

BOOK OF FREEHOLDS

A SOURCEBOOK FOR



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Dedication

This book is dedicated to:

- ☉ Rick Carroll, who's had my back just this side of forever.
- ☉ Matt McFarland, who believed in me even when I had doubts.
- ☉ Mel Uran, who's never failed to inspire me, even before I knew her.
- ☉ Liana Lavoie, who made everything brighter and more Glamorous. If there's a Dreaming, I know that's where you are, because that's where you've always belonged.



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Dark Lights

Mercy watched the azure dragon coil against the wall, plaster falling down in chunks where the creature broke through. She could feel the Glamour in the beast, calling to her from the Dreaming.

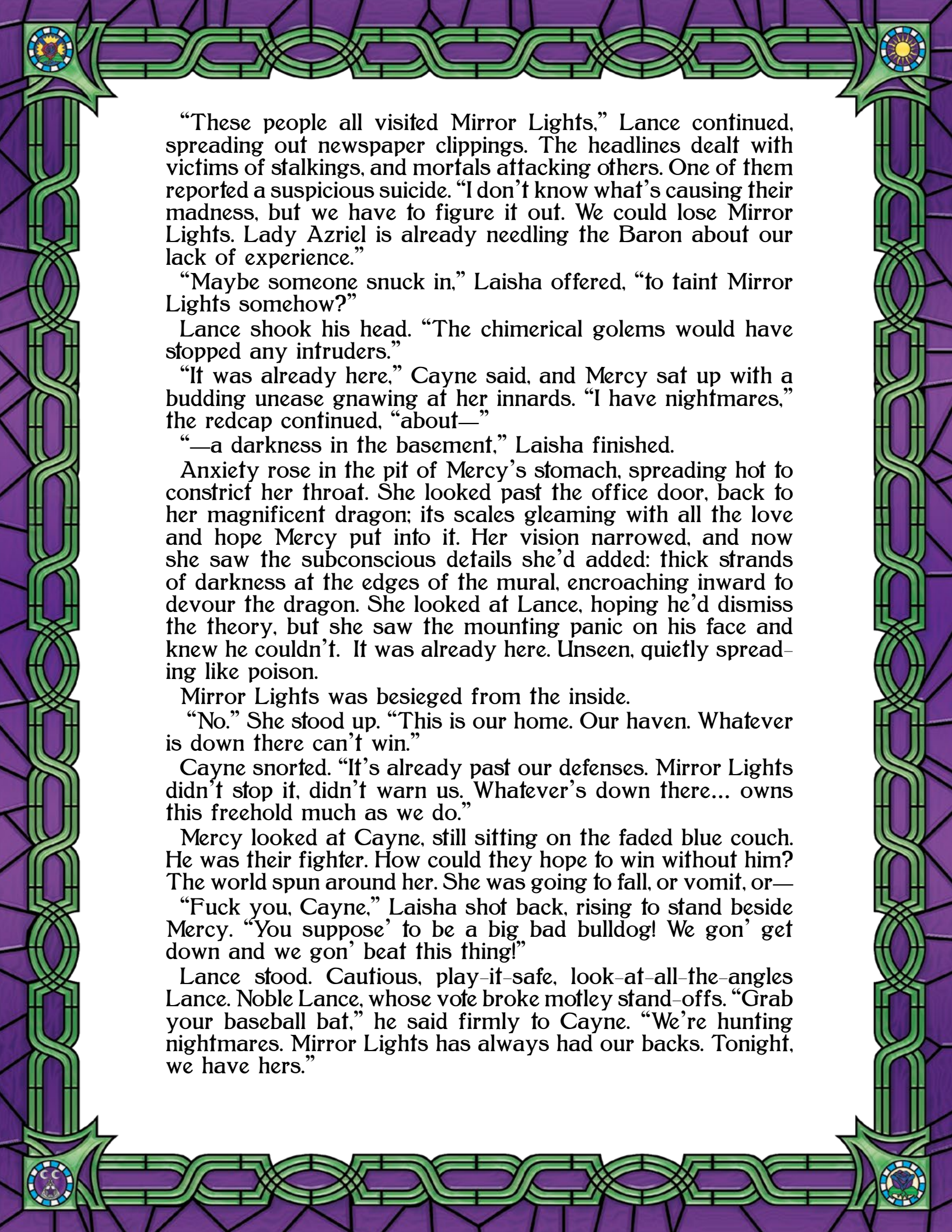
Her reverie broke abruptly as Lance called from the office backstage: "Merce, group meeting!"

The eshu sighed and put her brush down, taking one last look at the mural — it was perfect.

She found her motley already gathered and waiting for her. In her defense, Laisha and Delilah looked like they'd been in here smooching. That didn't count as arriving on time.

"More bills?" she asked Lance, hoping it was a minor problem. She was keen to return to her dragon.

The sidhe shook his head while he opened a manila folder, prompting an eye roll from Cayne, who seemed to oppose preparation on principle. "I can handle bills. I found a disturbing pattern."



"These people all visited Mirror Lights," Lance continued, spreading out newspaper clippings. The headlines dealt with victims of stalkings, and mortals attacking others. One of them reported a suspicious suicide. "I don't know what's causing their madness, but we have to figure it out. We could lose Mirror Lights. Lady Azriel is already needling the Baron about our lack of experience."

"Maybe someone snuck in," Laisha offered, "to taint Mirror Lights somehow?"

Lance shook his head. "The chimerical golems would have stopped any intruders."

"It was already here," Cayne said, and Mercy sat up with a budding unease gnawing at her innards. "I have nightmares," the redcap continued, "about—"

"—a darkness in the basement," Laisha finished.

Anxiety rose in the pit of Mercy's stomach, spreading hot to constrict her throat. She looked past the office door, back to her magnificent dragon; its scales gleaming with all the love and hope Mercy put into it. Her vision narrowed, and now she saw the subconscious details she'd added: thick strands of darkness at the edges of the mural, encroaching inward to devour the dragon. She looked at Lance, hoping he'd dismiss the theory, but she saw the mounting panic on his face and knew he couldn't. It was already here. Unseen, quietly spreading like poison.

Mirror Lights was besieged from the inside.

"No." She stood up. "This is our home. Our haven. Whatever is down there can't win."

Cayne snorted. "It's already past our defenses. Mirror Lights didn't stop it, didn't warn us. Whatever's down there... owns this freehold much as we do."

Mercy looked at Cayne, still sitting on the faded blue couch. He was their fighter. How could they hope to win without him? The world spun around her. She was going to fall, or vomit, or—

"Fuck you, Cayne," Laisha shot back, rising to stand beside Mercy. "You suppose' to be a big bad bulldog! We gon' get down and we gon' beat this thing!"

Lance stood. Cautious, play-it-safe, look-at-all-the-angles Lance. Noble Lance, whose vote broke motley stand-offs. "Grab your baseball bat," he said firmly to Cayne. "We're hunting nightmares. Mirror Lights has always had our backs. Tonight, we have hers."



INTRODUCTION

"And above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don't believe in magic will never find it."

— Roald Dahl, *The Minpins*

The greatest stories our species have told each other since we sat around campfires in prehistoric times have always involved some majestic, terrifying, *fantastical* setting. We're blown away by the likes of *Avatar*, we can believe that New Zealand really is Middle Earth, that we can get to Narnia through a wardrobe, that a cave in a swamp can make us face our darkest fears and strengthen our souls. We believe in gods and monsters, and by extension, we believe in the places where they dwell.

When we believe, we dream. When we dream, we build castles in the clouds and islands in the sky.

And those are the kinds of places the fae call home.

What This Book Is

Book of Freeholds is exactly what it says on the tin: a book about freeholds. How to build them. How to find them. How to use them. What kinds of freeholds there are. What kinds of people and environments define freeholds.

- ⑤ **Dark Lights** opens the doors into the freehold *Mirror Lights* and its holders, the Low Rollers.
- ⑤ **Introduction:** You are here now. This section includes an outline of the book, a short lexicon of terms, and the basic concepts behind freeholds.
- ⑤ **Chapter One: A Brief Study of Freeholds:** This chapter presents an abbreviated look at the history of freeholds, how their importance and forms evolved as one age of Faerie turned into the next, and how the sacred places of the Gallain differ from their Kithain cousins.
- ⑤ **Chapter Two: Building Freeholds:** The rules for creating freeholds, a breakdown of their Archetypes, and how troupes can work together to tailor-make a freehold that suits them all.
- ⑤ **Chapter Three: The Art of Freehold Maintenance:** An in-depth look at the ways a troupe can use their freehold, from how to divide the rights of a freeholder, to what common threats freeholds



face, and finally how changelings claim, maintain, destroy, and pass on their Holdings.

- ⑤ **Chapter Four: Living Dreams:** Seven completely developed freeholds, ready for troupes to use in their chronicles, complete with stat blocks and story hooks.
- ⑤ **Appendix: The Natural Order:** Freeholds are built on the foundation of Glades, and this Appendix covers the protection and development of these places, as well as offers five fully developed Glades for troupes to use in their chronicles.

lexicon

balefire — the heart of a *freehold*, refined from a natural *wellspring*, which produces Glamour.

freehold — a constructed place between the Dreaming and the Autumn World where changelings work, socialize, hold court, take refuge from Banality and travel into the Dreaming. Typically constructed atop Glades and are held by *freeholders*.

freeholder — a changeling who has bonded his soul to the balefire of a freehold and is recognized by the Dreaming as the legitimate owner. See also: *landed noble*, *Ratification*, *regent*.

Glade — a natural place where the Dreaming touches the Autumn World. Can be developed into freeholds. Glades may manifest as a number of natural Archetypes.

heartstone — the focal point of Glamour in a Glade. Often refined into balefires, heartstones manifest as a special stone, gem, or other type of mineral within their Glade.

Holding, Rights of — a set of rights and responsibilities a freeholder must observe to successfully remain in her freehold. The Rights of Holding are mystically bestowed and enforced by the Dreaming upon the freeholder's *Ratification*, and supported socially and politically by changeling society.

landed noble — a *sidhe* or ennobled kith who is also a freeholder.

Lost One — an ancient being that trapped itself in a freehold during the Shattering, and is in a permanent state of Bedlam. Since the Resurgence, the term also applies to modern changelings who fall to Bedlam as a result of spending too much time in their freehold.

rath — a portal into the Dreaming. Unlike a *trod*, a rath is a doorway that connects a single place in the Dreaming to another, such as a dream-realm, or to a place in the Autumn World, such as a freehold or Glade.

Ratification — the moment in which a changeling bonds to their balefire, swears their oaths as a free-

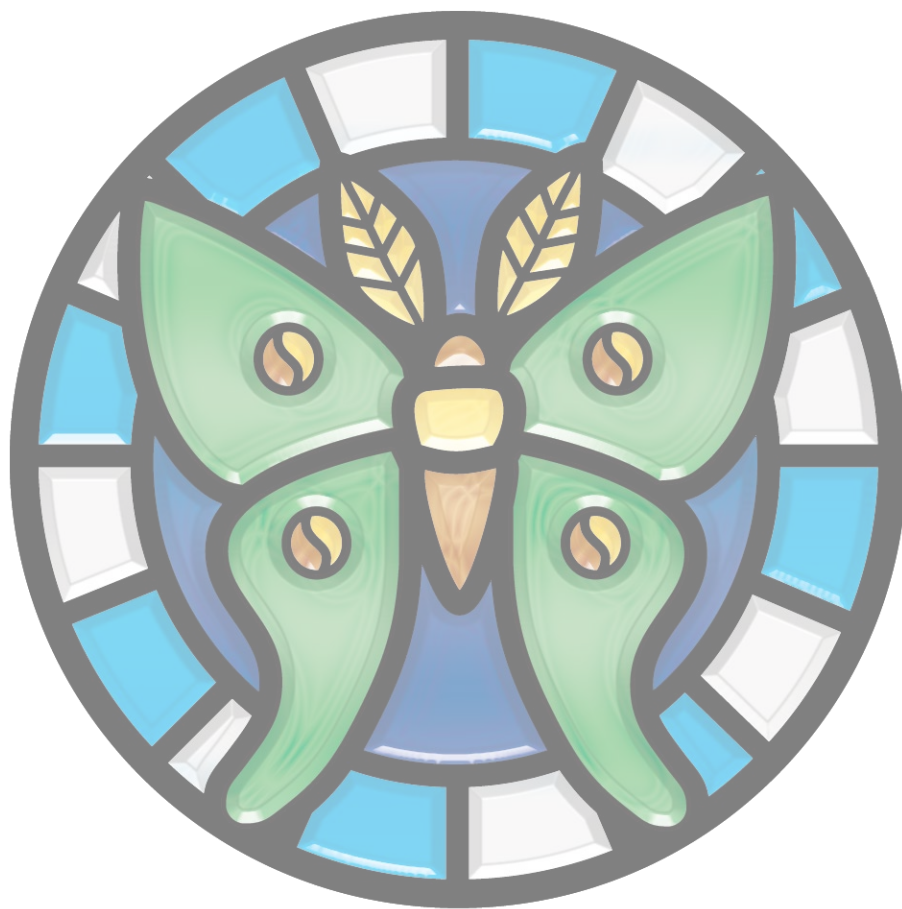
holder or *regent* and the Dreaming recognizes their legitimate claim to the freehold.

Reaving – the process by which a changeling may force a balefire to produce more Glamour than it would naturally. It is considered a dangerous Banal act in the eyes of the Dreaming, and has a high tendency to weaken or even destroy the balefire.

trod – a passage through the Dreaming. Unlike a *rath*, a trod is a path or highway along which creatures of the Dream-

ing may travel. Trods may form crossroads, connecting many places in the Near, Far, and Deep Dreaming to dream-realms and to the Autumn World.

wellspring – a raw, untapped source of Glamour that wells up between the Dreaming and the Autumn World. Wellsprings naturally develop into the heartstones of Glades, or can be refined into the balefires of freeholds.





CHAPTER ONE: A BRIEF STUDY OF FREEHOLDS

*"This is a roadside attraction," said Wednesday.
'One of the finest. Which means it is a place of power.'"*
– Neil Gaiman, *American Gods*

Freeholds vary greatly from one to the next. Like the Kithain who maintain them, the only thing that's true of all freeholds is their uniqueness. From look to feel to location to use, no two are exactly alike. Still, for those who spend a lifetime studying freeholds, certain generalities emerge. Freeholds are shaped by the epoch they occupy and the changelings who inhabit them, just as freeholds themselves shape the nearby Dreaming. By looking at their history, their impact on the Dreaming, and those who call them home, a student of faerie lore can begin to understand common themes shared amongst freeholds.

Freeholds Throughout History

The Kithain witness the fabric of reality change as each age gives way to the next. The Mythic Ages were a time of unity when Earth and the Dreaming coexisted in harmony, each drawing from and

building upon the other. The Sundering saw a withdrawal of magic and Glamour from the world as distance grew between Earth and the Dreaming. The Shattering severed the bonds between the worlds, making the Dreaming inaccessible and Glamour scarce. The Resurgence brought Glamour back to Earth and reopened ancient passageways into the Dreaming. The Evanescence corrupted the dreams of the Kithain with the nightmares of the Fomorians. With each fundamental shift in the Dreaming, the nature of freeholds changed with it.

The Mythic Ages

Freeholds of the Mythic Ages were not the sources of Glamour they are today. The worlds overlapped – their boundaries hazy where they existed at all. Glamour permeated everything, making the entirety of Earth a freehold in the way modern changelings think of them. Instead of a refuge from the cold, banal world, Fae of the time considered their homes, ceremonial sites, and any other land they claimed as theirs to be a freehold.

The Court of All Kings

The Court of All Kings is most famous freehold dating back to the Mythic Ages. Also known as the Isle of Dreams, it was the seat of power for the High Kings of antiquity, where the Fae observed their sacred rites and shifted power between the Seelie and Unseelie Courts as the yearly cycle of seasons progressed. At the center of the island stood Silver's Gate, a portal to the heart of Tir-na-N'og — now known as Arcadia. The Isle of Dreams vanished in the Shattering, presumably swallowed whole by the ocean.

Today, faerie scholars believe the Isle of Dreams existed somewhere off the coast of Ireland, and historians and treasure-hunters alike search for the freehold's final resting place. The Court of All Kings contained the only copy of the Codex Compendia known to be complete, as well as Treasures of power unimaginable to the Kithain. Of course, if the freehold remains intact, it's sure to be guarded by defenses that no longer recognize the Kithain as their ancient masters.

The Sundering

During the Sundering, distinct boundaries between Earth and the Dreaming developed. Freeholds became Earth-bound realms of faerie, similar to the modern understanding of Dream-realms. The freeholds of this age were not constrained by simple geography; instead, concepts and ideas derived from descriptive titles like "Dark Heart of the Forest" or "Underbridge" bounded them. No magic was needed to enter these freeholds. They were a part of the landscape, if perpendicular to the world of humans. Turn left at a rightward sign post, take the third fork in a road, or pass through the hollow of a tree and a traveler might inadvertently find herself in a faerie freehold.

Underbridge

Controlled by the Unseelie Court, Underbridge's entrances existed in every space beneath a bridge where the sun's rays never directly touched. A realm of eternal night and starless skies, only the dim, sputtering torches and campfires of Underbridge's denizens provided illumination. Within this realm, all earthly bridges were represented, with each leading to another. A traveler needed only to pass beneath a bridge in Underbridge to emerge under its counterpart on Earth. This method of quick travel was not without its risks: here, redcaps, sluagh, great beasts, and other fell creatures now lost in the mists of time stalked the foolish and unwary for sport and Glamour.

While certain legendary bridges may also be freeholds today, the interconnected realm of Underbridge fractured into countless shards in the Shattering. Occasionally, a





The Codex Compendia


The Codex Compendia is a collection of four books that chronicles the history of the Fae. Fragmentary copies are known to exist, but the vast majority of the Codex has been lost since the Shattering. Kithain scholars believe that recovering the full set of volumes might result in discovering solutions to the threat of the Endless Winter.

The Black Compendium tells of the creation of the world, the rule of the Fomorians, and their overthrow at the hands of the Tuatha de Danaan.

The White Compendium records the rule of the Kithain, their oaths to Earth and the Dreaming, and the ancient rituals necessary to maintain them.

The Red Compendium documents the War of the Courts, the rise of Banality, and the faes' actions leading up to the Shattering.

The Green Compendium chronicles the history that never was but might yet be.



trod may still connect some bridges to each other, but those paths are invariably fraught with danger, either from Lost Ones who foolishly sought shelter and became trapped or from travelers caught in the moment Underbridge splintered apart, Branding their souls as Dauntain.

The Shattering and Interregnum

The Shattering destroyed the greatest places of faerie power. Citadels crumbled, sacred sites vanished, and pockets of creation sputtered and died. With magic all but gone from the world, Glamour became rarer and more difficult to cultivate. The freeholds that survived into the Interregnum were small, precarious shelters from Banality — the equivalent of dilapidated shacks in thunderstorms. Still, they sufficed and, most importantly, kept changelings alive until the Resurgence.

American Indian Center

From the 1940s into the 1960s, the United States government attempted to eliminate Native American tribal sovereignty and American Indian culture through their genocidal adoption of the Indian termination policy. Forced relocation coupled with evaporating economic opportunities drove Native Americans en masse to urban areas. Facing the depletion of their Medicine sources, the Nunnehi who made homes in Chicago assisted members of their home tribes in the city to found the American Indian Center.

Today, the American Indian Center is a strong, thriving sanctuary, thanks to the tireless efforts of its original founders and the successive generations that followed. The Center continues its mission to preserve and restore tribal history, language, customs, and pride despite the forces that seek to erase Native American identities.

By safeguarding their native culture, the Nunnehi gain sanctuary and Medicine through the preservation of their ancient rites. After the Evanescence, however, the Nunnehi sought and gained an alliance with the local Kithain of Chicago. The Nunnehi have pledged to render aid against the Thallain in exchange for the Kithain's help in promoting the arts and culture of Native Americans.

The Resurgence and Evanescence

The Resurgence didn't bring just the sidhe back to Earth, it also restored Glamour. Ancient sacred sites, long thought forever lost, reawakened with the ashes of their extinct balefires glowing anew. While the two worlds have drawn no closer together, the Kithain on Earth finally found opportunities to rebuild their society. The globe-spanning pocket realms of the Sundering may never be whole again, but their fragments waited to be rediscovered and reshaped into new freeholds. Political tensions ran high, but the end of the 20th century appeared to be the cusp of a new golden age for the Kithain. Then, the Evanescence happened.

Briefly, a spark of the Fomorian Dream shook the Earth. Many freeholds were damaged by the onslaught of dark Glamour. Smaller, more precarious freeholds collapsed like kindling, their foundation dreams extinguished or twisted into horrors that repelled the Kithain. The remains of ancient freeholds are still out there, waiting to be rediscovered. Now, however, fell creatures, once thought banished for all time, stalk the ruins while nightmares race to claim them before the Kithain.

Freeholds and the Dreaming

Freeholds aren't merely sites where Glamour wells up on Earth. They're also vital for the continued existence of the Dreaming. They are areas where the Mists between Earth and the Dreaming are thin enough that the two can intermingle. Earth gains small amount of wonder and the local dream is reinforced. The Dreaming receives the collective unconsciousness of the nearby humanity that molds it and provides it with substance. This transference can be seen in the freehold's balefire, also known as the Ignis Vesta — the pure fire. The flames of the balefire burn away the mundane, the trivial, and the monotonous, purifying humanity's sub-

conscious thoughts into the raw ideas and emotions which give the Dreaming life.

The Dream

With the Dreaming bleeding into the mundane, balefires tend to crystalize the emotions and stories of the areas around them. Most changelings use these crystals as the foundation of the freeholds they build. The Kithain call this underlying bed-rock of story the freehold's dream. A freehold's dream heavily influences the character of the freehold and the surrounding area — nearby humans subconsciously shift their attitudes to align more with the freehold; the look of the physical building and immediate vicinity gradually changes to mirror the Dreaming; chimera with an affinity for the freehold's dream find themselves drawn to the resonant Glamour.

The one requirement for a freehold's dream is that a strong story or emotion already be associated with the location. It doesn't matter what kind of legend is present, as long as it has resonance and weight in the minds of the local population — something sturdy enough to give the freehold substance. A freehold drawing upon the dream of Whitechapel, for example, has a strong foundation and potential to become a powerful site, but it would be a dark, fearful place of endless shadows, bloodthirsty nocnitsa, and inexplicable murders. Without a strong will to bring the dream to heel, the potential freeholder might be better served leaving the site to the likes of the Thallain.

Chimerical Ecosystems

The freehold's dream colors the character of the mundane world that surrounds it, and the Glamour provided by the Earth profoundly impacts the dreamscape beyond the Mists. Landmarks often thought about by the locals appear in close proximity to where the freehold intersects with the Dreaming. Likewise, the flora and fauna of the Dreaming close to the freehold often reflect the predominate nature of the people around it. For example, creatures that gorge themselves on any available resource, reveling in their excess, prowl the Dreaming close to the Bullpen — a freehold nestled in the heart of Wall Street. Beautiful flowers bloom around it, radiating an intoxicating scent, but are all too eager to kill and feast on anything that gets too close.

The place where a freehold anchors in the Dreaming may have only a tenuous connection with its location in the physical world. Two freeholds separated by oceans on Earth might be only a day's journey through the Dreaming. Two freeholds in the same mundane city may be separated by entire realms of the Dreaming. Beyond the Mists, freeholds are anchored in realms suffused with the predominate Glamour the freehold channels into the Dreaming. There are those, however, who argue the reverse is true — freeholds of similar types create the realms of the Dreaming. Whichever is correct, the result remains the same: if a changeling wishes to travel

from one freehold to another via the Dreaming, his shortest journey is always between two freeholds with sympathetic aspects. A freehold in the Badlands National Park is closer to one in the Putangirua Pinnacles of New Zealand than to any freehold in metropolitan Sioux Falls, South Dakota while inside the Dreaming.

Freeholds and Changelings

Freeholds are the centerpiece of changeling society. All changelings, regardless of kith, Court, or social standing, rely on them. For changelings, freeholds are much more than convenient sources of Glamour. They provide shelter from Banality and serve as gathering places away from prying mortal eyes. They also serve vital functions determined by their aspect — Academy, Hearth, Homestead, Manor, Market, Repository, Stronghold, Thorpe, or Workshop. Whatever purpose the freehold serves, it is never trivial or easily accomplished in mundane spaces.

Freeholders

The proprietor of a freehold is known as a *freeholder* if she is a commoner, and a *landed noble* if she holds title. While the two names have different meanings, freeholder is often used informally as a catch-all term. Freeholders and their landed noble counterparts occupy a unique status in changeling hierarchy. Because freeholds occupy the center of changeling social life, freeholders, whether they like it or not, tend to be in much the same position. Noble fae in control of a freehold usually command greater respect from local Kithain than landless members of the Shining Host with greater titles. Commoner freeholders are often instrumental in settling informal disputes and are generally looked to as the de facto leaders of their communities.

Due to their increased responsibilities, service to the Dreaming, and status as leaders of their communities, freeholders have a greater voice in Kithain politics than most of their brethren. Every freeholder in Concordia is granted a seat in the Chamber of Commoners, which she or her representative may occupy during Parliamentary sessions, along with the right to vote on issues presented to the Chamber.

Form and Function

Freeholds are found in all shapes and sizes, but their forms tend to follow their functions. They can be places open to any changelings, or they might be private affairs. The Signal Brewery, a freehold owned by a satyr named Ozzy, is famous for its chimerical ales and collection of velvet nudes. Lady Lone is the proprietress of an artisanal print shop called the Crinkled Page. Its back room contains a massive chimerical library open to all the local fae. MacAlistair, a computer inclined nocker, converted a forgotten Cold War era bomb

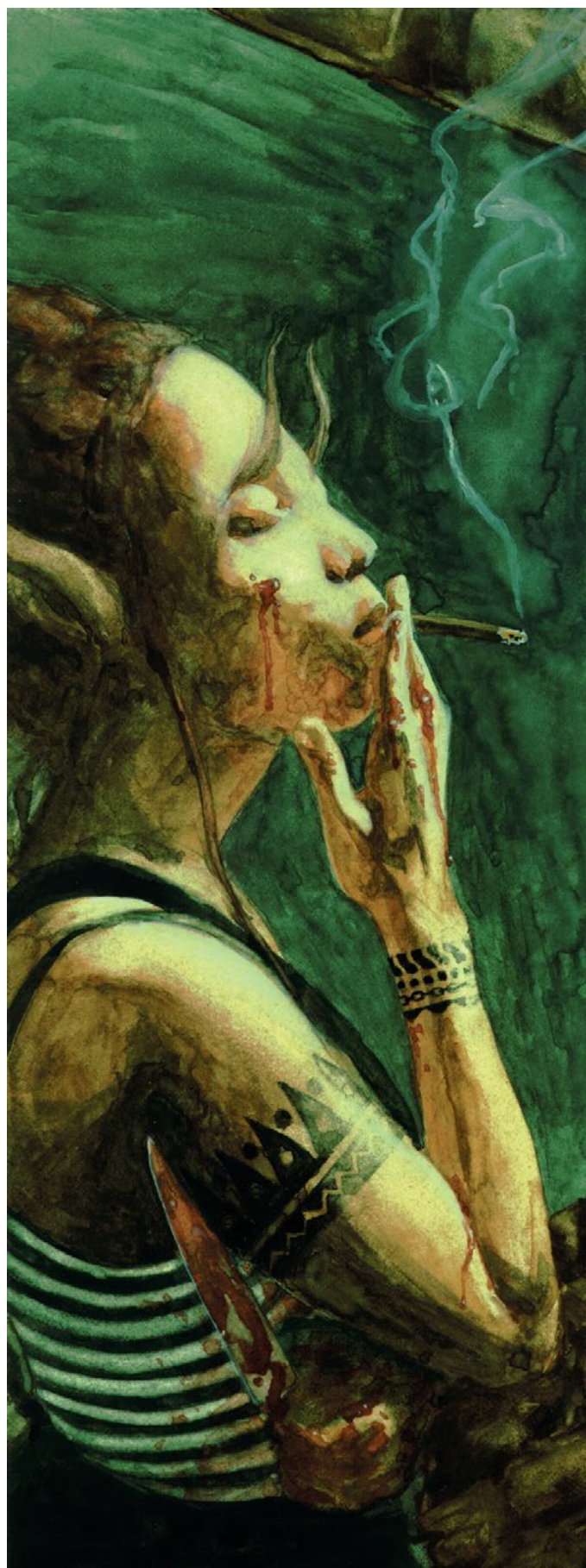
The Parliament of Dreams

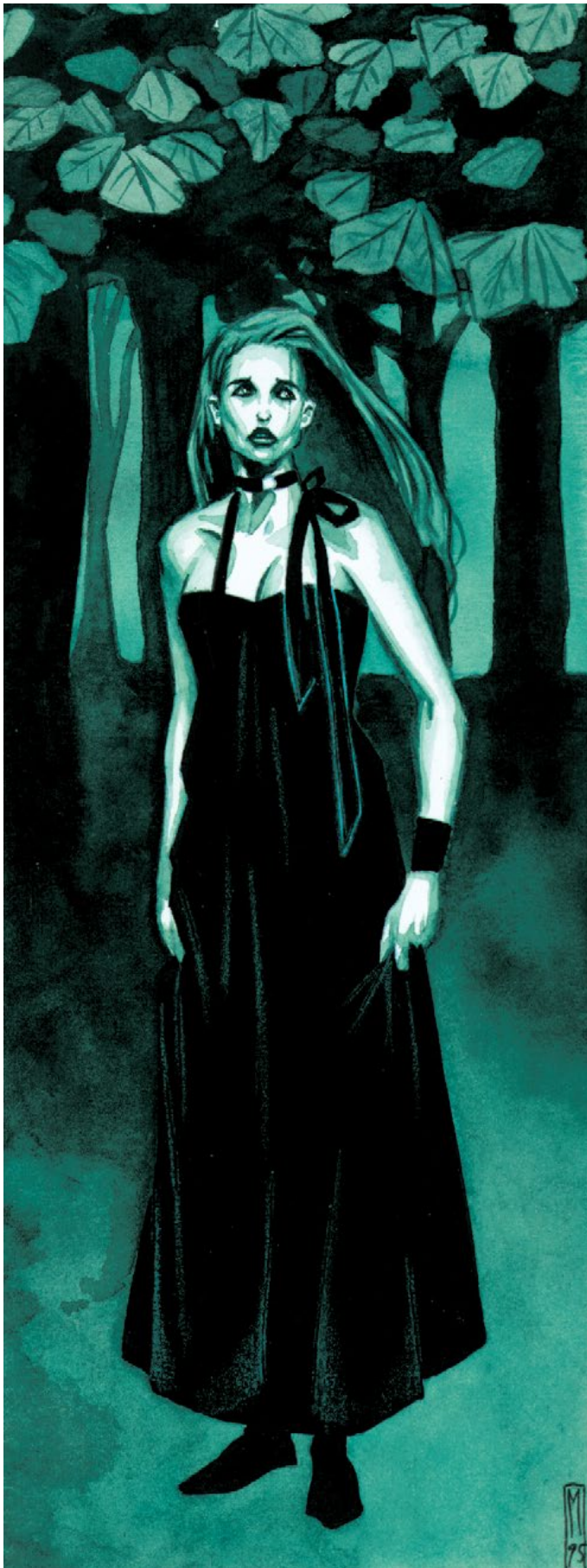
High King David established the Parliament of Dreams as an advising body to give commoners a voice in governing and create a forum where commoners and nobles could find solutions to each other's grievances. Parliament is split into two bodies – the Chamber of Commoners and the Chamber of Nobles. The Chamber of Nobles is split into fourteen delegations, one for each noble house. Landed nobles may vote within their delegation, but each delegation is allowed only one vote. The High Lords of the various houses are the official spokespeople for their delegations, but they often appoint someone from within their delegation to speak for them.

The Parliament of Dreams is an enormous, raucous body, filled with discordant voices and fae of every stripe. Getting anything passed through both Chambers is a drawn out, tortuous process. However, any proposal that does manage to survive a vote in Parliament is honored by the vast majority of Kithain in Concordia. So trusted is this process, nearly all the kingdoms and duchies of Concordia have adopted their own Parliaments. Even a number of kingdoms outside Concordia have begun to establish similar bodies of their own. Before High King David's disappearance, the Parliament of Dreams was mostly a ceremonial body, only passing resolutions but never allowed to make any meaningful legislation. Since David's return and subsequent seclusion, the Parliament of Dreams has taken on a more proactive role in setting policy in Concordia with very little input from the High King.

shelter into a small, unnamed freehold where he built a cutting edge analytical engine to explore the digital realms of the Dreaming. Although freeholds serve the same basic purposes for both nobles and commoners, the ways they manifest vary significantly.

The most common types of freeholds used by all changelings are Hearths, Manors, and Markets. Hearths and Manors are social hubs where the locals catch up with each other and revel in their faerie nature – the town's watering hole for gossip would be a Hearth, while the Duchy's court where the Kithain politic and jockey for power would be a Manor. The city's art district where changelings show off the new works of their Dreamers could be either depending on if it's controlled by commoners or the nobility. A Market, on the other hand, is where changelings buy and trade with one another. Markets come in two varieties: Faerie Markets, which are legally regulated by the nobility; and Goblin Markets, which deal in contraband or oper-





ate out of sight of the authorities. All sorts of wonders can be found at a changeling Market – exotic materials from the depths of the Dreaming, chimerical trinkets or treasures of vast power, memories, bottled dreams, prophesies either told or crafted, even souls are known to turn up on occasion. At the right Markets, a changeling can buy just about anything if she is willing to pay the price.

Nobility

Noble freeholds tend to be elegant affairs. Their design conveys a sense of importance. Traditionalist nobles prefer classical designs such as grand castles, while nobles with more modernist sensibilities might style their freeholds after executive boardrooms. The Dreaming ensures that even the freeholds of ennobled commoners still convey an air of authority, whether it's a pooka's treehouse overlooking his forest or a korred's carefully curated library at a prestigious university. The sidhe are fundamentally political creatures, so their freeholds tend toward seats of power or ritual sites, evoking a sense of overwhelming awe from anyone who beholds them. They are also usually open to the public for general socializing or holding court.

- ☉ Sir Chip Fizzlewig, a boggan of House Fiona, oversees the Toybox Coffee Shop in San Francisco at the pleasure of Duke Aeon. It was once the main social hub for the city's Kithain, but rising rent prices forced most changelings out. Now, Chip isn't sure how much longer he can keep the Toybox afloat.
- ☉ Duke Greythorn holds court in the grand ballroom on the top floor of the high rise that serves as the world headquarters of the Greythorn Financial Group. While his monthly stakeholder gatherings are invitation only, everyone who's anyone within the Duchy finds a way to attend to trade favors and negotiate alliances.
- ☉ The Geomantic Heart, located in the center of Barre des Écrins in the French Alps, serves as the inner sanctum for the secretive society of sorcerers known as the Crystal Circle. Protected by a labyrinthine system of wards, this stronghold is where they enact their most important rituals and safeguard their most dangerous secrets.

Commoners

Commoner freeholds, while they can certainly be opulent and ostentatious, tend to be more pragmatic and down-to-earth. Whether consciously or not, the hardships of the Interregnum and countless lifetimes of barely scraping by – toiling for any wisp of Glamour they could eke out – left scars on commoners' psyches, resulting in a shared, deep paranoia regarding Glamour's fragility and transience. Consequently, they often use personal Glamour to build only the core components of their freeholds, foregoing the embellishments the sidhe cherish. Compared to the palatial

freeholds of the nobility, commoner freeholds are often personal, private affairs used as homes and retreats from the daily grind.

- ⑤ The Raven is a nightclub on Knoxville's strip that Caitlin, satyr frontwoman of the house band, Nuada, and her wife, a Scathach autumn sidhe named Crystal, recently purchased. The two, along with their motley, use the club to scout new musical talent and attempt to grow Glamour in the city despite the nobility's lack of aid after the Evanescence.
- ⑤ Mike's Body Shop is a rural freehold owned by a nocker named Mike. For most people, it's a standard collision repair shop making most of its money from insurance claims. Around back, however, are the special garages that house the balefire. There, he lovingly restores vintage muscle cars to their former glory, stoking the dreams of their owners.
- ⑤ Shamrocks Beer Cellar is a storied freehold beneath Shamrocks Pub in the old city of the Duchy of Moon-silver. The freehold's founder died under mysterious circumstances shortly after the Resurgence. Since then, Shamrocks changed hands numerous times. Its current freeholder is the satyr Arkus Oreias. Through all the changes in management, one rule has remained constant: all who enter leave their title at the door.

STRANGER DREAMS

The approach Gallain take to freeholds is as diverse as the Gallain themselves. The elusive inanimae are certainly the most compatible with the Kithain's idea of freeholds, and are able to use freeholds just as the Kithain do. They may gain Glamour from the balefires and enjoy the protection offered from Banality. A significant number of them take great delight socializing with their Kithain cousins away from the withering gaze of mortals. Inanimae rarely possess freeholds of their own, though. Their Anchors provide them all the benefits of a freehold and require just

as much, if not more, attention and maintenance. Most inanimae balk at the thought of trying to manage both.

The Nunnehi and Menehune find Kithain freeholds an affront to their very existence. Since the destruction of the Higher Hunting Grounds in the Dreaming, they are incapable of harvesting Glamour produced by western-style freeholds. Instead, they require untouched wellsprings of natural Glamour. Each Glen the Kithain develop into a freehold means one less source of life-giving Medicine. Because of this, the Nunnehi and Menehune heavily distrust the Kithain and fight tooth and nail to protect their dwindling places of power.

The Hsien are the most alien of the Gallain, to the extent some Kithain have difficulty believing they're creatures of Dream at all. The Hsien do not worry about Banality or live off Glamour. Consequently, they have no interest in Kithain freeholds. Without assistance, they struggle recognizing freeholds even exist. Instead, the Hsien have their own revered sites they call Dragon Nests. From these places, they are able to gather Yugen, a special form spiritual energy more closely related to Medicine of the Nunnehi and Mana of the Menehune than the Glamour of the Kithain. Unlike the Nunnehi and Menehune's sacred places, the Hsien's Dragon Nests do not have a chimerical aspect and do not touch the Dreaming.

The Thallain's use of freeholds is insidious. They are able to use any freehold to the full extent the Kithain can master. However, the Glamour of the Tuathan Dream is bland and unsatisfying for them. By force or guile, they'll launch coordinated campaigns to steal the freeholds of the Kithain. Once they've captured a freehold, the new Thallain freeholder will do everything in her power to bastardize the original dream of the freehold into a primordial nightmare. The flames of the balefire turn from a warm glow into a harsh, sickly light. All the emotions the freehold channels into the Dreaming go to support Nightmare realms. Any Kithain foolish enough to gain Glamour from a Thallain freehold may soon find himself addicted to the horrors of the Fomorian Dream.



CHAPTER TWO: BUILDING A MYSTERY

*Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*
– Emma Lazarus, “The New Colossus”

Changelings share a burden that no one else understands — they fully belong in neither the Dreaming nor the material world. Only in a freehold can they be amongst kin. Freeholds are the lifeblood of changeling society, the warm spirit holding the pieces together. Small freeholds offer a moment of refuge to wary changelings, a place to recharge before returning to a world not wholly theirs. Large freeholds offer a greater purpose, as commoner and noblewoman, Seelie and Unseelie alike, gather in these safe havens — often under the flag of truce — to share their tales. Like the changelings they serve, freeholds exist in two worlds: they have a body of mortar and brick, and a heart of Dreaming and Glamour.

The smallest balefires survived the Shattering, rather than the largest. Scholars speculate that the big balefires were knots in the weave, breaking under the stress of the Autumn World and the Dreaming ripping apart. Disgruntled commoners say the true fae claimed the greatest prizes and hid them from their changeling cousins. Some nobles believe the brightest candles simply burn the fastest. Either way, now changelings are left with scraps of the Dreaming that they must painstakingly fashion into proper freeholds.

Freeholds shelter their holders, but encourage them to not shut the world out. Changelings seeking refuge from banality or Bedlam find them welcome (if not necessarily safe) havens. Changelings seeking to hole up until the world passes by, however, quickly find themselves facing hostile intrusions and chimerical threats, as the freeholds encourage them to go live grander adventures.

This chapter presents extended rules for players to create a freehold. Rather than a single rating assigned to all aspects of a freehold (e.g., a one-dot freehold is small and sparsely decorated, with minimal security), players can pick and choose where to buff up their freehold and where to downsize.

Designing a Freehold

The Dreaming is a living, changing entity, and freeholds are no exception to this rule. Changelings shape their freeholds both unconsciously and by their active will. That means every player gets a

say in how the freehold represents their character's needs, desires, and fears. If a new player joins the chronicle later and invests Background dots for Holdings, the freehold will change again to integrate the new changeling's dreams.

Brainstorming

Freeholds are never boring or mundane. Players looking for inspiration can draw on pop culture, myths and legends, books and songs, or their favorite fairy tales. As long as the inspiration fits the characters, it's valid no matter the source.

The troupe should reserve time to get together to reach a consensus. If a player can't attend the brainstorming session, the Storyteller should ask for their input beforehand and extend to them the opportunity to suggest changes at their earliest convenience. All players should be happy with the freehold – after all, they're the ones paying for it.

Example: *Marianne is the Storyteller of her troupe. Nancy plays Cayne, a Seelie redcap struggling with his violent tendencies. Rob is Laisha, an aspiring singer-songwriter satyr. Shino plays Mercy, an eshu high school drop-out. Dewayne plays Lance, an Autumn sidhe of House Liam. Together they form the Low Rollers, an up-and-coming motley looking to make a name for themselves.*

The campaign takes place in Las Vegas, and the troupe wants their freehold to be in the middle of the action, as they all play wilders who don't want to live in suburbia. Rob suggests a club called Mirror Lights, where Laisha can fire up the crowd for extra Glamour. Dewayne wants a VIP lounge that Lance will claim as his territory – Lance may be an egalitarian, but the Dreaming still pushes him towards elitism. Shino says Mercy is fine with everything so far, but as a player he would like the freehold to be old, with dangerous secrets at its heart. Nancy suggests maybe darkness dwells in the large basement of the club, and it calls out to Cayne.

At this point, Marianne steps in: since the darkness of the freehold won't respond to the characters' wishes, she'd rather the players leave the details to her. She does, however, take note of Nancy's enthusiasm for Cayne to be singled out by the darkness.

Acquisition

Now the motley has a freehold – but how did they come across it? As with inspiration, anything goes. The players may choose to leave these details to the Storyteller, trusting her to come up with interesting hooks and plot threads. The troupe might also select directly from the list below, choosing their favorite option, or as a table for rolling random acquisition.

- ⑤ **Homemade Brownies.** The motley stumbles upon a Wellspring, and shapes it into a freehold – this freehold is wholly theirs, though they need Glamour (from dreamers, or borrowed from another balefire) to kick start it.
- ⑤ **Mysterious Heirloom.** One of the motley acquires a freehold on her Chrysalis, as it belonged to her in a previous

life. Even though one of the *characters* owns the freehold in character, all *players* should still get equal say in its design.

- ⑤ **Reclaimed Heritage.** Something stole the freehold eons ago, whether a hostile chimera took up residence, or it was sealed away by a Lost One. The motley managed to repel the threat, and has claimed the freehold for themselves.
- ⑤ **Amazing Treasure.** Using a legendary Treasure, the motley pierced the veil between the Autumn World and the Dreaming to draw the freehold forth. It's a magnet for fantastic beasts from the Dreaming, and the motley frequently has to defend its new home.
- ⑤ **Stolen Prize.** The motley won or stole the freehold from another changeling – and she seeks to take it back, creating a recurring antagonist for the story.
- ⑤ **Regency.** The motley doesn't own the freehold themselves, but they've been granted its deeds after taking the Oath of Regency (see p.32).

Example: *Mirror Lights is old and holds a darkness the characters haven't discovered. This means the characters didn't construct the freehold themselves (ruling out Homemade Brownies and Amazing Treasure). The troupe decides against Stolen Prize: they have the darkness to contend with, and don't want to add additional enemies this early in the game. Regency doesn't look right for them either – they're egalitarians and unlikely to be willing vassals for a lord. Their remaining choices are Mysterious Heirloom, and Reclaimed Heritage.*

Nancy thinks it would be cool if, in a past life, the Low Rollers created the darkness, and advocates for Mysterious Heirloom. Shino instead suggests the freehold has been lost since the Shattering and the Low Rollers only recently rescued it, making it a Reclaimed Heritage. Rob and Dewayne have no strong opinion – they're much more interested in the freehold's present and future than its past.

Marianne reveals that her campaign will focus more on threats from the Dreaming than from past lives (though she makes another note about Nancy's interest in the subject for a personal arc). The troupe decides Reclaimed Heritage works best for their needs.

Archetype

A freehold's story is represented by its Archetype: the role it plays in changeling society, and the purpose it plays in its freeholder's journey. This is the spark that draws the freehold into a campaign, what gives the Storytellers hooks to introduce and use it.

Players shouldn't feel limited to one Archetype when designing their freehold – a freehold can serve multiple purposes – but is restricted to *one* mechanical benefit without the purchase of Dual Nature (p.28). Alternately, the motley might hold two different, physically adjacent freeholds. This scenario qualifies them for the benefits of both, assuming each character has invested in Holdings for each freehold.



“While They Reside Within”

Typically, the benefits gained from a freehold only apply when the changeling is inside her dwelling, but long ago, the fae found the Dreaming’s loophole: Covenants of Flame (p.35). As long as a freeholder carries the Covenant of Flame on her person, she is considered to be within her freehold for the purposes of reaping its benefits.



Academy

Academies are the commoners’ answer to the nobles’ traditional systems of tutelage and of wards. Dedicated to teaching young Kithain about lore, combat, and history, some Academies have become so popular even Arcadian sidhe apply for a student seat, which often brings their holders into heated conflict with their more conservative fae neighbors.

Benefit: Together, the players and Storyteller choose one Ability that the Academy teaches as its specialty. The Academy grants its freeholders -2 difficulty on rolls for that Ability while they reside within. Studying at the freehold counts as training when increasing the associated Ability with experience points.

- ☉ Ayo’s Well in Nairobi is a community of six commoners who teach one other their skills. Ayo, the freeholder, is a skilled hand-to-hand combatant as well as a brilliant mathematician. To his sorrow, the former skillset is in far greater demand than the latter. Duke Ra’zel ap Gwydion is deeply suspicious of commoners daring to educate themselves, and the Well is a frequent target of his ire. *Associated Ability: Melee.*
- ☉ The Emperor Norton Academy near Portland, WA is Concordia’s premiere educational institute for faerie lore and Kithain heritage. Lady Violet, its Autumn sidhe headmistress, takes special interest in ensuring that her many Arcadian sidhe pupils learn the true history of the Sundering. Her most vocal critic in Portland’s political and social scene is Lord Lancelot ap Ailil, who resents Violet’s populist rapport with the young nobles he would rather mold in his own image. *Associated Ability: Kenning.*

Hearth

Hearths are the most common freeholds. Most are ancient hold-ings, claimed by commoners who secured and safeguarded them long before the Resurgence. No matter who owns the Hearth, it welcomes all changelings in need of safety. In return, commoners and Arcadian nobles alike rise up to defend the freehold when it needs them.

Benefit: A hearth grants its freeholders -2 difficulty on either Leadership or Socialize rolls (player’s choice) while they reside within.

- ☉ Wedged between the skyscrapers of downtown Johannesburg is a small café that is not in any tourist book or smartphone app. Changelings instinctively find it though, wandering the streets on nothing but a “hunch” that pulls the Glamour in their own soul towards that of the freehold. Minenhle waits for them behind the bar with a smile and a cold mug of ale.

- ☉ A balefire burns at the heart of the Lambda Phi Epsilon house at NYU, pulled from the Dreaming by a nocker, Ti’an, fifteen years ago. Changelings still come for shelter, long after Ti’an’s graduation, posing as exchange students to cover a longer stay.

Homestead

Homesteads are freeholds used to grow chimerical crops and raise animals, providing a significant portion of the Kithain’s craft goods and chimerical foodstuffs. Most are run by commoner Regents, who administrate the property in the name of a liege lord. In order to create the optimal environment for their crops and animals, Homesteads are constructed almost entirely in the Dreaming. While this makes them vulnerable, most rely on their liege’s Stronghold or another friendly freehold nearby for defense.

Benefit: A Homestead grants its freeholder -2 difficulty on Survival or Animal Ken rolls while they reside within. It also creates chimerical produce, using the rules found in **Changeling: The Dreaming 20th Anniversary Edition** p.317.

- ☉ Between grape and peach farms along the Eastern Cape, a barren-seeming land stretches. In the Dreaming, though, chimerical orchards sprawl. Anodiwa’s Meadow primarily produces ordinary chimerical fruits intended to quench hunger and replenish Glamour, but a small section of the orchard is reserved for the rare (and expensive) Babalu-Aye’s Kiss, a pomegranate-like fruit that can heal the most grievous chimerical injuries.
- ☉ The rooftops of Berlin are crowded with vegetable patches and small beehives, but one of these gardens only exists in the Dreaming. Here, the sluagh Atile breeds Dream Venoms, a species of chimerical spider-fly whose bite induces prophetic fever-dreams. The Homestead itself has no defense, and Atile pays a tithe to the Baroness of Charlottenburg for protection.

Manor

Manors house communities of changelings. They hold only one balefire, with changelings flocking to outlier buildings (or rooms) for access to the balefire’s Glamour, or the protection of its Lord or Lady. Manors are the second most common freehold, next to hearths, and are mostly run by nobles who act as the Lord or Lady of the Manor.

Benefit: A Manor grants its freeholders -2 difficulty on Etiquette rolls while they reside within.



- ☉ Lady Manon rules a small commune of changeling and mortal artists in San Francisco's Mission District. As rent in the Mission rises and more artists are forced out, the building's balefire dims. Manon worries it won't last much longer.
- ☉ Izas is a small, picturesque village in Provence, France. Its all-changeling population lives in homes clustered around the balefire burning steadily in the market square. Lord Laurence works to add Izas to prominent tourist guides to draw in more Dreamers and, he hopes, harvest some of their Glamour to expand the freehold.

Market

Markets are freeholds where changelings to meet, trade chimerical goods and services, and look for jobs. Accessible through secret raths, Markets remain hidden from the mortal eye even in the middle of large, crowded cities. Most Markets are regulated by local nobility or their representatives, but Goblin Markets deliberately evade oversight: here, changelings deal in contraband and plot to undermine their local or rival noble's rule.

Benefit: A Market grants its freeholders -2 difficulty on Persuasion or Subterfuge rolls while they reside within.

- ☉ A rath connects London's Shimmer Alley to the central train station. In recent years, the Glamour from masses

of Dreamers seeking Platform 9 ¾ have grown the Market in leaps and bounds. Unfortunately, the influx of mortals makes it harder for changelings to slip in unnoticed, and a Typhoid Dauntain has picked up the Market's scent.

- ☉ Hidden in the skull-lined catacombs under central Paris, the greatest Unseelie goblin market of Europe does business. The dark tunnels are unwelcoming to Seelie changelings, but Kithain of both Courts brave the underground to browse the Market's steady stream of Treasures.

Repository

Repositories are dedicated to lore and research. Most Repositories take the form of libraries, though literal talking heads or magical trees and pools that divulge knowledge are also common. Repositories are rare and highly sought-after; those not in noble hands are jealously guarded by their holders and coveted by the ranking local fae.

Benefit: A Repository grants its freeholders -2 difficulty on Lore rolls while they reside within.

- ☉ The Library of Alexandria lives on in the Dreaming, its shelves bowing under the weight of the ancient world's lost lore. After years of personal, bitter conflict with the Lord of nearby Cairo, its Arcadian sidhe freeholder Kleos has become paranoid and secluded, suspecting all newcomers of espionage. Persuasive, patient motleys may be able to



gain access to his vast library if they can convince him they have never worked for the Lord of Cairo.

- ⑤ Abandoned long ago, changelings still comb the vast Russian steppes and mires for the Chicken Hut. Rumors persist that after inscribing a question on a dog's bone, a changeling may sleep in the hut and dream an answer shrouded in prophecy. Rumors also warn that spending more than three nights at the balefire results in horrible nightmares and hostile chimera, which may explain why it remains unclaimed.

Stronghold

Strongholds are the Kithain's seats of power, the first line of defense against Lost Ones, Fomorians, and other hostile incursions from the Dreaming. When the sidhe left the Autumn World, their Strongholds either sealed their gates or vanished completely. Now, many Strongholds have returned with their old masters. They are frequently hotbeds of the political pettiness at the center of noble conflicts.

Benefit: A Stronghold grants its freeholders -2 difficulty on Firearms or Melee rolls while they reside within.

- ⑤ Belfast Castle overflows with Glamour and dross produced by the balefire roaring at its heart. Its freeholder, Duke Connor ap Liam, strictly adheres to the Rule of Hospitality, but keeps close watch on strange and commoner motleys, fearful they will try to take the Stronghold from him.
- ⑤ A folly stands in the small Dutch town of Sittard. Clearly a faux castle to mundane eyes, the structure towers high in the Dreaming, complete with parapets and a stone guardian. The Dutchies, a motley crew, has recently claimed the Stronghold, putting them into conflict with the Arcadian sidhe Baroness of nearby Maastricht, who promised the Stronghold to one of her vassals.

Thorpe

Thorpes are changeling communities with multiple balefires burning throughout the property. Thorpes exist both in urban and rural areas, though they're exceedingly rare in either. They're run by a Mayor — usually a noble or commoner with the personal magnetism and stubborn patience to manage all the competing personalities living in the Thorpe.

Benefit: A Thorpe grants its freeholders -2 difficulty on Empathy rolls while they reside within.

- ⑤ The Unseelie Mayor of Tokyo's Maynil Building has unscrupulously muscled out all Autumn denizens; only changelings of either court are welcome. The looming apartment block houses one main balefire and two smaller balefires, carefully tended by the Mayor's crew. Fourteen Kithain call the building home, and recently, tensions have begun to rise between the Seelie and Unseelie occupants.

- ⑤ Marisiel never intended her cattle farm to be a Thorpe, but the arrival of refugees from a conflict between two nobles in nearby Madrid influenced its growth. The farm holds two small balefires, and an allied boggan created a third in a nearby meadow, adding its power to the Thorpe. The Autumn sidhe Marisiel is happy to welcome refugees, as long as they leave politics at the door — it's the reason she left Madrid herself, years ago.

Workshop

Workshops, the counterpart of Homesteads, exist almost completely in the Autumn World. Like Homesteads, changelings use them to produce chimerical items, to the point where the balefire's Glamour is more often used to fuel the creation of goods rather than the creator's personal reserves. Workshops are eclectic and unique, but usually, a nocker or boggan serves as Regent to these freeholds, under the authority of a landed noble patron.

Benefit: A Workshop grants its freeholders -2 difficulty on Craft rolls while they reside within. It also creates chimerical goods and items, using the rules found on **Changeling: The Dreaming 20th Anniversary Edition** p.317.

- ⑤ Fu Meili runs her Workshop in an abandoned station of Hong Kong's subway. The streams of humans daydreaming with music or books as they pass through nearby stations keep the balefire well-fed. A mortal cousin to Hong Kong's sidhe Magister, the satyr is mostly free to create and sell her beautiful swords and clockwork creatures as she pleases.
- ⑤ Two Kings Brewery is run by Dafne Broeks, a Belgian Seelie boggan living in Antwerp. Her beer is famous for its miraculous properties: it can heal wounds, enhance mental prowess, or make the drinker *extremely* drunk, depending on the recipe. Dafne also created a love potion recipe, but she steadfastly refuses to share it, saying that love must be consensual to be true.

Example: Marianne's troupe chooses the Hearth Archetype. They want Mirror Lights to draw in people of all ilk, and a Hearth's inclusive nature fits perfectly. They also like the Leadership bonus, which is not immediately relevant for a new motley, but fits their intention of making a name for themselves.

Aspect

Once the troupe has chosen their freehold's Archetype, they can decide on an aspect. Aspects offer no mechanical benefits, but are just as important as Archetypes in describing the freehold's innate character. Aspects draw on the nature of the nearby Dreaming and the personalities of the freeholders. A castle in Schwarzwald, Germany, won't naturally be populated by wallabies; the characters must travel to Australia's Dreaming to catch specimens for that. It might, however, be infested with venomous spiders drawn from a freeholder's nightmares, even though Germany has no native venomous spiders.

Everyone in the troupe, including the Storyteller, should be happy with the Aspect selected. It should be unique and personal to the characters, while matching the Storyteller's vision for the chronicle's Near Dreaming.

- ⑤ Niomi claimed a freehold at the edge of the Hwange National Park from its former redcap master and refurbished it into a photo safari lodge. Though the freehold retains the "hunting lodge" aspect from the last freeholder, Niomi has embraced this, marketing her business as an ideal place to "hunt for the perfect moment!" This way, she respects the freehold's existing Aspect as she creates her own.
- ⑤ Niagara Falls is home to a water Aspect Glade. The balefire at the heart of the small island is a geyser rather than a fire, and the Glade's impenetrable walls are made of rushing water. The Isle is owned by a May-may-gway-shi, who guards her stronghold against the Kithain. Great fish live in the Dreaming of the falls, and they aid the Nunnehi in her defense.
- ⑤ In the Harajuku district of Japan stands a slender castle. As complex and layered as the famous Harajuku girls, its Aspect is "pink castle with bows and Hello Kitty skull decorations". Visitors to the freehold are often dismissive of the pink structure, but they should pay more attention to the skulls — the castle's Eiluned mistress may be sweet and Seelie in the summer, but she is lethal and Unseelie in winter.

Example: *The troupe decides Mirror Lights should be a nightclub with live music, a VIP lounge, and the darkness in the basement. But those are all descriptions of what the freehold does. Now the troupe must decide what the freehold is.*

Rob says he really liked the Zion dance scene from *The Matrix Reloaded*, and the rest of the troupe agrees. After watching the scene again, they write down the keywords: primal, exuberant, sexy. They link "primal" to the darkness — this is an ancient threat, though perhaps only recently active again — and reserve "sexy" and "exuberant" for the club's atmosphere and patrons.

The freehold's Aspect is now "sexy nightclub with exuberant parties and hidden primal darkness." It's a mouthful, but conveys the freehold's personality well.

Appearance

Most of the time, a freehold's physical and chimerical appearance match — a small tree house in the Autumn world is a sprawling treetop fortress in the Dreaming. Occasionally though, the Dreaming throws changelings for a loop: the small, pink house at the end of the street is a bristling estate full of dark corners and hidden passages in the Dreaming. Both physical and chimerical bodies are susceptible to change: a motley might simply paint the house blue with no changes to the chimerical

appearance, whereas bright torches suddenly spring up in dark chimerical passageways when the freehold changes hand from a surly sluagh to an outgoing satyr.

A troupe should also consider the Autumn location of their freehold. Does it sit at the end of the great park lane, or is it wedged in between houses in a dark alley? Does it grace a peaceful inner-city sanctuary, or hide in a war-torn countryside? Does the motley own the Autumn house, or are they renting or squatting? These things are as much a part of the freehold's story as its chimerical body.

Example: *The troupe thinks Mirror Lights is too small for the Strip, and they'd rather cater to local croupiers, waiters, and dancers than tourists. Dewayne suggests Mirror Lights used to be a casino that failed due to its off-Strip location, and that it was later converted into a nightclub. Shino builds off that and suggests that echoes of the lost freehold's balefire enticed a luckless mortal to set up a casino around it.*

The troupe sees no need to pinpoint a physical address, other than "off-Strip, where only locals and lost tourists go." They still have to settle on Mirror Lights' physical size, and go for a dance floor, bar, VIP lounge, and backstage area with a room divider to create office space.

Hierarchy

A freehold conveys certain privileges to its holders, and the players should discuss how they share them. The same holds for the Glamour generated by the freehold's balefire. It's fine (and encouraged) to negotiate this in character. Not all the characters need to be happy with the outcome, but the players should be.

- ⑤ Titania and Oberon divide their freehold by night and day: she holds all rights of Hospitality, Passage, Sanctuary, and Mandate during the dark hours, and he during the light. Attuned to both of them, the freehold's powerful balefire divides its Glamour, producing two points during the day and two during the night. The remaining Glamour converts to dross during twilight, manifesting as black dew drops, and is a frequent source of contention between the lovers.
- ⑤ Lord Holt ap Dougal holds the prestigious Fentir Workshop in Ireland. He shares his balefire and the privileges of Sanctuary freely with his betrothed, Lord Muriel ap Liam, but keeps the privileges of Hospitality, Passage, and Mandate solely to himself. The exclusion grates Lord Muriel, who prefers a home where they are both equals.

Example: *The Low Rollers will share Mirror Lights' Glamour evenly, as well as most of its responsibilities and privileges. They make two exceptions: Lance gets the sole privileges of Hospitality and Mandate to the VIP room, and only Laisha may invite guest performers (effectively granting her Hospitality and Mandate over the stage).*

Glamour Investment

All freeholders must invest a dot of Glamour in the freehold, even if that exceeds its total balefire rating. If their combined Glamour still falls short of the balefire rating, they have to pay the difference (divided between them as they see fit) or use the Treasure-sacrificing method described on **Changeling: The Dreaming 20th Anniversary Edition p.314** to lower the cost.

This Glamour attunes the freehold to their wishes, allowing them to shape it, consciously or otherwise, to their needs. As long as this Glamour remains invested, they may also harvest the balefire, take advantage of Sanctuary, and grant (or deny) hospitality and privileges to visitors. If the freehold is ever destroyed, all changelings regain their individually invested Glamour and an equal amount of Banality.

Example: Marianne's troupe is leaning toward a four-dot balefire for Mirror Lights, to match the number of motley members – that means they only need to invest one Glamour each. Should the freehold ever be destroyed, each of the changelings regains that Glamour dot and one Banality dot to match it.

Multiple Fires Burning

A Thorpe's balefires are independent entities, requiring separate Glamour investments. Each has a different appearance, as well as different Glamour and dross production. Changelings who invest in one of a Thorpe's balefires work out Hierarchy for that specific balefire between themselves, and permission to sleep at one balefire does not translate to permission to sleep at the others.

Every changeling invested in one or more balefires counts as a freeholder when it comes to the Rule of Hospitality, and the Rights of Mandate, Passage, and Sanctuary. As long as one of the balefires still burns, the freehold and all its features remains (though its balefire rating might diminish if one of the balefires dies).

Freeholders can also choose to perform the **Oath of Fire and Unity** – a ritual especially common with motleys. The Thorpe's freeholders divide themselves across all the balefires (if they're too few, they have to appoint temporary Regents to fill the gaps), and recite the oath together. Modern motleys sometimes rely on livestreams to coordinate, but this is not necessary: the Dreaming will synchronize the oath swearers as if they were speaking in one voice. The oath binds the Thorpe's balefires together, allowing the freeholders to withdraw and re-invest Glamour for all of balefires combined, instead of separately. This can significantly reduce the cost of membership in the Thorpe, especially if they also sacrifice Treasure or chimera in lieu of investing Glamour themselves.

Hierarchy, Glamour, and dross production (and divison) remain independent: the bonded balefires are sisters, not twins. While the oath allows for potentially cheaper Glamour investments, it leaves the freehold more vulner-

able to Reaving. Once an attacker has depleted one of the balefires, he can stay on location and use the oathbond to Reave the linked balefires.

The Rule of Hospitality

The freeholders must offer food, drink, and a night's hospitality to any changeling who asks for it. They do not have to offer access to their balefire, and the hospitality does not need to extend beyond one night. When that night has passed, the guest may petition any of the freeholders to stay longer. If the troupe is divided in opinion and cannot reach consensus, the Dreaming allows the guest to stay.

Example: Delilah, Laisha's pooka girlfriend, has an open invitation from Laisha to sleep at Mirror Lights. Lance dislikes Delilah due to her capricious nature, but as long as Laisha's invitation stands, he cannot force Delilah out.

He can, however, try to sway the other Low Rollers to pressure Laisha into rescinding her invitation, a tactic that will certainly cause tension between the motley.

The Right of Mandate

Changelings have complete sovereignty within their freehold – their word is law, even if someone who outranks them visits. Motleys shouldn't push their luck too far, though – if High King David comes to visit, they could technically tell him exactly what he can and can't do, but it might be wiser to pull their punches and make a good impression on the king. If two (or more) freeholders contradict each other, the last one speaking to the visitor counts. If the troupe decides on an issue beforehand, they must inform each other before they can revoke that ruling.

Example: A Baron comes to Mirror Lights, and Lance graciously tells him to "go anywhere you please." Cayne later finds the Baron exploring the basement, where he senses a dark presence, and tells him that's not wise and "you probably shouldn't." Cayne's order takes priority, as he spoke to the Baron last (though the noble might go back to Lance for a new *carte blanche*).

The motley later decides the basement should be offlimits to visitors. If at any point a member of the troupe does want to invite a visitor down, he has to inform the rest of the motley before he does. Note that he doesn't need their permission – he only needs to inform them.

Point-Buy Features

With the freehold's story spun, the troupe converts their vision into hard numbers. Pooling their individual Holdings, they determine how many feature points they can spend: each Holdings dot is worth three feature points. Individual freehold features are capped at five dots, though the features combined may exceed five. Players can also invest in a personal freehold, represented by a separate Holding Background.

The Biggest and the Smallest Fire

A troupe can sink all their feature points in Balefire, giving them a huge source of Glamour for only one Holdings dot each. This leaves them with a highly coveted and valuable resource, sitting out in the open with no protection. As freeholds are vitally important to changeling society, sooner or later, someone will come to take it from them and finally invest in building a castle around the balefire for proper protection.

Players can also skip the Balefire feature entirely. Like Fu Meili's Shop, the freehold holds only an ember — the *promise* of Glamour. Fanning that spark into an all-out flame should be a great undertaking. Maybe the troupe owns an ancient castle, but the touchstone at the back of the fireplace was stolen centuries ago — until they retrieve it, the balefire won't burn. Once the quest is complete, the players can invest more Holdings dots and spend the feature points on Balefire.

Balefire

Players can freely decide where the balefire lies and what it looks like, but the freehold only generates Glamour and/or dross equal to its balefire rating. For example, a three-dot balefire can generate three Glamour, three dross, or any combination thereof that does not exceed a total of three. The Glamour is evenly split between changelings sleeping near the balefire, as per **Changeling: The Dreaming 20th Anniversary Edition** p.312.

Any one of the freeholders may give a guest permission to harvest Glamour from the balefire, though a second freeholder may deny this if they find out. If two freeholders reach an impasse about this, they may call on the rest of the freeholders to vote. The majority rules, though a tie comes down in favor of the nays — the Dreaming is protective of its Glamour.

In addition to assigning a balefire rating to their freehold, the troupe should also decide where in the freehold it lies and what it looks like.

- ⑤ The balefire of Wayland's workshop takes the form of a great forge, in which the fabled smith tempers his steel. As a permanent feature of the balefire, weapons forged within are imbued with a free point of Glamour.
- ⑤ Lady Margaret has turned her townhouse into a Manor. Her balefire is a soft light that springs from a porcelain figurine gifted to her by her patron, Duchess Deliah. This figurine was the vessel that carried a spark of the balefire of Deliah's freehold, which Margaret used to ignite her own.

Example: The troupe wants Mirror Lights' balefire to produce at least one point of Glamour per motley member, for a total of four

points. Nancy suggests the balefire originates in the dark, unexplored basement. Dwayne builds on that, suggesting that the fire burns upward in a column of light that illuminates the stage like a reverse spotlight — this is both appropriate since performers are the heart of the nightclub, and handy since it allows them to chill and regain Glamour easily once the club closes.

Size

A freehold's Size rating represents the area the freehold encompasses. The size may be either the mundane or the chimerical area of the freehold, normally whichever is larger.

- x Miniscule, out in the open with no walls: a faerie ring, or a decorated stone in a street
- An apartment; one to two average rooms.
- A home; three to four average rooms.
- A mansion, warehouse, or church; five to eight average rooms.
- A sprawling estate, fortress, or network of tunnels; nine to 15 average rooms.
- A significant chunk of the countryside, or a town; Tara-Nar.

Example: The troupe wants Mirror Lights' chimerical body to match its Autumn shell. That makes it a three-room freehold (dance floor with bar, VIP lounge, backstage area with office), but each room is much larger than average — not counting the space needed to store bar supplies and stage equipment. This pushes Mirror Lights' size up to three dots.

Since they now have room to spare (going from "three to four average rooms" to "a mansion or warehouse"), the troupe adds a separate office and an attached shed for storage. Marianne, thinking of the darkness below, chimes in and suggests the basement is actually several rooms, some walled off, and that the motley hasn't explored them all yet. Since this is the Storyteller's addition rather than the players', the players do not have to pay for this additional size until the Storyteller deems it appropriate, perhaps once their characters explore and secure those hidden rooms.

Sanctuary

A freehold naturally protects its freeholders, granting them a threshold against attacks as well as bonus dice for defense equal to its Sanctuary rating. Sanctuary also subtracts dice equal to its rating to any Reaving attempts against the balefire. Furthermore, Sanctuary subtracts dice equal to its rating to all unwanted attempts to find or break into the freehold. Sanctuary does not work against freely-invited guests, but if the invitation is rescinded, it takes full effect.

Troupes should also decide what form this defense takes, which should be in keeping with the Archetype, Aspect, and Appearance they chose.

- ⑤ Haweyo lives in an abandoned freight ship off the Somali coast. If intruders board the ship, the horn creates such an

intensely loud sound it stuns and hinders the attackers. To Haweeyo and those she invites on board, the horn merely plays a soft, pleasant melody.

- ⑤ An ancient sluagh makes its home in an old Bostonian cemetery. Drawing on the sluagh's nightmares, the freehold instills dread in those who enter uninvited. The sluagh has never invited visitors in its long life, but it could. By carving their name on a headstone, it could render its guests immune to the effect.

Example: *Mirror Lights* has at least two entrances: one for patrons, and one for staff (and maybe a secret entrance to the basement, hailing to the prohibition era). The troupe decides to invest two points in Sanctuary, and together, they create a description of a large chimerical bouncer guarding each entrance. The bouncers will alert the motley to any intruders and aid in fights – while they have no actual stats of their own, the dice bonus obtained through Sanctuary represents their help.

Resources

A freehold may generate resources for the changelings, be they mundane or chimerical. This feature is vast in scope, encompassing mundane money, chimerical plants, stone, metal, or even chimerical creatures. As such, Storytellers and players should decide what rating is reasonable.

- ⑤ The Kurmaja homestead in Osh grows a pomegranate-like fruit that allows humans to experience the Dreaming as changelings do: they see changeling miens, and may be hurt by chimerical damage. The effects last only 24 hours, and the Kurmaja fruits are very much in demand. It produces a potent effect, but that effect can also be achieved through Treasures and cantrips. As such, it warrants only two dots of Resources.
- ⑤ A small freehold in Roppongi Hills, Japan, creates chimerical companions. This is not conscious effort by the freeholders, but rather, it just happens – every now and then, a cute, fuzzy creature pops up near the balefire. The creatures possess limited intelligence and communication skills and are highly sought-after, and the freeholders trade them for money or dross. Even with their unpredictable creation, the creatures are so valuable that this counts as a four-dot Resource.

Example: *Mirror Lights* doesn't produce chimerical items, but as a nightclub it does generate mundane revenue. Deciding that it would be good to have a motley income in addition to individual Resources, the players decide to invest two dots in Resources. This means *Mirror Lights* is new and only minorly successful, but it's a good start – and the players may always add Holdings dots and purchase additional Resources later.

Passages

A freehold is connected to both the Dreaming and the Autumn World. It has one free rath or trod, and the troupe may purchase additional ones at the cost of one feature point per path. Players should consider if these paths lead to the Near or Far Dreaming and if they are safe and well-traveled. The freeholders are responsible for maintaining these passages. Other Kithain may petition them for access, but they are not obligated to grant it.

- ⑤ The Dreaming Stone in the Australian outback holds a trod that leads to the Deep Dreaming. The freeholders are unable to close the trod, and they frequently have to beat back nightmare beasts that use the path to attack the Glade.
- ⑤ The Walking Moon Manor in Estonia sits on a crossroad of powerful trods. From Walking Moon, changelings can travel to New York, Capetown, Tokyo, and Reykjavik. The freeholders, Arcadian sidhe sisters from Houses Eiluned and Ailil, will happily let anyone use their trods for a secret revealed.

Example: *Mirror Lights'* free trod is its back entrance: a freeholder may knock on it in a specific pattern, after which the door opens to reveal a path leading into the Near Dreaming. The troupe doesn't see a need for additional trods, so they choose not to spend points on this feature.

Powers

In addition to features, freeholds can hold a variety of powers. This section details the most common ones, but troupes are encouraged to come up with their own, too.

Warning Call (•)

The freehold's Sanctuary doesn't just protect its residents, it also alerts them. The freeholders are immediately aware of intruders trying to make their way into the freehold, or – if they are already within – where they currently are. If the intruders conceal themselves with Glamour, such as through the use of Chicanery cantrips or Treasures with similar abilities, the freehold rolls its Sanctuary rating at a difficulty of 6 to penetrate the obfuscating effect.

Glamour to Dross (••)

Every evening, the freehold converts unclaimed Glamour into dross. Once the total created and unused Dross is twice the freehold's balefire rating, this conversion stops until some of the Dross is used up.

Resonant Dreams (••)

Freeholders gain a +2 dice bonus either on all mundane checks, or one Art, that resonate with the freehold's Aspect, while they remain within.

- Lady Vivienne lives in an underwater castle off the coast of England. The water Aspect of her freehold reinforces Vivienne's magic, granting her a +2 bonus on Sovereign checks made against her selkie subjects.
- The Utjawi Homestead in Peru rears large alpaca-like creatures intended for riding. The freeholders gain +2 on all checks to handle these creatures, but also on selling them.

Example: *Mirror Lights' Aspect could grant several bonuses – the VIP area could enhance Lance's Sovereign, or the stage light could enhance Laisha's Chicanery. Those powers would only aid two characters though, and while Dewayne and Rob offer to chip in an extra Holding dot to compensate, the troupe decides to go for the mundane bonus instead. Tapping into the freehold's sexy, exuberant, and dark nature, they could easily gain a bonus on Intimidation, Persuasion, or Performance checks.*

Call Forth the Flame (•••)

Lost since the Shattering, changelings are slowly rediscovering the art of coaxing Covenants of the Flame from their balefires. Freeholders celebrate at their balefire in a way that suits their nature – a boisterous satyr holds an orgy, while a quiet boggan sits alone and polishes the silverware, and an extrovert pooka tells stories to an enraptured audience. After a number of nights equal to the freehold's Balefire rating, the fire produces its Covenant Ember in a flare of Glamour. This Ember is the central component of the Covenant of Flame (see p.35), though the players must pay the Treasure's Background rating separately.

Dual Nature (•••)

The freehold draws on two separate Archetypes, such as a school inside an ancient castle, or a noble's mansion encompassing a courtyard where its people trade and bargain. The freehold gains the benefit of a second Archetype in addition to its first.

Cantrips (•• – ••••• •••••)

A freehold can hold any Cantrip that resonates with the freehold's Archetype or Aspect at twice the cost of the cantrip's rating in its Art. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of which cantrips fit the freehold's dream and which don't.

Quirks

Freeholds aren't sentient, but they have a dream life of their own. Every freehold has features that don't mold to their holders' desires, but spring from their nightmares or from those of the ambient Dreaming. Many commoners take these oddi-

ties as-is, though nobles, especially Arcadian sidhe, find them distinctly disconcerting. Some nobles even claim these quirks didn't occur before the Shattering, and accuse commoners of breaking the freeholds. Given how little Arcadian sidhe typically remember before the Resurgence, it's impossible to verify these accusations.

Quirks can be harmless, strange, and unpredictable, or outright dangerous. Troupes should take care to ensure the freehold remains a benefit to the players who invested Background dots into it. A freehold's potential for danger should present an adventure to tackle or a problem to solve rather than a reason to move out.

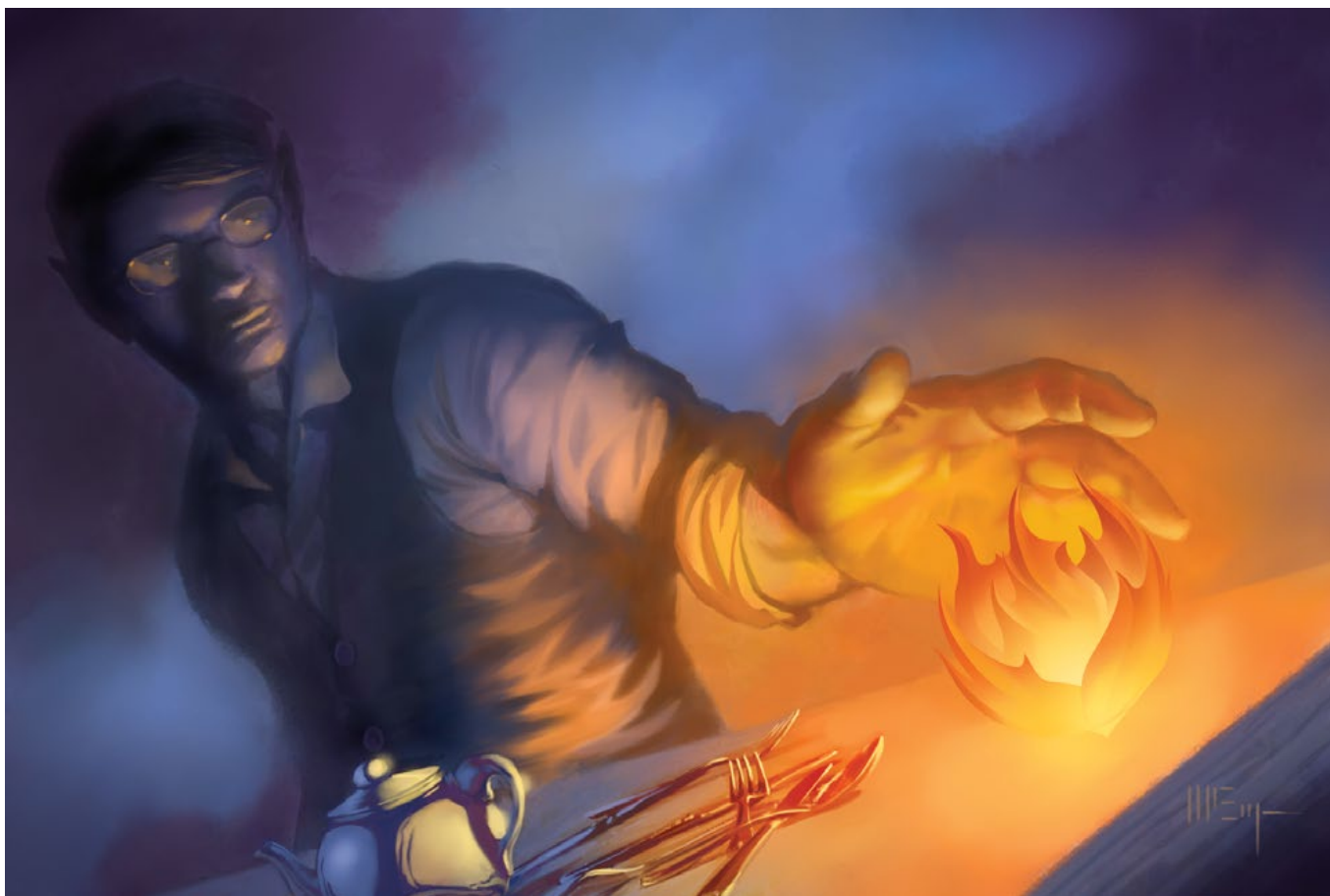
- A wild wave of Glamour swept the Killarney freehold up decades ago. The Hearth's Autumn shell remains a small, unassuming house in Ireland, but the current of Glamour drags Killarney's chimerical body all across Ireland and, occasionally, into Europe. On any morning, Sir Thomas Agemo, its pooka freeholder, might wake up to find that one of the Manor's raths still leads to the house in Ireland, while the other suddenly exits into the Near Dreaming of France, or worse, Britain.
- The Three Dukes freehold in Chicago sits on the border of two gang turfs. The freeholder, a landed noble of House Liam, works hard to maintain his freehold as neutral territory, and is not above pitting the gangs against each other or striking deals with either of the leaders to stay out of the fray.
- The small Amogetswe freehold just outside Gabarone managed to survive the construction of Sir Seretse Khama airport. The freehold still exists today, but the chimerical winds around the freehold die completely whenever a plane takes off.

Example: *Mirror Lights was lost in the Shattering, but the Low Rollers found it in the Dreaming. After they invested Glamour in the balefire and claimed it, the freehold merged with its Autumn shell again. The motley doesn't know that the freehold's previous owner, a Lost One, still remains in the freehold. The creature is essentially trapped, too insane and vulnerable to leave the safety of the basement. The creature's fear soon turns to hatred, spreading to envelop the patrons of Mirror Lights – who in turn suffer nightmares, obsession, and suicides.*

Marianne plans to leave clues for the characters to follow, culminating in a battle with the Lost One. Once they defeat it, the freehold strengthens its attachment to the motley, and Marianne will either increase its Sanctuary rating or grant it a Power free of cost.

Paying for It All

With the freehold fully fleshed out, the players tally all the points they spent on features or powers. Remember that each Holdings point allocates three feature points, so divide by three to determine how many Background dots



the players need to purchase together.

The players decide how the division is made: an even share by everyone is typical, but some players can spend more to represent benefits specific to their character. The Storyteller may choose to contribute dots if some features of the freehold are not under the players' control, though the Storyteller's contribution should be much smaller than the players'.

Example: *Mirror Lights* has the following statistics: Size •••, *Balefire* ••••, *Sanctuary* ••, *Resources* ••, and *Resonant Dreams* ••, which add up to 13 points altogether. This translates to a total of *Holdings* •••••, which grants 15 freehold points in total. Going back over their notes, the troupe decides to add *Glamour to Dress* as

an additional power for the two remaining points.

Now, the troupe decides how to split the cost. Dewayne offers to pay more, to reflect Lance's sole dominion over the VIP lounge. Laisha controls the guest performers, but the troupe agrees it's a lesser boon than Lance's and unworthy of asking Rob to buy another dot. Nancy, Rob, and Shino each purchase *Holdings* •, and Dewayne buys *Holdings* ••. Marianne could have contributed, compensating for the darkness below, but instead chooses to reward the group with free upgrades once the Low Rollers defeat the Lost One.

If a player also wishes to invest in a personal freehold, she may purchase that *Background* separately – Cayne's character sheet might read *Holdings* (•) for *Mirror Lights* and *Holdings* (•) for the redcap's own bachelor pad.



CHAPTER THREE: FREEHOLD MAINTENANCE

"There is no place like home."

— L. Frank Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*

Being a freeholder is a wonderfully rewarding experience. It gives a changeling a reliable supply of Glamour and shelter against the ravages of Banality. It also gives him a deep and personal bond with the Dreaming unknown to most Kithain. If he's not careful though, it can also be an overwhelming experience. He doesn't just have to worry about day-to-day maintenance; he must also deal with any threats that arise. For better or worse, becoming a freeholder will inevitably alter the story of his life.

Owning the Freehold

Building the freehold is merely the first step to actually owning one. Only after taking ownership do most freeholders find the actual work begins. Once a changeling ratifies her freehold, it accords her all the rights and responsibilities of a freeholder. She must diligently maintain her freehold or risk it forsaking her. She must beware of all perils that might endanger her holding. If she doesn't have a plan to counter such threats, she risks losing everything she diligently built. Concurrently, she must not forget her mortal

affairs. A careless freeholder is Bedlam's easiest prey in the Autumn World.

Ratification

Once the hard work of building a freehold is finished, the process of ratification is straightforward. The freeholder swears the Oath of Demesne to invest his Glamour, tying his soul to the fate of his holding. As long as he remains connected to the freehold, he enjoys all rights and responsibilities of a freeholder. The Dreaming itself supports this bond, so long as the agendas of freehold and freeholder are in sync. Then, things always seem to go right for the changeling. Luck breaks his way while he's in his freehold. But if freeholder and freehold are at odds, the freehold offers passive-aggressive resistance. Minor possessions go missing. There seems to always be something in the way for the freeholder to trip over. For all the good luck a freeholder receives while in harmony with his freehold, he suffers nothing but misfortune when they dissent.

In Absentia

The story of a changeling's life is often tumultuous, sometimes keeping her constantly on the move. Her

The Oath of Demesne

As the land supports the air, as the water nourishes all life, so shall I serve [name of the freehold]. So long as I draw breath and the Ignis Vesta burns, I shall be its guardian, else the Dreaming avert its gaze from me.

The Oath of Demesne is similar in nature to the Oath of Guardianship, except it carries a heavy cost. Upon swearing the oath, the freeholder invests Glamour equal to the freehold's rating. As long as he upholds the oath, he enjoys all the rights and responsibilities that come with freehold ownership. If he breaks the oath, he automatically receives Banality equal to the Glamour he invested.

In the case of a motley swearing the oath, each member must contribute at least one Glamour. If any individual breaks the oath, each changeling receives Banality equal to the Glamour only he invested – even if they were not the ones to break it.

adventures might keep her away from her freehold and unable to perform her duties as freeholder for extended periods. Occasionally, a noble might claim ownership of more holdings than she can possibly maintain herself. In the cases where a freeholder is prevented from personally caring for her freehold, she'll usually find a regent to manage the day-to-day business of the holding in her stead.

If a changeling agrees to become the regent of a freehold, he must swear the Oath of Regency. With oath in place, all the benefits and responsibilities backed by the Dreaming transfer from the owner to the regent. The owner of the freehold loses the rights that accompany it until she asks for her holding back. Freeholders who appoint a regent never choose their minister casually. Even if the freehold falls while under someone else's stewardship, the freehold's owner suffers the consequences as normal.

Rights and Responsibilities

Though most are unable to afford the initial Glamour investment, many changelings dream of becoming freeholders. After all, what is better than holding a private refuge from Banality and a personal wellspring of Glamour? While it's true that freehold ownership has undeniable benefits, freeholds carry a price for freeholders beyond the Glamour cost. Kithain society makes demands of its freeholders to ensure the survival of all changelings. More importantly, her soul becomes intermingled with the Dreaming through the freehold, and while the Dreaming will take steps to protect her, it also places certain expectations on the freeholder to ensure its own survival.

The Right of Harvest

In exchange for tending the balefires, which keep the Dreaming vital, the freehold offers a small portion of its rarefied ideas

and emotions as Glamour to its freeholders. Through her soul's union with the freehold, a freeholder or landed noble is able to connect with the Dreaming when she sleeps near her balefire. During her slumber, the Dreaming allows her to harvest Glamour according to the freehold's balefire rating. With nothing more than a thought, she may allow another to receive the Right of Harvest in her place. This Right comes with a price. In order to receive its Glamour, a freeholder must actively maintain the freehold's balefire. After all, balefire is the manifestation of new thoughts and emotions pouring into the Dreaming. Without it, the Dreaming stagnates and eventually withers away.

February 2nd marks Imbolc, or Bard's Day – a day of replenishment for balefires. Firebrands carry lanterns lit from the Well of Flames from Tara-Nar to every freehold in Concordia. The lantern's flame is added to the freehold's balefire in a symbolic act of restoration. In return, the freeholder either provides a story herself or arranges for one to be told on her behalf. The story must be different every year, in tribute to the ever-changing nature of Glamour and the Dreaming. The rite of Imbolc strengthens the freehold's balefire for another year. If the freeholder fails to observe the rituals of Imbolc, she gains one fewer Glamour points than normal when harvesting her balefire until the next rite, and the balefire weakens, becoming more susceptible to Banality and other threats.

The Rule of Hospitality

The law of hospitality is one of the oldest traditions of the Kithain. When he accepted guardianship of the freehold, the freeholder agreed to protect the Dreaming and, by extension, the people born of it. Any creature of Dream invoking the tradition of hospitality may not be turned away. In addition, the freeholder must offer his guest any food or drink he can reasonably pro-

Oath of Regency

With the light of the Ignis Vesta as our witness, I take upon your holding, caring for it as though it is my own. Let my hand be an extension of yours. Let your will find expression through me. May I serve in your trust until you return, else the light of my heart grow dim.

The would-be regent uses a dot of Glamour to seal the Oath of Regency. While the oath is in place, she takes on all the rights and responsibilities of the freehold as though she were the owner. The oath ends and the regent regains her Glamour when the original freeholder returns and asks for her freehold back – whether the regent wishes to return it or not. Should the freehold fall while the oath is in effect, the regent automatically gains Banality equal to the Glamour used to seal the oath. The freeholder automatically gains Banality equal to the freehold's rating.

Imbolc Around the World

The tradition of Firebrands and the replenishment the balefires across their kingdom is an integral part of Imbolc rituals, but those from Tara-Nar only visit the freeholds of Concordia. What of the faerie kingdoms outside its borders? The capital freehold of every great kingdom feeds the freeholds of its nation from the flames of its own great balefire. In addition to Concordia's Well of Flames, Firebrands light lanterns from such balefires as the kingdom of Hibernia's ever-burning heart of Emain Macha, Huma's Nest within the Empire of the Caucasus, Ginga's Folly in the Land of the Wandering Dream, and the Gifts of Aganju from the Lands of Ancient Tales.

cure. He is not expected to offer his guests the opportunity to harvest Glamour from the balefire, nor is he required to extend his guests' stay beyond the first night. If the freeholder refuses a request for hospitality, the Dreaming removes its protection from Banality for a week, and he immediately suffers a Banality trigger. Hospitality may be revoked without consequence if his guests intentionally attempt harm against the freeholder or his possessions. While the Dreaming levies no additional punishment against the guests for breaking hospitality, they must face whatever they were seeking shelter from.

The Right of Mandate

A changeling is the ruler of her domain. Just as a baron's word is law over his territory, a freeholder's edicts must be obeyed within her freehold. She may owe fealty to another lord or have her actions bound by oaths. Even if the freeholder's commands oppose her lord or break her oaths, the Dreaming will still enforce her will within the bounds of her freehold. It will go to great lengths to uphold her word, but the Dreaming expects the freeholder to uphold its mandate in return. Every freehold has an Aspect that serves as its foundation — a strong legend or emotion tied to the location. A freehold in White Lake, New York would have an Aspect of free love, whereas one built in Selma, Alabama would have an Aspect of strife or protest.

These dreams must be reinforced or they'll fade from memory. The Dreaming expects a freeholder to support her freehold's dream in accordance with its Aspect. The owner of a freehold of peace might forsake the use of weapons, no matter the circumstances. The lord of a freehold with a sadness Aspect might erect a memorial to the tragedy that inspired the freehold's dream. Even freeholds with an Aspect as far afield as a popular children's cartoon must have their dream supported. This is second nature to child freeholders, but grumps can still host Pretty Princess Kitty themed birthday parties. As long as the freeholder fulfills tangible acts to reinforce



the freehold's aspect, the freehold takes action to impede those who act against the will of the freeholder, imposing dice penalties up to the freehold's balefire rating. If the freeholder forsakes the freehold's Aspect, the freehold forsakes her in turn, taking no action to stop those who would act against her.

The Right of Passage

The freeholder is responsible for maintaining all trods and raths connected to the freehold. Trods are often aligned with certain dreams much like freeholds. In order to keep the trod healthy, a freeholder needs to reinforce the trod's Aspect as well. Luckily for her, trods attached to freeholds are almost always based on similar, if not the same dreams. Actions taken to support one will usually support the other. A number of trods require additional rites to maintain their vitality, usually a specific action on meaningful dates. A fireplace-rath that opens into a winter wonderland realm requires a sacrifice of milk and cookies every Christmas Eve. A Thorpe on the banks of the Zambezi welcomes residents returning from their journeys with Mahororo songs played on a mbira, keeping the trods clear of hostile chimera. A trod of secrets demands a riddle be answered every Solstice that coincides with the new moon. Others maintain their power if only those worthy to pass through or walk the path are allowed passage. It then falls to the freeholder to determine who is worthy and who must be denied.

Failing to properly maintain a trod associated with the freehold doesn't have direct repercussions from the Dreaming on the freeholder. However, if the trod isn't well maintained and secure, there is no telling what sort of surprises might cross into the Autumn World from the Dreaming. The Dreaming is unpredictable, and things that find their way along dilapidated trods can range from benign annoyances to life-threatening perils. It behooves a freeholder to preserve his trod.

- ☞ Chimerical termites find that a freehold makes a tasty snack.
- ☞ A platoon of army ants decides the freehold is the perfect forward base of operations as they expand their empire.
- ☞ A beautiful Ganconer with an eye for the freeholder's skin awaits to seduce him.

Politics

While not required by the Dreaming, freeholders often find themselves at the center of changeling politics whether they like it or not. Her position as the freehold's proprietor means that a freeholder is forced to settle disputes that arise in the freehold. If she establishes herself as a fair authority in the freehold, other changelings often look to her for guidance within the larger community. A freeholder's voice carries weight beyond such informal civic positions. As a voting member of the Parliament of Dreams (see p. 15), she can find herself with friends she never knew existed and others currying favor so she'll vote in their interests. Some freeholders revel in the attention and love the games of politics. Others resent their newfound attention and shun any who would use them for political gain.

Sanctuary

As long as the freeholder does everything the Dreaming expects of him in support of his freehold, he and his holding become in sync with one another. It transforms into his place of power, and he gains a considerable measure of strength while in its confines. They each become an extension of the other's will. If the freeholder stays true to his obligations and doesn't lapse in any of his duties backed by the Dreaming, he gains extra dice for any defensive roll, both physical and magical, equal to the freehold's rating. Additionally, he gains half the freehold's rating (round up) in extra dice for soak rolls. Should he be penalized by the Dreaming for neglecting his holding, he loses this benefit until he starts to maintain his freehold properly again.

Repercussions

Even with all the benefits of freehold ownership, a freeholder must always remain vigilant against the threats drawn to her holding. Jealous changelings and prodigals may eye her freehold with desire. The freehold may have other owners from lifetimes ago — now returned — demanding their freehold back. If the freeholder isn't careful, she could lose her freehold, her life, or both. The most dangerous threat, however, is that which is inherent to all freeholds — the seductive lure of Bedlam.

Defending the Freehold

Freeholds, especially powerful ones, are rare, precious commodities. The most common threats to them typically come from other changelings. Glamour is scarce, and Banality rampant. Some Kithain will go to any length secure refuge from both dangers. They're prepared to fight and kill to take a freehold for themselves, no matter what the Escheat says. Other changelings desire a particular freehold for the political or tactical advantage it provides, and will besiege the freehold until its holder surrenders or is slain. Growing in threat to Kithain freeholds are the Thallain, who wage devastating attacks on freeholds in order to control and twist them to their own nightmarish ends.

Some chimera are also willing to fight changelings for their freeholds, though they can't claim ownership like the Kithain. Most that threaten changeling freeholders are simply acting on instinct and do not understand that freeholds weaken and collapse without a changeling to maintain them. They only know the freehold provides a measure of safety, and see competition for the shelter as a threat to be eliminated.

Prodigals may also covet a changeling's freehold. Zealous werewolves in particular sometimes mistake a freehold for one of their holy sites and wage war to "reclaim" it in the name of their god. Mages, in their ignorance of the damage they do, consider freeholds a fuel source for their magic and can gut a freehold of all its Glamour, leaving a ruined husk behind. Certain families of vampires see freeholds as places of power suitable for enacting their bloody rites.

Dangerous threats may come from any direction. A freeholder should always have a plan in place to protect herself and her holding — by force, if necessary.

Contested Ownership

A freehold recognizes only the changeling or oathcircle who invested Glamour as its owner. If the freehold is destroyed, that Glamour is extinguished with the balefire. If the owner dies and passes back into the cycle of reincarnation, his invested Glamour goes dormant in the balefire, eventually burning away into raw dream-stuff. Arcadian sidhe are the most likely to contest ownership, but disputes over a current incarnation's rights to a freehold can arise between even commoners.

The simplest solution is for a freeholder to appoint a stand-in, bound by Oath of Regency, to oversee their holdings until their eventual return. In return, the regent may use the freehold as her own until the rightful freeholder returns to reclaim their holding.

In the age before the Shattering, mortality was unforeseeable to the fae. Their oaths made no provisions for a changeling dying and reincarnating into a new life. Some oaths of regency expired when the regent's first mortal life ended. Other regents found themselves drawn to the same freehold, lifetime after lifetime, unaware of their ancient oaths.

As long as an Oathbound regent dutifully maintains the freehold, the original freeholder may still claim the holding. Simply by requesting the freehold back, the returned noble regains full control over the holding — much to the dismay of the commoner.

The mass exodus of the nobility and their subsequent return muddled the waters with regards to the rightful ownership of a freehold. During the Resurgence, most commoner freeholders incorrectly assumed that their willingness to maintain their freeholds would supersede the right of the Arcadian sidhe who cut and ran. The Dreaming's sole criterion for who may lay claim to a freehold is whether or not a changeling's Glamour is bound to the balefire. A significant number of returned Arcadian sidhe brought with them their Covenants of Flame — a Treasure containing a piece of their Glamour mixed with a single flame of balefire. Though their original investment had long since evaporated, those Arcadian sidhe held proof of their claim. With the Dreaming recognizing their equal ownership (like a motley jointly contributing Glamour to a balefire), the sidhe then goaded the commoner into challenging him for sole rights. As the challenged party, the sidhe had the right to set the terms of the duel — ones favorable to their superior knowledge of Arts and the Dreaming.

Becoming Lost

Time is a funny thing in the Dreaming. The future and the past don't always move at the same speed, and they aren't necessarily prerequisites for each other. The mixture of Banality with the energies of the Dreaming tames time somewhat within a freehold, but dream-time can't be entirely restrained. Freeholds have a certain timeless feel because mortal time literally stands still in the presence of a balefire. Humans and changelings alike cease aging in a freehold, though time outside continues to proceed normally — a dangerous thing, because most beings in a freehold won't feel the time pass at all. Arcadian sidhe, however,



Covenant of Flame (Treasure ...)

Covenants of Flame serve as proof of ownership over a freehold. They are comprised of a small flame from a balefire encased in a crystalline structure carved into the shape of the freehold's crest. A Covenant is usually small and set into jewelry, such as a ring or pendant, enabling the freeholder to keep it on his person at all times. Landed nobles commonly possessed Covenants of Flame before the Shattering, but many were destroyed, lost, or taken to Arcadia in the ensuing chaos. The secret to their creation was lost to the Kithain during the Interregnum. Only recently, with a handful of Covenants back in circulation, have changeling artisans rediscovered how to craft them.

With a tiny piece of the changeling's soul and a single flame from the balefire, a Covenant of Flame becomes a bridge between freeholder and freehold. When the freeholder presents the Treasure before the balefire, it glows brilliantly, signaling he is the true owner of the freehold. While he is away, the flame within the Treasure relays the relative health of his holding. If the freehold collapses, he may destroy the Treasure to release the flame and reignite the balefire. A Covenant of Flame contains only a spark of the original balefire, though, and it may reestablish the freehold at a maximum of Holdings

- until the freeholder invests additional Glamour.



always know exactly how much time passes in a freehold, thanks to their undiminished faerie nature and affinity for time. Mundane clocks, for reasons the fae can only speculate on, continue tracking time normally in a freehold. Most freeholders make sure to keep a mortal timepiece on prominent display.

A freeholder succumbing to Bedlam in his freehold is one of the greatest horrors of the Kithain. When he completely lets go of the mundane, the Dreaming rushes into the schism in his psyche. His mind and his freehold become one. With his original personality subsumed by the freehold's dream, he is transformed into the freehold's Aspect personified and is no longer recognizable as a changeling. Capricious, callous, and utterly mad — Kithain call such beings Lost Ones. Lost Ones clothe themselves in their freeholds like a shroud, completely cutting themselves off from the outside world. Within their freeholds, they wield a near god-like power to reshape reality to their whims. Outside their protected sanctuary, the touch of Banality from the Autumn World renders them impotent and is enough to extinguish their lives in short order. Though rare, particularly cunning changelings have managed to bind Lost



Ones into oaths, turning them into powers of their freeholds (albeit capricious ones). Even bound, keeping a Lost One is a perilous endeavor. While their bedlam prevents them from breaking the letter of any oaths that bind them, their interpretation of their oaths may not match those of the freeholders.

Although freeholders who lose themselves to the temptation of their balefires aren't unheard of in the present day, most Lost Ones date back to the Shattering, when desperate fae barricaded themselves in their freeholds to hide from the floods of Banality. Lost Ones tend to be discovered by accident. A changeling pierces the skin of the world, hoping to reestablish the ruins of a freehold, and suddenly finds himself a captive performer in a Lost One's mad play. Only quick wit and cunning may trick the Lost One into leaving the safety of the freehold before the changeling's inevitable demise or descent into Bedlam, whichever comes first.

Maintaining the Freehold

Freeholds strengthen and wane over the course of their lifespan. Outside forces constantly batter the freehold's balefire, weakening it and reducing its rating. The freeholder must remain vigilant against these threats – chimerical pests nest in the freehold, Banality concentrates around the holding, or the freehold is attacked directly. The portion of her soul invested in the balefire lends it a resiliency it wouldn't otherwise have. As long as the balefire isn't extinguished, it will replenish itself over time, drawing on the ambient thoughts and emotions of local human populations. In this weakened state, the freeholder should take extra care to ensure her holding isn't stressed further.

Neglect

Unfortunately, neglect is all too often the cause behind a waning balefire. The freeholder either gets caught up in a quest, forgetting to leave behind a regent, or she loses herself in the mindless repetition of mundane affairs and forgets to check in on her holding. As she becomes more remiss in her duties, the freehold withdraws its support. It does this to remind the freeholder of her sworn responsibilities and as a cry for help, since without her attention and care, the balefire will sputter out.

Infestation

Besides the typical chimerical cockroaches and termites that routinely degrade a freehold's physical structure, certain pests from the Dreaming are all too eager to infest a freehold and eat away its balefire. The most infamous of these creatures was once the wolpertinger. They would nest in any freehold they could get into and multiply rapidly, devouring the balefire's Glamour faster than it could replenish itself. Even after the wolpertingers' transition into Kithain, they still can't help themselves around a balefire, a proclivity that doesn't help lingering prejudices against them. They are rarely allowed to stay in a freehold longer than the Rule of Hospitality requires.



Freehold Addiction



Changelings must be careful about how long they spend in a freehold – their sanity slips easily away. The ebb and flow of the Dreaming and Banality mixing, pulling, twisting, and pushing against each other make it easy for a changeling to lose sight of that which keeps him grounded. The refined, pure Glamour from the balefire is seductive and as addictive as it is invigorating. Any changeling who spends a week in a freehold gains an Imbalance. Also, if a changeling gathers Glamour points from a balefire in excess of his Glamour rating, he gains an Imbalance. For example, if the freeholder has a Glamour rating of 5 and currently has 4 Glamour points, he would gain an Imbalance if he harvests 2 or more Glamour points from his balefire.



The most dangerous pests freeholders contend with are dream weevils and nightmare locusts. Dream weevils scurry into the freehold on the freeholder's dreams as she harvests Glamour. Once inside, they hide in cracks and crevices, only emerging to feed while the freeholder slumbers. Most freeholders don't even realize there's a problem until the balefire weakens enough to reduce the freehold's rating. Once she does, it's a race to exterminate the infestation before it exterminates her freehold.

Nightmare locusts are a much more insidious threat, and were completely unknown before the Evanescence. They enter the waking world in a manner like dream weevils but, unlike weevils, nightmare locusts don't feed directly on balefire. Instead, they attach themselves to the humans subconsciously sustaining the freehold. The locusts eat their higher order thoughts and emotions, leaving nothing but primordial instinct for the balefire to process. The freehold's balefire gradually realigns to produce dark Glamour befitting Fomorians. If left unchecked, the infestation transforms the freehold into a Thallain freehold ([see p. 17 for more information](#)). Exterminating the infestation requires the freeholder to locate and save the Dreamers infected by the nightmare locusts.

Reaving

Jealous or impatient changelings sometimes attack freeholds for their Glamour. This process, known as Reaving, is similar to Ravaging. The Reaver channels his Banality into the balefire, forcing out the Glamour. Like Ravaging, a changeling suffers a Banality trigger whenever he Reaves a freehold. As her soul is joined with the balefire, the freeholder experiences an intense, icy pain in the core of her being when her holding is attacked, even if she is doing the Reaving herself. Just as covering a mundane fire deprives it of oxygen, Reaving a balefire suffocates it with Banality. The excess Banality deprives the balefire of the



Dream Weevils

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2, Perception 3, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Kenning 3, Stealth 3

Health Levels: OK, OK, Incapacitated

Redes: Hide, Steal Glamour

Glamour: 4 **Willpower:** 3

Armor: 0 (2 soak dice, total)

Notes: Dream weevils may use Steal Glamour on a balefire. They use the balefire's rating as the target difficulty. Dream weevils always travel in a swarm. If an entire swarm successfully uses Steal Glamour on a balefire, reduce the balefire's rating by one. Balefire ratings recover at a rate of 1 per month provided that dream weevils or other adversaries do not use Steal Glamour on them.



precious dreams and emotions it needs to burn, weakening it. If the attack weakens the balefire enough to reduce the freehold's rating, the freeholder continues to suffer a lingering pain in her heart until balefire recovers. For more about Reaving, see **Changeling: The Dreaming 20th Anniversary Edition**, p. 312.

Banality Encroachment

A rising tide of Banality is one of the most difficult threats a freeholder must face. When the ambient Banality of the freehold's surrounding area rises to high levels (8 or higher), it begins to erode the freehold's Glamour. The freehold loses one dot from its rating for every month it is immersed in high Banality.

Unlike most threats, the encroachment of Banality doesn't give the freeholder anything tangible to fight against. Instead of a straightforward war against a foe, she must convince people to dream again. Depending on her preference and the freehold's Aspect, she might start a community outreach program, launch a guerilla art barrage, or even expose — or create — a villain to inspire people to rally against. Once apathy sets in, it's extremely difficult to get people out of their rut. To free a mortal from the grip of Banality, a changeling must successfully perform Reverie on the person in question (see **Changeling: The Dreaming 20th Anniversary Edition**, pp. 260-261). The difficulty of her final Reverie roll is the target's Banality. If successful, the changeling does not gain any Glamour. Instead, the target's Banality is reduced by one. If the Reverie attempt botches, the changeling suffers a Banality trigger as the Banality proves to be overwhelming and threatens to infect the changeling.

Departure of a Freeholder

All freeholders eventually abandon their freeholds. The faerie half of her soul might be immortal, but a changeling is limited to a single mortal lifespan. Without a changeling's Glamour to act as its catalyst, the balefire will burn out. As the weight of years accumulates, wise individuals seek out and groom a successor to care for their freeholds, safeguard their legacy, and ensure the Dreaming remains strong after their passing.

Occasionally, a freeholder grows weary of the responsibilities her position entails and wishes to relieve herself of the burden. She can't simply abandon her holding without becoming Oathbroken. Before she can withdraw her Glamour from the balefire, she must find someone willing to mix his soul with the freehold and accept the responsibilities in her place. If the freehold is co-owned by a motley, any individual freeholder may relinquish his stake at any time, as long as at least one other remains to support the holding. Changelings who decide to part ways with a freehold often feel an emptiness left in their souls — as though an intimate friend is gone.

Destroying the Freehold

Nothing lasts forever, not even freeholds. The freeholder might not be able to keep the barrage of constant threats at bay. The dream of the land may change. If the dream underlying the freehold's aspects doesn't change with it, it may crumble. Invaders may raze it to the ground, or the freeholder herself might choose to revert the freehold back to its original Glade. How a



Nightmare Locusts

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Perception 3, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Kenning 3, Brawl 3, Stealth 3

Health Levels: OK, OK, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Redes: Hide, Inflict Nightmares

Glamour: 5 **Willpower:** 4

Armor: 0 (3 soak dice, total)

Attacks: Bite/2L

Notes: Inflict Nightmares works similarly to Ravaging, except nightmare locusts may use their Glamour rating in place of Banality. Inflict Nightmares fills the target with horrific nightmares of the Fomorian Dream, forcing higher order thoughts and emotions out of the target which the nightmare locusts feed on as Glamour. Like dream weevils, nightmare locusts always travel in swarms.





changeling deals with her freehold's destruction speaks to her character as much as to her previous performance as freeholder.

Dismantling

Sometimes, changelings believe a freehold needs to be destroyed. A tactical sacrifice thwarts an enemy. A changeling's inability to retake a freehold from a Thallain master requires its destruction lest the Dreaming become tainted with nightmares. The castle of an overthrown tyrant serves only as a painful reminder to the community she victimized. Whatever the reason, freeholds without a holder are straightforward to dismantle. Freeholds with living, active freeholders are incredibly resilient, due in no small part to the support of a timeless, ageless faerie soul, and require enormous effort to raze.

Without an investment of Glamour, destroying a freehold can be accomplished through the simple application of certain cantrips. Autumn's Withering, Chronos' Time Dilation, Dragon's Ire's Hollystrike, Ruin's Salt the Earth, Skycraft's Lord of Levin, and Summer's Beltane Blade, amongst others, all suffice to extinguish an unclaimed balefire. If the balefire is fortified by a changeling's soul, the task becomes much more challenging. Reaving the freehold until it collapses is the simplest method, but requires concentration and access to the balefire. In the chaos of combat, a changeling's Unleashing of an appropriate Art, such as Dragon's Ire, Summer, Winter, and others, is potent enough to take on the raw Glamour of a freehold.

On rare occasions, a freeholder voluntarily dismantles his own freehold. This most frequently happens when a freeholder wishes to give the land back to the Nunnehi. Because the Glamour of a freehold is incompatible with the Nunnehi, the freehold must be reduced back to its original Glade before they can use it. The Dreaming recognizes that not all of its children interact with Glamour in the same way. As long as the Nunnehi swears the Oath of Demesne before the Kithain withdraws his Glamour, the freehold may be dismantled with no ill effects for any party involved.

Death of the Dream

A freehold's Aspect is a manifestation of an underlying dream. In certain circumstances, that foundational dream can be broken. With nothing left to stand on, the freehold crumbles to oblivion. Legends from the Interregnum tell of a time when the Kithain used this knowledge to drive back the Thallain. After the Thirty Years War, most of central Europe gave in to despair, allowing the Thallain an early toe-hold on Earth. Former battlefields became terrible strongholds where only the courageous or foolish dared to tread. Ill-equipped to combat them directly, the Kithain instead coordinated their efforts to muse such luminaries as Isaac Newton, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, and other great thinkers. Their creativity and new ways of thinking fed the Scientific Revolution, the light of which evaporated the darkness of the Thallain strongholds, driving them back to their nightmare realms.

Attacking the Balefire

Any attempt to destroy a freehold by Unleashing must gain more successes than the freehold's rating. Each success above the freehold's rating reduces the rating by one. If the freeholder is present for the attack, he may roll his Glamour (difficulty 7) to fortify the balefire. Each success on his Glamour roll effectively increases the freehold's rating by one to resist the devastation of the Unleashing. Any changeling who successfully destroys a freehold, no matter their reason, immediately suffers a Banality trigger.

Effects on the Freeholder

The destruction of a freehold takes a heavy toll on its freeholder. Beyond the Banality he gains, an acute void grows in his soul where the freehold once dwelled. Some former freeholders who suffered this loss describe the experience like losing a limb, or a loved one. To ease their pain, some former freeholders throw themselves into doing whatever it takes to help preserve the Dreaming and fight back against the rise of Banality. Others vow vengeance against those responsible for their freeholds' destruction, never resting until the transgressors are paid back in kind. A few changelings never recover from the loss of their holding, and give into despair. Those poor souls fall to Banality in short order.

Incorporating the Freehold

Freeholds are more than static locations or Glamour batteries. With their Archetypes, Aspects, features, and quirks, every freehold has its own unique personality and can be considered characters in their own right since the Dreaming imbues them with a sort of vitality. Freeholds are the social, political, economic, cultural, and magical centers of the Kithain. Players can use their characters' freeholds to help drive the course of a chronicle, and Storytellers should use every opportunity to integrate the characters' freehold into their settings.

Leveraging the Freehold

Freeholds represent more than dots on a character sheet or a few free points of Glamour each day — they're extremely valuable commodities in Kithain society. Glamour is the lifeblood of changelings, and it grows rarer with each passing day in the World of Darkness. Players should work with their Storyteller to leverage their freehold into placing their characters in a more prominent role in the setting.

If the characters' freehold is an art gallery, coffee shop, or nightclub frequented by creatives of all types, it creates a hub for the local Kithain to network with mortals and search for potential Dreamers. In this case, the freehold gives the characters connections in both changeling and human society in their city. A Market situated on a major crossroad brings travelers from across the world and the Dreaming to the freehold; to some, it's the first stop on an epic quest to find an item they require. Others will bring exotic, one-of-a-kind wares to sell. Characters can gain plenty of well-placed favors as they connect buyers with sellers. Location is everything. Less powerful but well-placed freeholds could have greater prominence than their dot ratings suggest.

For a changeling, a reliable source of Glamour and shelter from Banality is worth more than any amount of money can buy. Shrewd freeholders gain great benefits through deals backed by their holdings.

- ⑤ They offer nights by their balefire in exchange for favors or services to those in need of Glamour.
- ⑤ Some changelings aren't interested in the Glamour to be had, but they would be willing to trade for the use of the freehold itself — as a place of power to enact a ritual or someplace free of Banality to work their magic.

Storytelling the Freehold

Freeholds offer just as many opportunities for Storytellers as they do for players. The freehold, especially if it is co-owned by the characters, can serve as an anchor for the chronicle. It's how the characters are connected. It's the base of operations for the characters to plan their strategy. It's their place of sanctuary and refuge. If the players flesh out their characters' freehold and truly make it their own, threats to the freehold will have a real emotional impact.

Freeholds of any rating are ready-made plot devices. The Dreaming can work through the freehold to point its owners in a certain direction — a particular Dreamer needs to be protected; the time is right for an ancient treasure to be recovered; a threat arises which the characters are chosen to oppose. The freehold could provide clues to the nature of the problem and omens to show the characters what actions it wants them to undertake. Additionally, the founding of most freeholds predates any character's lifetime. The possibilities of what lurks within the freehold, unknown to the characters, are limited only by the Storyteller's imagination.

- ⑤ Their holding contains long forgotten secrets waiting for characters to stumble upon them.
- ⑤ It's the bygone prison of a terrible chimera that should never be freed, but whose bonds are weakened by many years of neglect.
- ⑤ The freehold is the resting place of abandoned journals dating back to the Shattering that hold the key to staving off the Endless Winter.



CHAPTER FOUR: LIVING DREAMS

*She wondered where this courage had come from, to speak to him so frankly.
From Winterfell, she thought. I am stronger within the walls of Winterfell.*
– George R.R. Martin, *A Storm of Swords*

Freeholds and Glades are the Dreaming come alive, shaped to hold and protect the changelings that reside there. Some are lost to the world, or twisted by nightmares, yet they yearn to return to the fold – a freehold *wants* to be inhabited, a Glade *wants* to be visited, and even the smallest is a creation of wonder and amazement. Storytellers can use the sample freeholds in this chapter to build or kick off a chronicle, or to give a wandering motley a tantalizing sense of what *home* looks like, inspiring the players to create a freehold of their own.

The Holdings rating represents the combined Background dots invested in the property. Smaller examples might belong to a single character, but the largest require a motley working together to maintain (and players pooling their resources to purchase) it.

Ayo's Well (Holdings ...)

Three years ago, on an uncommonly warm evening, Ayo walked home from his class at the University of Nairobi. Drawn to the river giving

the Kenyan metropolis its name, his eyes opened to things ordinary men could not see: trees lighting up like candles, grasses whispering his name, and great four-winged birds soaring overhead. By the time he neared the river – and the bubbling fountain of balefire welling from its polluted depths – Ayo was in the full throes of his Chrysalis.

Ayo worked effortlessly to expand and fortify his freehold. With most of the Academy situated in the park, Ayo moored a small boat in the river, allowing him to rest at the balefire and protect it from other Kithain. Recognizing Ayo as its holder, the Well is in perfect attunement with him.

Ayo's Well welcomes all commoners to rest in the freehold (though not at the balefire), share their stories, and teach each other. Ayo himself teaches hand-to-hand combat, a trait that comes naturally to the burly troll, and mathematics. His passion lies with the latter as his college major, but the former is in higher demand – drawing suspicion of the commoner's gatherings from Duke Ra'zel ap Gwydion, who controls the larger Himaya Stronghold. Ra'zel doesn't approve of a commoner holding the Well,

let alone that Ayo invites others to learn new skills. The Duke believes Ayo and his motley plan secession at best, and rebellion at worst. He isn't entirely wrong. Ayo may be happy to treat the Duke with decorum and even pay a small tithe to avoid war, but his redcap motley-mate Hasana has no intention of respecting the Duke's rule.

Archetype: Academy (*Associated Ability: Melee*)

Aspect: *The rising tide lifts all boats.*

Quirks: The grass around the freehold whispers encouragement to the students, like "you can do it!" and "you rock!"

The water of the freehold rises when Ayo sleeps on the boat, as if reaching up to him.

Appearance: A small boat on the river, with a patch of grass, trees and benches on the riverbank.

Acquisition: Claimed by Ayo during his Chrysalis.

Hierarchy: Ayo's motley may openly invite others to the freehold, but Ayo retains all other responsibilities and privileges, an uneven division that irks his motley.

Balefire: • • •

Size: •

Sanctuary: • •

Resources: • • Ayo's Well hosts open-air classes, which mortals occasionally join for a small fee.

Passages: • Ayo's Well has one trod leading to the Near Dreaming. It also has one rath leading to a riverside glen in the Far Dreaming. Ayo keeps this rath a secret, lest the Duke become even more obsessed with the freehold.

Resonant Dreams: The members of Ayo's Well receive a +2 dice bonus when teaching one another mundane skills. This fulfills the tutor requirement for purchasing new Abilities.

STORY SEEDS

- ⑤ Nearly drowning in the river during her Chrysalis, a young Dauntain hates the Well. Ayo's motley unites with the characters to ward off the threat. After the battle with the Nihilist, Duke Ra'zel attacks – hoping to strike as the Well's defenders are still recovering, and to take the freehold.
- ⑤ Hasana, believing that no good ever came of men lording over others, plans to overthrow Duke Ra'zel. When the conflict finally comes to blows, the motley can no longer pay token respect to the Duke and must choose sides – the characters likewise get swept up in the nearing war.
- ⑤ A young eshu named Merela petitions Ayo for lessons, and he accepts her. The motley doesn't know that Merela is actually Lady Merela, a ward of the Duke trying to escape his overbearing grasp. The Duke hires the characters to bring Lady Merela back to his court.

The Chicken Hut (Holdings

Kithain legends speak of two chicken huts: one in the Autumn World, home to the scourge of Russia, and another birthed in the Dreaming from the scourge's dreams. Kithain do well to stay far away from the former, but the latter holds a trove of knowledge it shares in prophetic dreams with those who sleep at the balefire. Its previous owner, an Unseelie boggan with little love for mortals or the Autumn World, anchored the freehold in the Deep Dreaming just before the Shattering, during which it was lost.

The freehold returned when the gates of Arcadia reopened, without the boggan. Since then, scores of commoners have sought the Hut, eager to reclaim a freehold traditionally theirs. It's a difficult task, as the Chicken Hut moves, crossing the vast wilderness of Russia in the Autumn World, and hopping into distant realms of the Dreaming at a whim. Additionally, the Hut is protected by wild Glamour surrounding its exterior which manifests as hostile, chimerical beasts pulled from the nightmares of the would-be freeholders.

Archetype: Repository

Aspect: *Lost bastion of prophecy.*

Appearance: Iconic hut on chicken legs.

Quirks: Even if the Hut is claimed, it continues to utilize Portal Passage at its own discretion. It wants to help its freeholders, and takes them places that hold items, information, or allies they need. The hut doesn't account for potential danger, and the location may be unwelcoming or even hostile.

Sometimes the Hut grants nightmares instead of prophetic dreams, of red blood-tides, choking desert sand rising, and a dark shadow drowning out the sun. These visions are an echo of the creature whose dreams spawned the hut, but that makes them no less terrifying.

Acquisition: None yet.

Hierarchy: N/A. The hut is currently unclaimed.

Balefire: • • • •

Size: •

Sanctuary: • • The hut moves, and the door remains steadfastly barred against unwelcome visitors. The chimerical beasts, however, are a result of the untamed Glamour surrounding the hut – they disappear and offer no more protection once the hut is securely claimed.

Resources: N/A

Passages: (–) The Chicken Hut has one rath, which opens into the nearby Dreaming, no matter the Hut's location.

Soothsay: • • (Omen) Sleeping at the balefire grants visions, in addition to Glamour, dictated by the Storyteller.

Wayfare: • • • • • (Portal Passage) The Chicken Hut moves freely in both the Siberian Autumn World and the corresponding Dreaming.

Story Seeds

- ⑤ The dream of Baba Yaga returns to the Chicken Hut. This Outsider chimera stands over seven feet tall, and has large iron teeth. If the characters ever wish to safely sleep in the Hut, they must drive the creature off.
- ⑤ A motley seeks to claim the Chicken Hut, and must sleep there until no more nightmares spawn. The creatures become increasingly larger and more bizarre, and the motley defeats each in succession. The final chimera manifests as a young girl, who just stands there. The girl represents the original wellspring – she’s what the characters fought to free. But will they recognize her as such, as are they so riled up by their own violence that they attack?
- ⑤ A Fomorian has designs on the Chicken Hut, believing its prophetic power will tip the scales and secure victory for the Fomorian Dream. The creature attacks when the characters are at the hut – it plans to use their life’s blood to open a portal to the realm of eternal winter and draw the freehold there permanently.

Fu Meili’s Shop (Holdings ...)

Fu Meili is one of the greatest artists of her generation. From swords engraved with reliefs of coiling serpents with sapphire scales that reflect light in rainbow colors to armor painstakingly wrought from rose quartz petals to invoke dreams of sakura blossoms, Meili can do it all. Her clockwork creatures, delicately wrought from bronze, invariably come to chimerical life – some merely have a chimerical counterpart, others become animate, and the most precious even gain sentience. Hong Kong’s Dreaming is filled with the song of Meili’s nightingales and the whispered advice of sage crickets.

Fu Xiaoa, the sidhe magister of Hong Kong, serves as patron to Meili. This relationship runs deeper than between vassal and liege: Meili and Xiaoa are cousins, born from twin sisters. The cousins even experienced their Chrysalises together, emerging as satyr and Autumn sidhe. Common rumors amongst Hong Kong’s Kithain population say the pair were bonded in a previous life. The two women tentatively agree – it makes sense – but unfortunately neither of them can remember anything of it. Either way – bonded, or just favorite cousins – Xiaoa gives Meili complete freedom to create and do business (or not) as she wants.

Meili’s Workshop lies in an unfinished and abandoned subway station near Kowloon Bay. Sitting completely in the Autumn World, dreams of what could have been have nonetheless held the spark of a wellspring – which Meili stoked by feeding her own creations into it (though never the clockwork creatures). Meili found the Workshop on her own in a feverish, dream-led exploration of the subway system, and it has since been ratified as hers by Magister Xiaoa.

Archetype: Workshop

Aspect: *The source of Creation.*

Quirks: Trains pass through a nearby tunnel every ten minutes, shaking the freehold. This continues on the clock even if trains are delayed or not running altogether; whenever Meili finishes a great Treasure, the balefire rears up, as if hungry for the item.

Appearance: Abandoned subway station.

Acquisition: Meili founded the workshop, and raised it up into a freehold herself.

Hierarchy: Meili is currently the sole freeholder of her Workshop.

Balefire: •• Originally a zero-dot balefire, Meili has carefully nurtured the flame.

Size: ••

Sanctuary: • Meili erected a gate and mundane alarm system.

Resources: •• Meili’s creations are priceless, but the materials and time to create them cancels some of the profit. Also, Meili never sells the most precious creations – the sentient chimera – as she considers that slavery. Rather, she sets them free to choose an owner (if any) themselves.

Passages: None. The workshop exists entirely in the Autumn world, and Meili offers any of her creations to a changeling who can connect it to the Dreaming. (This is an exception to the normal free Passage a freehold enjoys, and if Meili’s efforts see fruition her player needn’t pay experience points to add one.)

Resonant Dreams: (••) The Workshop provides a +2 bonus on all mundane rolls related metalworking, including the design process. This is in addition to other bonuses smiths can receive per the crafting rules on p.318 of the **Changeling: The Dreaming 20th Anniversary Edition** core book.

Story Seeds

- ⑤ Meili finishes her opus magnum: a clockwork dragon, currently in seven pieces (four paws, a tail, torso, and head) that will tower higher than a two-story building when assembled. She seeks a motley to help her carry the pieces into the Dreaming, where she will assemble it. Just as the creature roars to life, Fa Rizo – rival to Magister Xiaoa – attacks: he wants to enslave the dragon, and use it to take control of Hong Kong.
- ⑤ Li Mao, a smith of House Dougal who envies Meili’s status, bribes his contacts in Hong Kong’s government to wall off Meili’s Workshop. Meili doesn’t know who undermines her or why, but she promises the pick of her Workshop to any motley who can uncover the plot and save her freehold.
- ⑤ Meili dreams of her past life, and those dreams hint she was a sworn enemy of Fu Xiaoa. She implores a friendly motley to seek the truth of her past life, and restrain her



if the dreams force her to move against her cousin (whom she genuinely loves, in this life at least).

The Geomantic Heart (Holdings

Hidden in the center of Barre des Écrins in the French Alps is the stronghold of the Crystal Circle, a secret society of fae sorcerers. The Geomantic Heart is an enormous, cavernous geode inside the mountain with no physical entrances or exits, where the society's greatest secrets are kept and where its members can enact their most arduous sorcery without disturbance.

Leveraging their trove of documents and their powerful divining magic, the Crystal Circle hopes to unlock the secrets of the Endless Winter and the Fomorians to save the Tuathan Dream. Progress proceeds painfully slowly towards their goal. In the meantime, they use the Geomantic Heart to track threats to the Autumn Realm and Dreaming.

Archetype: Repository

Aspect: *A lens with which to see the secrets of the Dreaming.*

Appearance: A cavernous geode in the heart of the mountain.

Quirks: Occasionally when a changeling is deep in concentration, she'll hear or see echoes of the past or possible futures reflected in the geode's facets.

Acquisition: Controlled by the inner ring of the Crystal Circle.

Hierarchy: While any member of the Crystal Circle may come and go freely, the inner ring of the Circle determines who has access to which documents and who may use the balefire for their sorcery.

Balefire: ••••• The light of the balefire cascades through the crystals that make up the freehold's walls, floor, and ceiling, creating a dazzling array of colors for the lucky few who ever see the chamber's interior.

Size: •

Sanctuary: ••••• The rath to enter requires a demonstration of mastery over any one Art before it allows a Kithian passage. The freehold's location ensures that none besides those skilled in the Arts of the fae have any hope of entering.

Resources: N/A

Passages: (—) A single rath leads into the Geomantic Heart from a secluded cavern. It's well-hidden and well-guarded. Once on the rath, powerful wards and guardian chimera deny entry to all but the trusted members of the Crystal Circle.

Resonant Dreams: •••• The crystals that make up the walls of the Geomantic Heart are aligned to focus Glamour toward knowledge and learning. Anyone practicing Soothsay or the Naming Arts gains +2 dice to their casting.

Story Seeds

- ⑤ The Crystal Circle discovers a prophecy centering on the players' characters. They are key to a pivotal moment for the Dreaming. Signs point to the prophecy being immanent, but the Crystal Circle doesn't know if the characters will help or harm the Dreaming. They get taken to the Geomantic Heart and subjected to a series of trials to determine their mettle and to prepare them for the challenge ahead.
- ⑤ The characters uncover part of a map that predates the Shattering leading to someplace called the Crystal Fortress. The map hints that the Crystal Fortress can reveal the origins of Glamour and the Dreaming. Through their contacts, the characters believe the rest of the map is in the hands of the Crystal Circle. Can the characters convince the Crystal Circle that they're worthy to enter the Geomantic Heart and have access to their records? Barring that, can they find a way to break into the Geomantic Heart to steal the rest of the map? If the Crystal Circle finds out what the characters possess, will they be allowed to keep it?
- ⑤ Taking refuge in the freehold, the sound of ringing echoing throughout the chambers awakens the characters. All the members of the Crystal Circle have become crystal themselves, and the chambers of the Inner Circle have been sealed. To save the freehold, the characters must discover the source of the discordant tone that threatens to release dark prophecies throughout the world. Worse still, the arts of Soothsay and Naming have gone mad, activating unbidden at the worst possible times.

New River Gorge Bridge (Holdings ..)

Located in the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia, the New River Gorge Bridge is the third longest single-span arch bridge in the world. It's also the third highest bridge in the United States. Though it was only completed in 1977, it has already been designated as a historic site. The visitor's center and scenic overlook bring tourists from across the nation to marvel at the vista, and once a year in October, the bridge is closed to vehicle traffic for Bridge Day. Amongst many other festivities, Bridge Day participants rappel and BASE jump from the span, attracting thrill seekers and adrenaline junkies alike.

During the Evanescence, a stray fragment of Underbridge attached itself to the New River Gorge Bridge and fed on the Glamour generated by festivals and tourists until its dark, broken passages cracked opened once more. Ancient monsters thought forever lost spilled into the world, finding perfect

homes in the mountain communities of West Virginia. Though the once-depressed economy is rebounding with increased tourism, many of the region's residents still harbor bitterness at the failure of the coal industry and the apathy shown them from corporate and federal agencies. With these pockets of resentment providing sustenance, and ample shelter available in the multitude of abandoned coal mines, these nightmare chimera regularly Ravage vulnerable Dreamers and mortals to the bone, leading many to leap from the bridge in despair.

Archetype: Thorpe (broken)

Aspect: *The darkness and danger lurking beneath bridges.*

Appearance: New River Gorge Bridge stands majestically over the valley below. Inside the fragment of Underbridge, ancient bridges of the world stand dilapidated and broken. Some lead into a formless void, and others are irreparably shattered.

Quirks: Even broken, Underbridge remains a realm of darkness. Any light source brought into the freehold constantly sputters as if it's about to die and only provides a fraction of the illumination it would otherwise.

Acquisition: New River Gorge Bridge and its piece of Underbridge remain unclaimed.

Hierarchy: N/A

Balefire: •

Size: •

Sanctuary: •

Resources: N/A

Passages: (—) The bridges in the shard of Underbridge aren't as extensive as when the realm was whole. Even so, if they could be repaired, they would allow changelings to travel nigh-instantaneously to the corresponding bridge on Earth.

Resonant Dreams: •• Residents of Underbridge receive +2 to all rolls to abduct someone from their bridge or stop someone from crossing.

Story Seeds

- ⑤ Several Dreamers have jumped to their deaths from the New River Gorge Bridge. The motley investigates, discovers the fragment of Underbridge, and finds evidence of the ancient monsters now free. They'll need to do research to figure out what horrors now stalk the countryside and what criteria they use to choose their victims.
- ⑤ A group of Thallain were drawn to the darkness and released when Underbridge reopened. The characters must stop the Thallain from taking control of New River Gorge Bridge. If the Thallain claim the fragment of Underbridge and fix the trods that connect the realm, they would gain a base of operations that may grant them access to any other bridge on the earth.
- ⑤ A prominent politician plans to hold a rally on Bridge Day at New River Gorge, unveiling her plan to make the region

great again and revitalize the coal industry. A vision of the future reveals the hills overrun by lurks and ghosts, while the smoke of countless goblin foundries chokes out the sky. Unless the characters can uncover the truth about this politician and her ties to the Thallain, the entire region may be lost to Goblin Queen and her army of nightmares.

Shamrocks Beer Cellar (holdings)

One of the most storied freeholds in the Duchy of Moonsilver is Shamrocks Pub. It was built in the 1950s by a troll named Robert Terlyon, who died under mysterious circumstances during the Resurgence. After his death, ownership of Shamrocks changed hands numerous times, but one constant remained — all who enter the freehold must leave their title at the door. The rule is so popular with the local fae, it's believed that were the rule ever abandoned, Endless Winter would be nigh.

The pub itself is an unremarkable restaurant and bar in the old city, but those permitted to descend into the basement see more than crates of extra stock. Barrels of local chimerical brews line the walls. A well-worn bar occupies one corner, and reclaimed couches, beat up chairs, and beanbags are strewn about — all favorite spots for the local Kithain to trade stories and share the latest gossip. In the far wall, a brick hearth is set, containing the freehold's balefire, which casts a warm, welcoming glow over the entire cellar.

Archetype: Hearth

Aspect: *Drink shared between friends and family.*

Appearance: Shamrocks Beer Cellar is a cozy, intimate space. The décor is a mishmash of fine carvings, lovingly-worn accents, and artfully-dilapidated reclaimed furniture.

Quirks: The taps behind the bar in Shamrocks Beer Cellar never run dry, and its liquor cabinet always remains stocked.

Acquisition: Since Robert Terlyon's death, a parade of freeholders have claimed Shamrocks, only to renounce their claims after a handful of months or years. Most recently, the pub is under the management of the satyr Arkus Oreias, popular amongst the local Kithain for his welcoming management style.

Hierarchy: The freeholder of Shamrocks also becomes general manager of the pub upstairs. While his mandate gives him authority within the freehold, no holder of Shamrocks to date has ever allowed a hierarchy based on Title.

Balefire: ••• Shamrocks' balefire manifests as a cheery fire contained in a brick fireplace.

Size: ••

Sanctuary: •

Resources: ••• With its mundane business for the unenchanted upstairs as well as its fae business in the free-

hold, Shamrocks is able to financially support its freeholder in some comfort.

Passages: • A rath is built into the stairs of Shamrocks Pub. Changelings who descend them arrive in the freehold, while unenchanted mortals end up in a normal, mundane beer cellar. A trod also runs through the Dreaming connecting Shamrocks Beer Cellar to the castle that serves as the seat of power for Moonsilver.

Resonant Dreams: •• Shamrocks was built on dreams of companionship. Anyone within the freehold receives +2 to all rolls involving socializing or flirting.

Story Seeds

- ⑤ A prominent member of the local community stumbles into Shamrocks in obvious emotional distress. She seems to have an unhealthy obsession with the balefire. Can the characters stop her from immolating herself in its flames and get to the bottom of what happened to her?
- ⑤ A powerful chimera known only as Frice invades Shamrocks's trod. He leaves behind chimerical followers to harass and attack any who attempt to walk the trod. Only by reassembling the way stones Frice broke apart can the trod be kept clear from intruders.
- ⑤ A young, inexperienced Baronness possesses a Covenant of the Flame, entitling her by the Dreaming's laws to equal standing with the current freeholder. Not only does this cause immediate tension with those loyal to Arkus, the Baronness begins recognizing Title within the freehold. Discontent brews among commoners and nobles alike. Someone must convince her of the error of her ways before full-scale rebellion breaks out.

Utjawi (holdings)

The sprawling Utjawi homestead sprawls high in the Dreaming of the Andes mountain range. Led by Pilpintu, a satyr of Aymaran descent, the freehold specializes in breeding and raising chimerical riding alpacas, bigger and more brightly-colored than any of their Autumn cousins. The Homestead's alpaca herds occasionally births mutants: beautiful beasts with six legs or resplendent wings. These alpacas are worth small fortunes for interested buyers willing to part with the funds in Autumn World currency, dross, or chimerical goods.

Pilpintu is free to trade, gift, and sell the alpacas as she sees fit, as long as she tithes a small portion of her sales to her liege, the Baroness of nearby Huaraz. This arrangement, supported by the affection forged between the pair since their travels in the breadth of Peru's Dreaming, has held strong for two decades and counting, and the grump sometimes forgets that the Homestead is not technically hers.

Utjawi receives frequent visitors along the lengthy trod that connects the freehold to both the Far Dreaming and the Autumn World near Huaraz. Pilpintu welcomes them with a gruff demeanor, a hot meal and – if they need it – a soft bed in the attic. The old grump loves stories, and Kithain who regale her with gossip are welcome to stay beyond the one night hospitality affords them. Rumor has it Pilpintu once gifted an alpaca steed to an especially talented eshu orator, though Pilpintu herself steadfastly denies this.

Archetype: Homestead

Aspect: *Birthplace of chimerical creatures.*

Appearance: A traditional hacienda, surrounded by emerald green meadows. In the winter, the edges of the meadows are lined with blue snow.

Quirks: Whenever a changeling visits Utjawi, the grass softly whispers “ouch, ouch” as the guest walks on it. Pilpintu is sure the grass doesn’t actually feel anything, and it is just playing games, but she can’t get it to stop. Large mountain cats stalk the Dreaming near Utjawi, occasionally attacking the alpaca. Pilpintu’s motley keeps guard against them.

Acquisition: Entrusted to Pilpintu by the Baroness of Huaraz.

Hierarchy: The Glamour investment is fulfilled by the Baroness, who conferred all rights to Pilpintu after the satyr took the Oath of Regency. Pilpintu then further shared the freehold’s privileges with her motley.

Balefire: •

Size: • • • •

Sanctuary: • •

Resources: • • •

Passages: (–) Utjawi lies in the Near Dreaming, with a single trod passing through that leads deeper into the Dreaming and into the Autumn World.

Resonant Dreams: • • The freehold’s motley gains a +2 on all checks to breed, train, and sell the alpacas.

Story Seeds

- ⑤ A mutant alpaca is born: an emerald beast capable of traversing the barrier between the Dreaming and the Autumn World. Changelings from all corners of the Earth descend on the Homestead, prepared for a bidding war. Some also bring blades, instead of Treasure to trade. The characters are hired to keep the peace.
- ⑤ The Homestead is attacked by Unseelie, who seek to force Pilpintu out. The satyr petitions her liege for aid, but the Baroness is under siege herself: this is a coordinated attack by enemies of the domain. Pilpintu must turn to another motley for aid.
- ⑤ It’s lambing season, and Pilpintu is hiring changelings to help with the work. This should be an easy way for the characters to make a little money or win Pilpintu’s favor, until another motley attacks under the cover of night to steal the lambings.





APPENDIX: THE NATURAL ORDER – GLADES

*There is pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is rapture in the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar;
I love not Man the less, but Nature more.*
— Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*

The enchanted thicket. The ominous cave with the mysterious glow. The mushroom ring where pixies dance and mortals are whisked away to lands of dream and danger. Nimue traps Merlin in a tree, or sometimes in a cave. Dragons hoard treasure in their underground or mountain lairs. Sacred mountains mark places where the gods set foot on Earth. Miraculous oases glitter under the desert sun, immense rivers with special properties bar an adventurer's path, and fantastic gardens grow wild across islands that appear and vanish at whim.

Folklore wouldn't be much without its settings, whether it's Hansel and Gretel wandering deep into the forest after their father's abandonment, Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden, or Sun Wukong's temper tantrum that set the Fire Mountains aflame. These places, amongst many others, have come to be known as Glades in the parlance of modern-day Kithain.

What Dreams May Form

Glades tend to form where wellsprings of Glamour naturally pierce the barriers between the Autumn World and the Dreaming. As the dream-stuff seeps into the surrounding area, it shapes itself according to the landscape and the dreams associated with each specific location.

Like freeholds, Glades have an underlying story, a bedrock dream. This dream is innately tied to its Archetype and unique Autumn World history: a changeling who dreams at the Presidential pocket garden at MIT will not share the same dream as a changeling slumbering at the same time in the Peace pocket garden.

Unlike freeholds, Glades are natural reflections of the Dreaming and the Autumn World, and shift far more easily in response to environmental changes

in either realm. Some Kithain scholars believe that Glades left undeveloped over long periods of time shift between Archetypes in a reflection of the Autumn World's biosphere life cycles, gradually evolving from Aerie to Glen to Barrens to Subterrane to Grotto and beyond as the centuries pass. Gallain like the Nunnehi and Menehune don't simply believe in this theory, but understand it as a fundamental truth of the Dreaming.

Archetypes

Like freeholds, Glades are categorized in broad Archetypes, which classify Glades according to their dominant terrain. A Glade's aspects and quirks tend to follow the theme of its Archetype. Seven Archetypes of Glades originally appeared in **Changeling: The Dreaming 20th Anniversary Edition** on p. 312; **Book of Freeholds** offers an additional four Archetypes.

Barrens

Much like their Autumn World counterparts, lonely stretches of Dreaming in tundra, chaparral, or desert can seem featureless, lifeless, worthless. Much like their Autumn World counterparts, these Barrens can hold a surprising amount of diversity and wealth. Barrens are sometimes mistaken for Glens, but their remote locations, desolate-seeming landscapes, and/or harsh climates give the final clues for their proper classification.

Garden

A recent category of Glades, Gardens form where a wellspring pushes through the Dreaming in areas that have been urbanized. Often mistaken for small Homesteads, Gardens are beautiful green spaces in the heart of Banality-choked cityscapes. Though some are surprisingly resilient, most are closely watched and tended by their holders, vigilant against the constant threat of the surrounding Banality.

Mire

Often mistaken for Grottos or Hollows, Mires develop where dreams of swamps, bogs, and fens play a significant role in the culture and history of the surrounding area. Though associated with nightmarish, chimera-like bog monsters and cannibalistic witches in pop culture, Mires also have a strong connection to enigmatic dream-realms and natural healing abilities.

Oasis

The cool glitter of water beckoning those traveling through deserts might just be a heat mirage... or it might be an Oasis Glade. Rare and precious, Oases serve the changelings that visit them in a variety of ways. Most often, they are sources of shelter, water, and chimerical necessities in harsh suns and relentless heat. Many known Oases are located in the Middle East and Africa, but can manifest in any desert across the world.

Backgrounds

Glades may possess ratings in the following Backgrounds:

Passage (• — ●●●●)

A Glade always has one rath or trod, which may lead into the Dreaming, a dream- or nightmare-realm, or to another Glade or freehold. Dots in the Passage Background allow more raths and/or trods to connect to the Glade. Passage dots may not exceed the Glade's Size dots.

Resources (• — ●●●●)

A Glade generates only chimerical Resources, such as chimerical produce, stone, metal, or wood. This Background cannot exceed the Glade's Size or Wellspring rating, whichever is lesser.

Sanctuary (• — ●●●●)

Unlike freeholds, Glades are raw, primal sources of Glamour, and lack many of the defenses a refined freehold offers its owners. A Glade's defenses may derive from its accessibility, geography, harsh weather, dominant chimerical wildlife, or the protective efforts of its changeling guardians.

Size

Glades vary in size; some are as small as a couple of square feet in a meadow, while others may sprawl over significant portions of the countryside or through complex cave systems.

- A pocket garden, a hill or mound, a moat or fishpond, or a small cavern.
- A meadow, a foothill or small mountain, a pond or river, or a moderate cavern.
- A wooded copse, a series of hills or moderate mountain, a lake or stream, a large cavern, or a small cave complex system (2-3 caverns).
- A forest, a mountain, a large lake or river, or a network of caves (6-8 caverns).
- A national park, Mount Everest, the Great Lakes, a mountain range, or a significant cave system (9-15 caverns).

Wellspring (• — ●●●●)

Glades do not possess a Balefire rating. Instead, they possess the Wellspring Background, which is mechanically the same as Balefire. A Glade's wellspring manifests as a natural object that fits with the Glade's Archetype, and may be a stone, a geyser, a dust devil, a particular flower, a tree, a swirl of leaves, or anything else the troupe finds appropriate. Most often, the wellspring is referred to as the heart of the Glade, in descriptive terms such as *heartstone*, *heartspring*, *heartwood*, *heartblossom*, or *heartwind*.



Regardless of its form, if the wellspring is ever removed from the Glade, the Glamour font powering the Glade dries up and the Glade dies at a rate of one dot per day. This damage can be reversed (at a rate of one dot per day) by restoring the wellspring to and performing maintenance on the Glade (see p. 36).

Powers

Glades are rawer, more primal sources of Glamour than freeholds; as a result, their ability to develop the same range of Powers is curtailed, except for the following:

Glamour to Dross (n/a)

A Glade converts Glamour to Dross at Wellspring ••+ at no extra feature point cost.

Lingering Dreams (• – •••••)

For every dot the Glade possesses in its Lingering Dreams rating, it provides a one-die bonus to the changeling who last harvested its Glamour. This bonus is tied to the dreams the changeling experiences as she harvests from the Wellspring. The effect lasts until she next sleeps.

Nature's Bounty (•• – •••••)

Glades do not normally allow multiple changelings to harvest from the wellspring. Only the first to fall asleep and dream

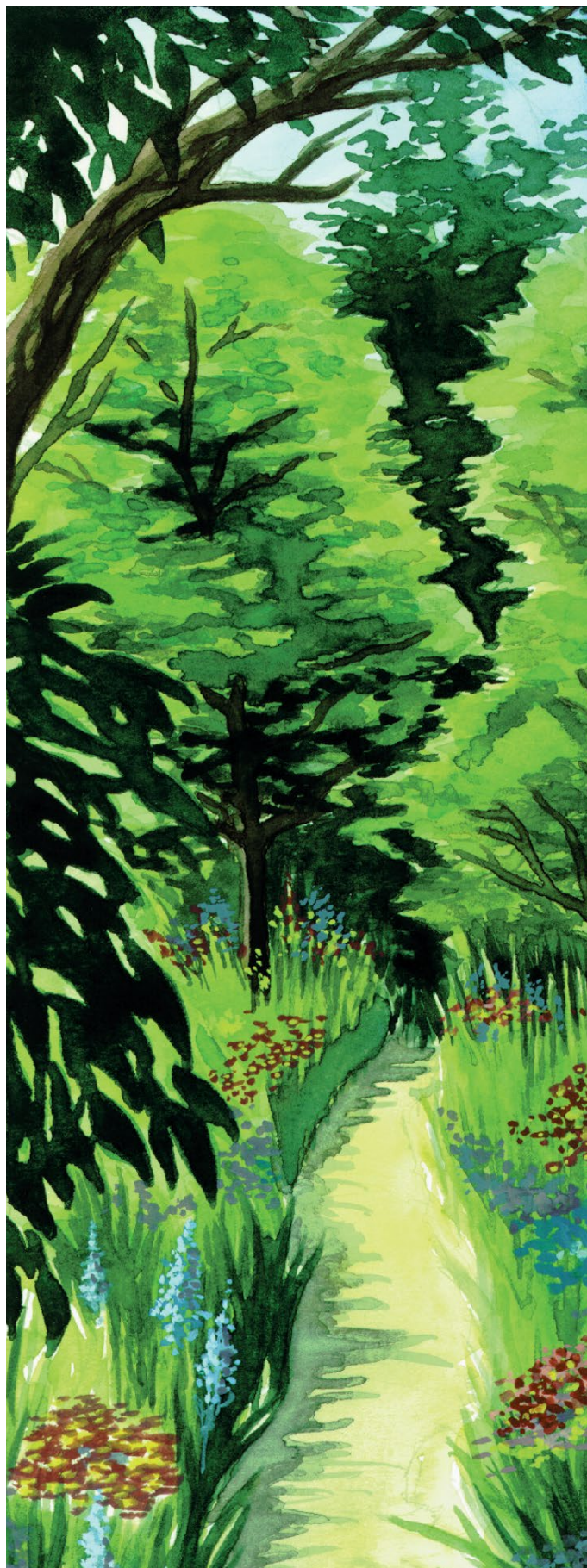
receives the Glamour. A Glade with Nature's Bounty, however, permits additional changelings to share in the Glamour its wellspring offers. The number of changelings who may harvest Glamour is restricted to the Glade's rating of Nature's Bounty. This Power's rating is restricted to the Glade's Wellspring dots.

Example Glades

Interested troupes can use the four example Glades here, or they can tweak them to fit any particular style of game.

MIT Pocket Gardens (Holdings ••)

Dotted all across the MIT campus in Boston, MA, pocket gardens are the result of decades-long sustainability initiatives by the technical college to provide green spaces for its faculty and students. The careful tending and nurturing that MIT's Ground Services provides, as well as the gardens' frequent usage by students and staff to relax, revive, and daydream, has encouraged the formation of tiny wellsprings in the Dreaming. Some of these wellsprings have pushed through, creating small but true Gardens that reflect the microclimates of their Autumn World counterparts.



A few of the Kithain who frequent MIT have petitioned Duke Tymon ap Gwydion to refine these Gardens into freeholds, but the majority of MIT's changeling population loudly opposes these petitions. The unlikely duo of Baroness Rafaela ni Liam, an Autumn sidhe who teaches urban planning, and Samoset, a Tunghat social theorist and environmental studies professor, spearheads the movement to keep the Gardens undeveloped. The combination of their popularity with the commoners, social awareness networks, and considerable political clout make Tymon especially wary about approving any developments to the new-formed Glades at the college.

Archetype: Garden

Aspect: Green spaces

Quirks: Technorganic flowers grow amid the riot of nature; berries and seeds grow in bunches of prime numbers.

Size: •

Wellspring: • The pocket gardens' wellsprings typically take the form of opalescent heartwoods or heartblossoms, which gleam with rainbow colors at all hours of the day and night.

Resources: • The microclimates of the pocket gardens are home to a number of useful chimerical plants, berry bushes, minor chimerical insects, and game.

Sanctuary: • • • Samoset and Rafaela's awareness campaigns afford the Gardens higher defense than they might otherwise receive.

Passage: One rath, leading onto MIT's Near Dreaming reflection. None of the Pocket Gardens have yet grown in strength to develop additional trods and raths.

Story Seeds

- ⑤ After a recent rainstorm, the Stata Swale biofiltration Garden swelled with Glamour until it fairly burst into a Homestead, the first-ever documented Glade to naturally become a freehold. Duke Tymon suspects that the "naturally-occurring" freehold may not be as it seems, and he sends the characters to investigate the miracle. In the meantime, Samoset and Rafaela set themselves against the Duke's efforts in order to keep the Garden-turned-Homestead free of his interference.
- ⑤ Fed by dreams of lust and romance, a popular make-out spot for amorous students has formed into one of the many pocket gardens that dot the campus. Infused by a sentient dream of ecstasy, the students leave the garden and infect others with primal lust. Social order begins to break down across the campus as students, teachers, and staff alike give in to their desires with such abandon that even Satyrs are shocked. Unless the heroes can uncover the source of this passion, MIT will never be the same again.

- ⑨ Daydreams of accomplishment and success are common amongst the student body, second only to nightmares of failure. Fueled by a Garden, those nightmares have taken form and caused a rash of addictions and self-harm among the staff and students. When the Garden at the source of the problem is regretfully eradicated, Baroness Rafaela believes the problem is solved, only to find that when two students try to jump to their deaths, the cause of this nightmare might be more insidious than she ever imagined.

Niflhel Barrens (Holdings ●●●●)

The village of Múli, on the northern tip of Borðoy in the north Atlantic Faroe Island archipelago, has been mostly abandoned for years. Though a few of the former residents use their old homes as summer residences, Múli is an Autumn World ghost town for much of the year, eerie and silent. It's during this time that it ironically sees the most activity. Kithain from the nearby Trollsborgs, an ancient Unseelie Stronghold styled after Viking ring castles, make the long trek to the Niflhel Barrens, an icy and unforgiving Glade above the village, to test their mettle against the native (and dangerous) chimera that ancient Trollsborgs Treasures summon from the Dreaming.

Archetype: Barrens

Aspect: *Windswept plain of battle*

Quirks: From midnight to false dawn, banks of mist cover the fields, muffling sound and limiting visibility. Unseelie find the chill wind brisk and invigorating, while Seelie find it unbearably cold and discomforting.

Size: ●●●

Wellspring: ●●● Niflhel's wellspring takes the form of a translucent blue-silver heartstone that towers against buffets of wind. Even in the nighttime fog, the heartstone is always visible, gleaming as if lit from within.

Resources: ●● Niflhel Barrens is well-named, and generates next to no consistent Resources for its holders beyond its dross and small furs from trapping. Occasionally, however, great *joralf* wander from the Dreaming into the Barrens. These chimerical wild boars are highly prized by crafters for their silver-and-ivory tusks and pale, gleaming hides that flex as leather but protect as steel.

Sanctuary: ●●● Niflhel Barrens is protected by its remote location, its limited access from the Dreaming, and by the residents of the Trollsborgs freehold.

Passage: ● Niflhel Barrens has two passages, a trod and a rath. The rath opens into the Ninth World, a Norse dream-realm of legend which trolls visit to prove themselves in battle against hordes of hostile ice chimera. Niflhel Barrens's trod leads to the Trollsborgs, which traditionally welcomes only trolls, sluagh, lupine pooka, redcaps, and Autumn sidhe of the Unseelie Court into its halls.

Glamour to Dross: Unharvested Glamour from Niflhel Barrens' heartstone converts to dross at the stroke of midnight each night. This dross normally takes the form of weather-smoothed chips of ice-blue, translucent stone.

STORY SEEDS

- ⑨ A herd of *joralf* has been spotted moving through the Barrens' mist-shrouded hills deep in the night, far more than their previous migratory patterns suggest should be moving this time of year. A grump troll seer has foretold the coming of the *joralf*, king of boars, whose tusks are gold and whose hide turns aside even the most determined blade, but it will not remain in the Autumn World long. Sir August Erikson ap Ailil, the landed noble of the Trollsborgs, calls a Great Hunt to slay it before it disappears forever.
- ⑨ Every year, in accordance with ancient tradition, hundreds of Scandinavian Kithain travel to the Trollsborgs to participate in the *leikmót*, where they enter the frozen waters to swim and wrestle, either to death or to submission, for the honor being ordained as the Champion of Niflhel. This year, something has gone amiss, as one unscrupulous troll decides to ensure he is crowned by any means necessary.
- ⑨ Deep in the Dreaming, the glacial prison of an ancient Lost One, the Queen of Rime, cracks. Hoarfrost blankets the Dreaming, freezing chimera in icy cocoons and twisting them into monstrosities loyal to the Queen. Winds sweep from the Barrens, breaching the barrier between realities and freezing Kithain in similar cocoons. Someone must find the ancient secrets of the Trollsborgs and warm the Queen's frozen heart, or her eternal winter will steal one of the most ancient freeholds from its rightful holders.

Uluru, the Dreaming Stone (Holdings ●●●● ●)

Uluru has stood tall in central Australia since the Dreamtime, long before the dawn of either man or fae. The ancient Glade survived the Shattering, but its connection to the Autumn World was lost when European invaders decimated the people of Australia. It didn't return until after the Resurgence, when Mala, a Pitjantjatjara changeling, found a towering fortress of red rock in the Dreaming and unlocked the Dreaming Stone once again. Uluru is so large that Mala, now a grump, still hasn't explored all of its shifting halls and passageways.

Mala's motley — consisting of three Aborigine people, including Mala, and one Caucasian Australian — has taken control of Uluru, though they sometimes wish they hadn't. Uluru's primary trod remains permanently open and leads into the Deep Dreaming; all manner of creatures emerge

from its depths. The motley initially treats all chimera with respect, but they are frequently forced to combat horrendous and hostile creatures. Mala herself fears Australia's Dreaming is somehow broken, capable only of creating nightmares, but she doesn't know how to heal it (or if she even can).

The members of Mala's motley are highly educated (she herself is a doctor of medicine), but they feel more at home in the outback than in Australia's cities. They trade for food and medical supplies with their kin.

Archetype: Oasis

Aspect: *Australia's Dreaming made manifest. The great defense against Fomori.*

Quirks: A host of chimerical creatures lives in Uluru's Dreaming, from emerald lizards to wallabies. Changelings mistreating any of the chimera find themselves lost in the shifting passages until they apologize to the freehold. A soft, thumping sound thrums through Uluru like a heartbeat.

Appearance: Endless passageways and shifting rooms of red stone.

Acquisition: Uluru has always existed — Mala merely unlocked it once more.

Hierarchy: Mala shares all responsibilities and privileges freely with her motley.

Wellspring: ••••• Uluru's heartstone is hidden deep in its labyrinthine corridors, and manifests as a perfectly round sphere of rust-red stone suspended exactly halfway between the ceiling and the floor of its chamber. It glows with soft, dancing rainbow light.

Size: •••••

Sanctuary: ••••• Uluru's shifting halls trap intruders, funneling them into bottlenecks where defenders have every advantage.

Resources: N/A.

Passages: ••• Four trods lead out of Uluru, each winding through the Near and Far Dreaming all the way into the Deep Dreaming and, legends say, far beyond.

Glamour to Dross: Unharvested Glamour from Uluru's heartstone converts to dross once per day. It manifests as chips of red stone with a rainbow sheen.

STORY SEEDS

- ⑤ No stranger to nightmarish incursions, Mala's motley finds itself struggling with the most recent nightmare chimera: an enormous dream eater lizard (see **Changeling: The Dreaming 20th Anniversary Edition** p. 367), with flaking scales that drain the Dreaming of color where they fall. Mala asks unaligned changelings for help, and may offer them membership in her motley (and a stake in the Glade) if they impress her.
- ⑤ The Arcadian sidhe Lord of Alice Springs has long coveted the ancient site, but Mala has no intention of turning

over her heritage. The Lord plans to take his case to the King of Australia, believing the Glade would better serve as a stronghold. Unable to leave Uluru undefended with the trods permanently open, Mala seeks regents to temporarily serve as caretakers, while she and her motley defend their claim to the King of Australia. First, the motley must prove themselves worthy of caretaking this sacred site through a series of trials set by both Maya and Uluru. Once they are proven worthy, the characters become responsible for all aspects of maintaining the Glade, including dealing with all hostile incursions, until Maya's motley returns. Should the King grant the lord's request, Mala further employs the characters to defend the Glade with her motley.

- ⑤ Mala has a dream of Wanumpi, the rainbow serpent, and believes the creature holds the key to healing Australia's Dreaming. She seeks the characters to accompany her on her quest, so her own motley is free to remain in defense of Uluru.

Wonder Cave (holdings ••••• •••••)

Located some 50 miles outside of Johannesburg, South Africa, the Cradle of Humankind UNESCO World Heritage Site is home to a multitude of subterranean Glades, sustained by the dutiful attention and care given by a succession of nomadic Buntu changelings over the eons.

The largest and most powerful wellspring, located in the natural pools of the Wonder Cave, has reawakened in recent years, stirred from slumber by the wonder, awe, and dreams sparking in the minds of tourists passing through the complex.

Archetype: Subterranean

Aspect: *Ancient font of memories*

Quirks: An echoing murmur, like voices from afar; every fourth drop of water reverberates softly, ringing like crystal.

Size: •••••

Wellspring: ••••• The heartstone hangs from the ceiling in the middle of the Northern Chamber, resembling a stalactite made of rose quartz crystal.

Sanctuary: ••••• A remote location, limited Autumn World accessibility, and nearby changeling caretakers all protect the Wonder Cave and its neighboring subterranean.

Resources: ••• Wonder Cave, were it ever harvested by its caretakers, can produce chimerical stone, metal, and gems for trade and crafting.

Passage: ••••• Wonder Cave has four passages, one rath and three trods. The rath opens into a primeval dream-realm that mirrors the Earth of 3.5 million years ago. One trod leads into the Deep Dreaming, and another branches into the Dark Dreaming. A third trod connects the Wonder Glade to several other nearby subterranean, as well as the seasonal camps

of the Buntu changelings who have guarded and tended the Cradle for millennia.

Glamour to Dross: Unharvested Glamour from the Wonder Cave's heartstone converts to dross at the stroke of midnight each night. This dross takes the form of rose quartz pebbles.

Lingering Dreams: ••••• Like almost all of the Cradle of Humankind subterraneans, the Wonder Cave's Glamour is intimately tied with the fossil discoveries and the nature of humanity's (and by association, faerie's) evolution since the dawn of time. A changeling slumbering near the heartstone dreams of these ancient times. Until the changeling next sleeps, she receives a +5 dice bonus to any Ability check pertaining to recalling ancient legends or remembering past lives.

Story Seeds

- ⑤ The Wonder Cave is home to the memory of the world, its ancient walls filled with the experiences of all humanity through the scope of its existence. How it gathers these memories, however, is not always gentle. After a group of tourists go missing, the characters notice that several

new rock formations have appeared near the well-known Praying Mary. Something is turning visitors into statues locked away in the stone, and unless the champions can do something about it, the Enchanted may be next.

- ⑤ Though able to destroy a hero that rose against her, the great Rainbow Serpent Aido-Wedo fled to the Wonder Cave to heal, attracted by her sympathetic tie to the Praying Mary. Coiled around the Praying Mary, the great serpent sleeps, its dreams birthing hordes of hostile chimera that erupt from the cave. Unless a brave motley can either slay Aido-Wedo or politely convince her to move along, the entire region could collapse under the horde of hungry rainbow serpents.
- ⑤ Something mysterious lies in the shadows of all hidden places, a dark and malevolent thing that hates the light and any that live under its painful rays. Within the ancient Wonder Cave, this primordial being shrieks in agony as electric light burns its body for the first time. Heralded by waves of Dark-Kin, the Ancient One will show this pathetic world the reason it should be terrified of the dark.



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