jobs and lives. Many of them wait to see if they'll return the next summer, only to find that, when they do, a fetch has taken their place.

The Court of Tides

For mortals and changelings alike, life in Ipswich depends on the sea. The tides not only affect the fishing industry, but also when and how the mines full of faerie metal can be accessed. For changelings whose miens don't allow them to breathe underwater, the caves are off limits when the tide comes in. Those with webbed fingers and gills, however, may join the Asrai at work

even when the mines are flood with dark, salty water. Hard-a-Lee swore oaths to the Court of Tides for fair winds, abundant catches, and, when the situation calls for it, crashing waves and rip currents.

High Tide

The waves pound away at the shore, destroying carefully built sandcastles, washing forgotten sandals and buckets out to sea. When the tide comes in, land yields to water, and when it recedes, it takes a bit of the beach with it.

The Court of High Tide is most often viewed as the strongest of the Ipswich Courts. Those who swear fealty to it are forces of nature themselves, with strong personalities and implacable wills. Some of its members confront their foes like strong waves, knocking down anyone who dares stand in their paths. Others prefer to wait, working their will so subtly their opponents don't realize they've lost until the tide's already on its way out. Changelings who join this court are often the first line of defense against the True Fae and their minions.

The Mantle of a High Tide courtier evokes the smell of salt and the cries of seagulls. Warm sea breezes stir the air around her.

Your character gains a Glamour point whenever she opens someone's last Door in Social maneuvering (p. XX).

- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to inflict Tilts on opponents.
- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to undermine someone's authority or respect among their peers.
- Once per chapter, you may reroll a mundane roll that uses a Power Attribute and choose which result to keep.
- Automatically succeed on attempts to break through mundane barriers or otherwise deal with inanimate impediments.
- Enemies of lower Wyrð than your character take a two-die penalty to attacks against her.

Ebb Tide

With the tide on its way out, the beaches fill again. Families spread their blankets further, children adorn their castles with drizzles of wet sand. It's the calm after the storm, now that the waves aren't so tall.

When the Court of Ebb Tide rules, quiet reigns. Though the Court of Tides doesn't always hew to the seasons, Ebb Tide Queens often take to their thrones in the latest part of the summer, when cool breezes on the heels of hot ones signal autumn's approach, and when some quality of the sunset from mid-August on fills tourists with nostalgia for the summer even as they're still on vacation. Ebb Tide courtiers are often matter of fact, approaching bargains and proposals with a skeptical eye.

Many changelings join this court when they first escape Arcadia. The sense of summer just out of reach reminds them of the lives they once led, and offers hope that they'll return to those lives when the tide returns, even though that's rarely the case.

The Mantle of an Ebb Tide courtier evokes a feeling of calm. The sound of waves lapping gently on the shore follows them.

Your character gains a Glamour point whenever he successfully talks an individual down from a fight.

- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to persuade someone based on shared past experiences.
- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to defuse a tense group situation.
- Once per chapter, you may reroll a mundane roll to negotiate a deal or pledge and choose which result to keep.
- Increase your character's effective Composure by one when using it to contest mundane or supernatural attempts to make your character lose her cool.
- Enemies take a penalty equal to your character's Mantle dots to their Initiative bonuses.

Low Tide

The water is as far from shore as it ever gets, the sea fled for a time. Clams push toward the surface for a bit of air, only to be dug up and cooked for a delicious dinner. The sands lay uncovered; debris that was left behind by the tide dries in the sun.

The Court of Low Tide attracts changelings of a gentler disposition, but equating "gentle" with "weak" is unwise. Lost who join this court are adept at digging up secrets and exposing them, bringing down their foes without ever having to confront them in person. This court also handles the majority of the dealings with the Asrai, keeping track of expeditions to the mines and managing sales of the metal drawn from them.

The Mantles of Low Tide courtiers often manifest as a briny seaweed scent on the wind. They leave the impression of footprints in wet sand in their wake.

Your character gains a Glamour point whenever she successfully uses secrets to foil someone's plans.

- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to investigate someone's dirty secrets.
- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to blackmail or coerce someone using information she dug up herself.
- Regain a Willpower point whenever your character definitively profits from her position as a go between for two other parties.
- All clues your character turns up in an investigation gain an additional element (p. XX).
- Another character with a Leveraged Condition (p. XX) that your character inflicted must capitulate to *two* of her demands before they can resolve it.

Flood Tide

Just as the tide goes out, it comes in again. The sea swells and encroaches, sandbars disappear, and the beaches feel more crowded as sunbathers are pushed closer together. Where Ebb Tide is

the calm after the storm, Flood Tide is the feeling of clouds gathering beforehand and the air growing heavy with the promise of rain.

Members of the Court of Flood Tide are perpetually engaged. Whether it's planning gatherings for the other courts, checking up on the newly freed Lost, or following up on the freehold's needs, these changelings always have a full calendar. Other courts joke that when the Huntsmen come looking for them, the Lost of the Flood Tide are simply too *busy* to get caught. The real truth is that the Flood Tide courtiers *never stop running*.

The Mantle for a Flood Tide courtier is a sharp spring breeze and the creak of boats against their moorings.

Your character gains a Glamour point whenever a plan he built as equipment (p. XX) goes off without a hitch.

- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to find a safehouse or shelter away from home.
- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to make friends in a new place he's never been.
- Once per chapter, you may spend a Willpower point to grant your character additional dots of the Etiquette Merit (p. XX) equal to her Mantle dots, to a maximum of five, for the scene.
- Once per chapter, you may reroll a mundane roll that uses a Finesse Attribute and choose which result to keep.
- Once per chapter, you may spend a Willpower point in place of Glamour to use portaling (p. XX).

Faces

Lacey O'Donnell

O'Donnell's Fine Arts is a tiny shop tucked away on a side street, but it's one of the first places changelings get to know when they stumble through the Hedge. Lacey knows everyone in town, and if you hang out at the shop long enough, they'll wander in eventually. She keeps several folding chairs behind the counter to accommodate the impromptu gatherings that happen every few days, and there's always a pot of tea ready for guests. Changeling artists who don't want to handle selling their creations display their wares in Lacey's store, and a cut of the proceeds goes to help newly escaped Lost get back on their feet.

Lacey's been the Ebb Tide Queen nearly a quarter of a century, and she's hardly aged a day.

Old Bartholomew

To hear him tell it, the silver thread connecting this craggy-faced Helldiver to his Keeper got snapped when he was swallowed by a whale. He came out of the Hedge covered in krill and never looked back. Nowadays he can be found out in the mines, coaxing bright ores from the earth like he did during his durance, but on his own terms. It's hard to tell which of his features are his Elemental mien, and which are simply years of salt and wind making their mark.

Changelings who make their living in the caves often start out under Old Bart's tutelage. He knows the best spots for ore, how long you can keep working a vein until the tide comes in, and where the Hedge encroaches upon the mines. No one's ever been lost on his watch.

Aunt Peg

Peg's never had family. Not a human one, anyway, but that's all right. She's adopted the changelings of Hard-a-Lee to make up for it. Peg's older than anyone's guessed, one of the last full-blooded Asrai left in Ipswich. Her memories get patchy the farther back she thinks, and anything that came before the Agawam people is lost. Mostly, she doesn't bother, much more interested in the world as it is now.

She's an older woman, weak-chinned and whiskered, more fishlike the closer you get. Her body bears the scars of Huntsmen's swords, blades she caught defending the Lost under her protection. Rumor has it the last time a Huntsman came to town, he turned tail the moment he caught sight of Peg bearing down on him.

She's can often be found at O'Donnell's, both socializing and standing guard.

The Shipwright

Danny Doyle came out of the Hedge three years ago. He's not yet 30, though his hair's gone white and wispy. His durance was short, as far as he recalls — surely no more than a year or two. Yet when last he saw Ipswich, Massachusetts was a colony. Catching up to the modern world has been a slow process for him, one he's still working on. Some days are easier than others, and often it's too overwhelming. He keeps to himself as best he can, living on a fishing boat most of the year and ferrying miners to the caves. In the off season, he repairs ships for the locals, bringing centuries-old techniques to modern crafts. For the right price, he'll take a group of changelings out onto the ocean, to a spot where the water gives way to the Hedge, and strange fish can be pulled up from the depths.

Places

The Mines

In caverns hidden in the rocky hills inland, in coves whose entrances appear when the tide goes out, or whose mouths require a long-held breath and a deep dive to reach, in still others that require a trip through the Hedge, lie rich veins of metals human smiths have only dreamed of: bright as silver, strong as steel, light as gossamer. Ores mined from here have been used to make armor and daggers as often as they've been made into rings and crowns, and any piece crafted from the faerie metals is deeply valued.

While the early Asrai knew the locations of every mine, some of the entrances have been lost over the centuries. In some cases, the Hedge has shifted, denying access to shafts that meander through it. In others, simple human expansion has hidden them as the town grew and bulldozed over the sites. Rumor has it one such entrance can still be reached beneath the Ipswich Inn, provided you can get inside undetected.

Ipswich Chowderfest and Bazaar

To tourists, the mid-October Chowderfest and Bazaar is all about the “chowdah” and the wares on sale from local vendors. For the Lost, it's also the annual Goblin Market. After the chowder tasting is done and the human families have gone home, the middle school gymnasium comes to life once more. The market hosts a taste off of its own, with chowder recipes far more daring than those available during the day.

Lacey O'Donnell hosts a stall here. Even the cloth she drapes over her table is adorned with designs in thread made from the faerie metal, and catches the eyes of browsing market-goers. Artisans from Hard-a-Lee are welcome to show their pieces at her stall, though all bargains are their own to make if they wish to sell.

Crane Wildlife Refuge

Away from the bustle of the town lies the Crane Wildlife Refuge. The area boasts both beaches and grassy fields, and is a quieter, protected patch of land. Even though it's also a destination for the summer tourists, many changelings come here for a place to get away when the beaches get crowded. Seeing carefree families on vacation can be hard for the Lost, especially the ones whose Keepers pulled them away from their own. The refuge, it turns out, isn't just for wildlife, but also for those who need a place to wander and regroup.

Castle Hill

Castle Hill has two meanings for the locals. It might reference the drumlin formation at the edge of the land — a shape resembling a half-buried egg that many believe once was (or still is) a faerie mound. It is also the location of the Crane Estate, the mansion that sits atop the mound. Both are significant to the changelings of Hard-a-Lee as meeting places, ritual sites, and on occasion, the scenes of some really great parties. After all, the summer people don't get to have *all* the fun.

Tumbledown Market

The French Market, New Orleans, Louisiana **Large Flea Markets across the United States**

Running alongside the Mississippi River at the edge of the French Quarter is New Orleans' French Market. It's part flea market, part souvenir shop, and part art show. Tourists and residents alike browse the market's wares. Anything you might need is likely to be tucked away in a stall, from T-shirts to spices to jewelry.

The French Market is also home to a Goblin Market so sprawling that it's broken the bounds of not only the alleys of shops along the river, but New Orleans itself. Used to be, the only way to enter the Goblin Market of Tumbledown was to know the secret entrance at the back of the French Market, near Barracks Street. Nowadays, it has grown so large that you can find trods in just about any large flea market in the United States that will wind up in Tumbledown.

The freehold of Fair Coin began as a motley that traded frequently in the market. Its members are mostly composed of New Orleans residents, but as Tumbledown's borders have spread, its changeling residents have accepted more out-of-towners into the fold. Tumbledown is always open for business. It's exhilarating and exhausting, a non-stop carnival even in the dead of night. Someone's *always* willing to make a deal.

Historiarum Obscura

Native Americans had established a trading post along the Mississippi River well before Europeans colonized the area. The market's location shifted occasionally, but stayed in the general vicinity. In 1791, the space that was once known as the Meat Market — the only place in the French Quarter where meat was allowed to be sold — became officially known as the French Market. It was largely an open-air market at first, with structures being added near constantly

over the next 200 years. The French Market stretches six blocks, from Café du Monde in the market's original location, down to the flea-market stalls across from the New Orleans Mint downriver.

The Goblin Market of Tumbledown began as a few stalls tucked in among the mundane vendors. A few enterprising traders sold goblin fruit alongside the everyday fruit sellers. Careful listeners might hear the details of a pledge being hammered out amidst the humans haggling for a deal.

As the French Market expanded, so did its goblin counterpart. More stalls popped up. More hobgoblins left the Hedge to hawk their wares. Shoppers came from far and wide to hunt for rare items, so many that the sellers began hiring Ogres to guard the Barracks Street entrance, letting only a handful of buyers through at a time to keep the humans from noticing.

In the late 1800s, a change rippled through Tumbledown. Where for decades, travelers came to the Goblin Market, suddenly the Goblin Market came to them. The spaces between stalls in markets across the country opened out into the humid air of New Orleans, the smell of the Mississippi and the lilt of Creole. Trods that had been closed off or forgotten opened up, their roads leading to Tumbledown. The market itself expanded, sprawling far beyond the six blocks in the French Quarter. Not only was there room for more vendors, Tumbledown became a small town all its own, with merchants and visitors pitching tents on the outskirts. Over the years, permanent structures took their places, housing inns, taverns, and storefronts. Most of them echo French Quarter architecture, even though they reside in the Hedge.

Theories explaining exactly *what* happened abound, but not a one has been proven true. One rumor tells of a massive contract negotiated with an embodiment of Commerce. Another suggests a fae merchant opened the Trods in a burst of Glamour and was never seen again. An old Wizenad, who spent all his years studying the Hedge, insisted until his dying day that the Hedge itself decided Tumbledown should exist, and so it was. The proprietor of the Sans Merci tavern hosts storytelling contests twice a year, seeking the best telling of Tumbledown's origin — it doesn't matter if it's *true*, only that it entertains.

New Orleans has other freeholds, but Tumbledown holds itself separate. The freehold of Fair Coin started with a motley whose members frequented the French Market. Elaine Beaudoin's family worked the same stall for generations, selling fresh seafood and small bites to hungry browsers. Two years after her Keeper stole her away, she returned to find her fetch bantering with her favorite customers. A nearby merchant offered her a handkerchief to catch her tears, and it took a few moments before she realized the handkerchief was made of dream-silk, and her companion had the face of a cat. She took a job with the silk seller, only a few stalls down from her family's, and traded there unseen for months before she fell in with her motley.

They were all changelings from New Orleans, several of them scouring the Goblin Market on a regular basis for Contracts that might help protect them or their families — even though those families had forgotten them, or never knew they were gone.

When Tumbledown expanded, Elaine was there. The influx of new customers, many of them Lost themselves, meant a slew of people who needed guidance and protection. When a person desperately seeks an item, Tumbledown's pull can be overwhelming. Many shoppers find themselves wandering the stalls, unsure of how they arrived but certain the answers to their problems will be found hanging from a rack or twinkling in the starlight. The freehold of Fair

Coin formed to help those travelers, to keep changelings from bartering away their hearts, their dreams, or their freedoms for deals that don't balance out.

The Traders' Court

Currency in a goblin market takes several forms, most of it heavily dependent on what the seller wants and what the buyer is willing to trade away. Coins, services, secrets, a favor to be collected later, or a dark deed done now, all are fair and valid trades. Fair Coin's loyalty is to transactions of all types. The bargains don't have to be honorable, but they do need to be honored.

The Court of Coins

The simplest transactions are completed with cold, hard cash, though that cash might more closely resemble lost doubloons or pennies gathered from the depths of a specific wishing fountain in Poughkeepsie. It has a specific value, can be counted, and can be bitten to test its realness. Change also jingles in one's pocket or purse, signifying to anyone listening for its clinking, clattering song that the carrier has riches to spend.

Members of the Court of Coins are the most straightforward of the Lost, preferring to deal in specifics and absolutes. They rarely hide behind ruses, wanting to deal straight with anyone who cares to trade with them, and expecting the same in return.

The Mantle of a Coin courtier carries with it the sound of coins shaken in deep pockets, or bills counted out from a drawer. They smell of copper and paper and ink.

Your character gains a Glamour point whenever she successfully hunts down someone who owes her something and gets it.

- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to persuade someone to make an oath (p. XX).
- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots to mundane rolls to figure out whether someone is trying to cheat her.
- Once per chapter, you may spend a Willpower point to grant your character additional dots of the Resources Merit (p. XX) equal to her Mantle dots, to a maximum of five, for the scene.
- Once per story, reduce your character's Goblin Debt by his Mantle rating.
- Once per scene, you may spend a Willpower point to learn the current heart's desire of any character present.

The Court of Barter

The farmer will let you sleep in her barn if you brush the horses. The hitchhiker tells stories to the driver who takes her from Boston to Albany, keeping him awake and entertained as the long miles pass. For a week's worth of the Fairest's beauty, the hag will help her find her long-lost love. People have bartered since time immemorial, trading their surplus to those with needed skills, and letting their trash transmute into another's treasure.

Changelings who join the Court of Barter realize that *everything* has value, even if it's hard to see. It's this court that takes in most of the newly escaped Lost, guiding them away from the stalls in Tumbledown where less scrupulous merchants will sense their desperation — for

information, for vengeance, for word of lost families. The Barter Court makes itself available to witness bargains, letting the entrants know whether their deal is fair or not. While this is generally met with approval, some sellers take it as an insult that their clients distrust them so openly.

The Mantle for a Barterer manifests in even tones and calming scents. They leave drips of sealing wax in their wake.

Your character gains a Glamour point whenever he successfully intercedes on someone else's behalf in an unfair deal.

- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to read someone's situation from their behavior.
- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to make deals and agreements in Tumbledown.
- Regain a Willpower point whenever you resolve the Oathbreaker Condition, or when someone else resolves it due to your influence or meddling.
- Once per chapter, when the Storyteller spends your Goblin Debt to impose a Condition, you may replace the Condition with another of the same general type.
- Once per chapter, you may ask the Storyteller if someone your character is dealing with has left a loophole or catch that will disadvantage him in a deal.

The Court of Favors

Jill never carries cash, but she's got great credit. Give her a few days and she'll make it up to you. If the Pie Man will part with one of his goblin-fruit tarts, Ash promises she'll bring him the finest berries from a secret shrub in the Hedge only she can find. Favors are a currency built on risk and trust on the parts of both seller and buyer. The seller trusts they'll recoup their investment; the buyer trusts that, when the bill comes due, they're not forced to pay more than what their purchase was worth.

The Lost who swear to the Court of Favors tend to be shrewd listeners and smooth talkers. They promise just enough, and know when to walk away from a bad deal. Whatever it is their business partner needs, the changeling knows a guy who can get it for him. Their networks are vast, and oathbreakers are rarely tolerated in their ranks.

Favorsworn Mantles carry with them the sound of bells tolling or hands clasping to seal a bargain.

Your character gains a Glamour point whenever she makes good on a promise she made within the same chapter.

- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to convince someone to make a bargain (p. XX).
- Gain the benefits of the Fixer Merit (p. XX) even if your character doesn't qualify.
- Other characters take a dice penalty equal to your character's Mantle dots to mundane rolls to swindle her or lie to her about a deal or promise.

.... Once per chapter, you may accept a point of Goblin Debt to pawn off an obligation from a bargain onto another changeling without being personally involved.

..... Once per chapter, you may reroll any mundane action that would pay off a favor she owes and choose which result to keep.

The Court of Shady Deals

The gentle-natured man would never do harm to another living being, but oh, how his neighbor snores at night. If only someone would pinch his nose shut. Sure, *you* don't have the Snowdrop Crown in your backpack, but if it were to find its way into it, and then to Tumbledown, well... don't you want to know if your daughter still dreams about her father? What's one more throat cut, after all the lives your Keeper made you take?

Members of the Court of Shady Deals are willing to take on the jobs most others would reject outright. They do the hard jobs, the ones that require cold logic, steady hands, and no aversion to blood. They do what's necessary. They're not sorry. The Lost who swear to this court are also the freehold's defenders. If the Huntsmen come near, they know where to hide the bodies.

Light dims around these courtiers, and the sound of knives rasping on whetstone follows them.

Your character gains a Glamour point whenever he successfully hides evidence of a dirty deed when someone comes looking for it.

- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to pick a lock or break into a place he doesn't belong.

- Gain bonus dice equal to your character's Mantle dots on mundane rolls to escape a sticky situation unnoticed.

- Your character may use Goblin Contracts without incurring Goblin Debt a number of times per chapter equal to his Mantle rating.

- You may spend a Willpower point to ignore all the effects of the Oathbreaker Condition for one turn.

- Once per chapter, you may reroll a surprise attack roll and choose which result to keep.

Faces

Wren Lamontaigne

Wren Lamontaigne was born and raised in the Crescent City. She preferred Decatur to Bourbon, could tell the time by how loudly the Preservation Hall crowd was clapping, and never, ever, wanted to leave. She was taken at 19, one minute listening to a tour guide tell his enraptured crowd about the ghosts in the Beauregard House, the next tearing through the Hedge, bits of herself catching on the thorns.

Her Keeper made her tell stories until she was hoarse, then tell more. Wren doesn't have much of a voice left, but she knows every tale there is to tell. The Lost seek her out in Tumbledown and offer her tea and honey to soothe her ragged throat. In return, she tells them stories: their own.

Charlotte Wake

Charlotte was rarely a good girl. If an elder said "don't," she heard "I dare you." *No Trespassing* signs were gilded invitations. The French Market at night, after the stalls had closed? She could

hardly resist. That first night, she wandered the empty rows, peeking beneath dropcloths and pretending to sell the wares to her imaginary friends. At 10 years old, she was the queen of the market. Until the night she snuck in through the Barracks Street gate, and found herself farther from home than her imagination had ever carried her. It was fun at first, some of the vendors as fanciful as anything she'd ever read in her fairy-tale collections. But then the Dusk Witch found her, and put her to work. Charlotte served the Dusk Witch for seven years, until the Fair Coin found her and set her free. Now she runs with them, acting as their errand girl and wreaking small havoc on the Dusk Witch's stall.

The Pie Man

One of the draws of any Goblin Market worth its salt is the goblin-fruit vendor. The Pie Man puts them all to shame. No one's ever seen him bake, but every morning his stall is filled with racks upon racks of fresh pastries and tarts, their fillings made of goblin fruits of every kind. Something in the dough or his technique enhances their effects. He refuses to share his secrets.

The best pastries are gone within minutes of him putting up his awning, so changelings who want the most potent fruits are wise to arrive at Tumbledown early.

The Tumbledown Players

What's a market without wandering musicians? The Tumbledown Players are a roving band, who range about the market hearing the latest gossip and weaving it into their songs. They serve as both rumor mill and town criers. Membership in the band rotates, and it doesn't always consist only of changelings. If a hobgoblin can carry a tune or keep time, they've been known to join the ranks now and again.

The players are also said to be able to manipulate behaviors with their music, playing songs that make people more likely to buy, or linger at a stall long enough for the shopkeeper to make the right offer.

Places

Dutch Alley

In New Orleans, Dutch Alley is a row of art galleries and exhibits, the art created by human hands. Tumbledown's Dutch Alley boasts more unusual pieces, many of them made by local changeling artists. Some are works stolen from Keepers' palaces, or from their jewelry boxes. The paintings boast colors impossible to reproduce with mundane pigments, and sculptures may once have been alive.

The Sans Merci Tavern

In the middle of a long day of shopping and bargaining, travelers may wish to sit down and grab a bite to eat. The Sans Merci has stood for over 100 years, built after Tumbledown's expansion. The chefs cater to both changeling and faerie palates, offering pints of ale and thimbles of newborn tears side by side on the menu. The Tumbledown Players and other musicians often stop in to sing for their supper and hear the latest goings-on. The proprietor, a slender, tattooed man who'd look right at home in any bar on Rue Decatur, goes only by the name of Jack. As a game, he offers a reward for anyone who can guess his last name — one guess per patron per night — but it's been a century, and no one's hit upon it.

Café du Monde

As far as you can get from the Barracks Street entrance and still be in the French Market is the 24-hour coffee and beignet stand, Café du Monde. It's a tourist attraction in New Orleans, selling squares of fried dough covered in powdered sugar, and strong chicory coffee. It's a place many of the Lost go for quiet moments away from the Market. They're surrounded by humans at all hours, and when you feel your Clarity start slipping away from too many encounters with hobgoblins and horrors, a good dose of excited tourists and jaded locals can set you back to whatever your normal is.

The Exchange

Not everyone carries the proper currency with them when they reach Tumbledown. Some come bearing braids of their true love's hair, only to find the merchants had enough of that and now wants the howl of a briarwolf in a green glass bottle. Rather than going home empty-handed, market-goers stop by the Exchange to see if they can make a swap.

The Exchange doesn't look too impressive on first glance. Boxes overflowing with what appears to be junk are piled atop one another, their contents spilling out onto the dusty ground. Cardboard produce boxes sit beside milk crates, and steam trunks with broken hinges lie open next to them. A pair of badger-faced sisters handle the transactions, sometimes arguing in hushed tones about the values and exchange rates of the items in question.