



Venice

Unmasked

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VENICE UNMASKED

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Introduction

Broken Masks, Splintered Dreams

Venice - La Serenissima - a city of lust, greed, mystery, magic and dreams. It is the fairy city of man sat upon ever rising waters. Venice sits at the gateway of the classical and medieval worlds, an ancient nexus now nothing more than a city-sized, water-logged, museum of the Renaissance.

Venice may no longer be a centre of the mortal world, but it has remained the centre of the world for those that live within its shadows. Venice has a dynamic, colorful, and sordid history since the fall of the Roman Empire, and has always been influenced by those other beings that take an interest in human affairs. One particular group is the Lost. Just as the original founders of the city fled the invading Huns, so the Lost fled from the captivity of Keepers. And Venice is the place even not the Lost escape to.

THEME: THE CARNIVAL

The Carnival is integral to Venice. In the Christian calendar, it marked the lead up to Lent. Because the six weeks of Lent would be spent fasting and being pious, and no wine or rich food was to be consumed in honor of Jesus' 40 days in the desert, all of this food and wine had to be used up. For this reason, there was a long party to do just that. The Carnival.

Carnival, like many Christian rites and festivals, has many traditions that predate the church. In many ways Carnival is similar to the festivals of Saturnalia and Bacchanalia held by the Romans. There are also a number of pagan rites involving masked figures. Due to the pagan rites traditionally related to Carnival, the clergy adopted the celebration rather than prevent it, but introduced more Christian elements. Though the tradition of Carnival takes place all around the Christian world, the Carnival of Venice was one of the most grand and extravagant.

Carnival is often referred to as the Fifth Season, and traditionally starts on the 11th of November. But the main celebrations and events would only begin after Christmas, and end the week before Lent on Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday). The term Carnival has a disputed origin but possibly has its origin in the Greek for meat, *carn*, or the Latin *carne levare*, or "to remove meat". It may also mean "farewell to meat", *carne vale*. This of course is a double meaning. Not only do they say goodbye to meat, but also they let go of their everyday self and succumb to the celebrations.

The Carnival of Venice was first recorded in 1268, and masks have always been a central feature of the Carnival. However masks were also a part of the celebrations during Ascension and from October the 5th. For this reason people were able to spend a lengthy period of time in masks. There were many attempts to ban the wearing of masks in Italy for the subversive nature they allowed. The mask makers, or '*Mascherari*', were able to take advantage of this and formed guilds and their own laws and had an important position in Venetian society.

The Carnival has always had a sordid history, with tales of men dressing as women and entering convents, others wore masks so they could hide from their creditors, or some wore masks to commit acts of murder. The people of Venice loved masks, but their rulers and the

church came to loathe them, with laws being created to ban the wearing of masks, cloaks and indecent attire.

For the Changelings of Venice, the Carnival is life, death, revelry, and survival. The Carnival is all seasons and none, a Court of its own. A Changeling game set in Venice revolves around the theme of 'Carnival'. Changelings wear masks in many ways; to hide from their Keepers, to hide from other things that would hunt them, to hide their motives in Court, to hide in the shadows and strike out at others. The mask allows a dual life for the Changelings. On the one hand, they may cavort in their Grand Balls, weaving their Glamour, indulging in the emotions of others. But also masks allow for Changelings to hide, to conspire, and to lurk in the dark. The Carnival really does mean "farewell to the flesh", for it represents their freedom from the Gentry. But the Carnival also represents that last celebration before giving it all up in order to brave the desert. It is the last deadly dance, and at the end all have a price to pay when the masks come off.

MOOD: THE FAIRY CITY OF THE HEART

"The Fairy City of the Heart", so Lord Byron named Venice. But what does that mean? Venice is both beauty and decay, a dying flower. The modern Venice is not very different from how it was at the height of its power. However, the average tourist misses the breath-taking vistas that can simply be seen if they took the time to look up from the windows of gaudy Murano glass jewelry or took a route off the beaten path. Behind each corner, above each shop, down each canal, Venice, the 'Fairy City', awaits to capture the love of another traveler. The city is bittersweet to its roots and is not unlike many of the Gentry. Palazzos and apartments twist and lean over the small waterways, and during the acqua alta the city meets its dark reflection in the high waters. The mood of Venice is simple, a city that is a true embodiment of all that is Fae. And so for all its beauty, creeping dark things are not far away. For every precious thing that lies in Venice, it sits nestled with its darker twin, the price of sin that must be paid. Venice is thus a city that does not forget consequences. For every great work there is a fall, a sin. This is Fortuna, the life blood of Venice.



<http://www.freefoto.com/preview/1551-12-23/Night-Time--Venice--Italy--Venezia-->

[Italia](#)

Chapter One

The Fairy City

“This was Venice, the flattering and suspect beauty - this city, half fairy tale and half tourist trap, in whose insalubrious air the arts once rankly and voluptuously blossomed, where composers have been inspired to lulling tones of somniferous eroticism.”

- Lord Byron

HISTORY

FROM THE ASHES OF AN EMPIRE

Venice has stood since the end of the Roman Empire founded by refugees who fled the invading Huns. The people from the north east of Italy fled their lands and took boats out into the lagoon and settled on the marshy islands. These survivors of the Western Roman Empire were ruled over by the Byzantine Emperor of the Eastern Empire, and in the 8th century the first Doge of the lagoon was elected, Orso, who was recognized by the Byzantine Empire. Orso's successor and son, Diodato, moved the seat of power of the region to the isle of Malamocco. This move to Malamocco was a sign of Venetians wanting to become unimpeded traders while being able to defend themselves from pirates and invaders. Venetians were looking for autonomy. Not too much, but enough so that they were masters of their own trade.

Venetian control of the lagoon and the Adriatic continued easily for the next few decades, undisturbed by the fall of Ravenna, the seat of Byzantine rule over the ports of the Adriatic. However, the Lombards, the new rulers of Ravenna, were then ousted by the

Franks, led by Charlemagne, who assumed the title of emperor of the Western Holy Roman Empire. Venetians were caught in the middle. On the one hand, they had their loyalty to Byzantium, and on the other they had a new Emperor on the border to their duchy.

The current Doge, Obelario, courted both parties, and together with the Duke of Dalmatia traveled to the Frankish capital and claimed to ignore Byzantine authority while asking for their lands to be seen as independent. However, this was seen as an affront to Byzantium and in return a fleet was sent from Constantinople to the Venetian lagoon. The Doge surrendered claiming it was all the fault of the patriarch of Grado. With Venice between two rival powers, the isles and their people were split by internal bickering and conspiracy. In an attempt to once more dominate the region, Charlemagne sent his son, Pepin, King of Italy, to the Adriatic at the head of a large fleet. Ravenna and Dalmatia fell, but the march of Pepin's forces was halted at Malamocco where the Venetian forces were focused. The refugees from the conflict fled to

Castle Olivolo, in the centre of the lagoon, which stood in the Rivoalto - 'high ground' - (later contracted to Rialto) Islands. From these isles the city of Venice would be born.

Of course the Frankish fleet was intent on finding and destroying the Venetians. But legend has it that when the fleet asked for directions from a woman, the fleet was pointed in the wrong direction, running aground in the shallow water. It was here the Venetian fleet destroyed the Franks. The network of shallows would be the natural Venetian defenses for centuries.

The next Doge to be elected, Agnello Partecipazio, was the first Doge to have Venetian coinage minted. The Doge's family was affluent and owned much land. Under the rule of Agnello, the Venetians enjoyed the privileges of both the Eastern and the Western empires.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE LION

It was in the mid-ninth century that the first Doge's Palace was erected. As the influence, power, and wealth of the Venetians grew, so did their territory. They aided the Byzantine Greeks in their war against the Muslims. But the most important event was in 828 A.D. , when the body of St Mark arrived in Venice.

Legend has it that St Mark had first preached in the lands of Veneti, and that by right his body should rest there. But at the time the body of St Mark lay in Alexandria. Two Venetian merchants convinced the priest who cared for the body to hand the body over so that it may be taken to Venice. In order to move the body in secret, it was stowed with pork. Pork being a vile meat to Muslims, who controlled Alexandria, was used to pack the cargo, the Venetian hoping that this would deter the Muslims. Along the journey back to Venice one miracle said to have happened was the vision of St Mark before a monk, asking for the man to warn the merchants that they must lower their sails in order to survive a coming storm. Once in Venice, the body was placed in the chapel next to the Doge's Palace, where it would rest until a church was built

that was grand enough.

Venice grew and soon was more than a simple province. It was now an imperial duchy. It still acknowledged the power of the Western Empire but retained its autonomy. With the growing population of the isles, the lagoon became properly settled on the largest islands. Simple single storey wooden houses were the standard, and they lined the embankments. Over time the marshes were drained, and crops were grown on the islands. The city continued to grow and soon all the homes and streets formed a continuous settlement. Each part of the city was centered on the local churches, and the foundations of the city were strengthened and reinforced. Of course the main feature of the growing city was the Grand Canal, the main waterway that divides Venice in half.

Under the command of Doge Orso Partecipazio, the power of Venice increased and it started to increase the amount of military action that the duchy was involved in. The primary aim of Venice was to remove the pirates from the Adriatic in order to ensure the safe passage of trade to Venice. The other enemy of the duchy were the Saracens of the south who held domain in southern Italy. Venice itself also grew, with more of the marshy islands being settled and built upon. Venice even maintained its ban on slavery as trade grew. Trade between Byzantium and Venice flourished, and gifts were exchanged between the Doge and the Emperor of the Eastern Empire.

Trade was the lifeblood of Venice, the reason for its existence. One item key to their trade was salt, a substance that was their currency for it could be traded for all the things that could not be grown or reared on the islands of Venice. However, trade came at a price. There were Narentine pirates, against whom expeditions were sent, and even a Doge died at the hands of them. To the north there were the Hungarian Tartars, against whom the Venetians raised a wall to defend their city.

In the mid-tenth century, Venice extended their trade to Istria, but in doing so brought upon themselves the resentment of the marquis of Istria. Venetians were jailed, cargo

confiscated, merchants killed and ships destroyed. In response, the Venetians blockaded the Istria ports leading to the marquis begging for trade to be reopened. Following on from this success the Venetian military crushed the Croatians, Slavs and Narentine pirates. Of course power breeds greed and Venice was rife with internal struggles. Families fought one another, and father and son were even at each other's throats. This was the case of the Doges Pietro III and his son Pietro IV, who after a long struggle and the exile of the younger, finally ended with the son returning and taking the mantle of Doge.

As time went on and the power and influence of Venice grew, the Doge saw no reason why his people should submit to the will of the emperors of either the east or west. Sons were made patriarchs of neighboring cities, wives were sent away so new marriages of politics could be made. Such was the way of the Doges of Venice as they made more and more advances for power in the lands of Italy and beyond.

Venice of course stood at the gateway between the two great empires. And so in 967 when the Doge renewed their allegiance with the Western Holy Roman Emperor, he made the Emperor of the Eastern Empire angry, threatening them, though under the pretext that the Venetians had been trading with the Saracens.

But life was not good for all Venetians. And so Pietro IV paid the price for his despot nature and warmongering at the hands of his own people. The palace of the Doge was burnt down, and with it St Mark's Basilica and numerous homes. The broken body of the Doge was then taken for display in the Rivoalto.

The next Doge, of the Orseolo family, rebuilt the palace, built a hospital and had the golden screen, the Pala d'Oro made for the Basilica. This new Doge then abdicated, and another of the Orseolo family took his place.

The new Orseolo Doge had higher aspirations than just his own wealth. Under his guidance Venice survived battles with the Holy Roman Emperor Otto II and followed a



political plan of Venetian prosperity.

UNION WITH THE SEA

Now Venice claimed lands to the north east of Italy and, with the pirates and the Slavs removed, the Adriatic was Venice's alone. The Doge laid claim to the lands of Dalmatia, he was the Duke of the Dalmatians, and Venice was now in a mystic union with the sea, a ceremony which began back then.



Sposalizio del Mare

The 'Marriage with the Sea' is a sign of Venetian dominance over the seas of the Adriatic, the Aegean and the Mediterranean.

<https://travelbugster.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/img2353-venice-from-rialto-x2.jpg>

Begun by Doge Peitro Orseolo II after conquering of the Dalmatian coast, the ceremony is a grand affair where the Adriatic is even referred to as the 'Gulf of Venice'. The Doge dresses in gold and ermine, and sails in an elaborate gilded galley called the Bucintoro the Lido where he stands at the mouth of the harbor.

Standing at the edge of the harbor with

the patriarch, the Doge throws a wedding ring into the sea and says: 'We marry you, O sea, in a sign of true perpetual dominion, asking God to protect those who travel by sea.' Rather than throwing the ring into the ocean, in later times the Doge would simply pour holy water into the sea.

It was said that Pope Alexander donated the ring for use in the ritual, while others say that the ring was given to the Doge by a fisherman who was given the ring by St Mark.



Venetians had an elected Doge for a reason. They disliked the idea of dynasties ruling over the city, remembering the previous tyrants of the Candiano family. And so Otto, son of the previous Doge Pietro, was ousted and exiled from the city.

In order to control the power of the Doge, two councils representing factions from either side of the Grand Canal were formed, the Castellani and the Nicolotti. The Castellani wore red caps to show their allegiance, while the Nicolotti wore black caps. The rivalry was seen as a benefit to the city, ensuring that the people were always well trained for combat



<http://travelbugster.wordpress.com/page/7/>

against each other and in turn for war against enemies outside of Venice.

In 1081, 15 years after the invasion of Britain by William the Conqueror, the Normans continued to increase their lands, seizing land in the Mediterranean, Italy, and even going as far as invading the holdings of the Byzantine Empire. Venice came to the rescue, after all the Normans were now imposing themselves upon the region of the Adriatic, an area of Venetian domination. In return Venice was rewarded with tax exemptions when trading and was even given its own quarter in the city of Constantinople.

Venice of course was not the only republic to rule the waves. There was Pisa, Amalfi and Genoa. During the First Crusade, the Venetian ships captured a rival fleet from Pisa, setting it free on the guarantee that Venice alone would sail Byzantine waters.

Slowly the Venetians took a more active role in the Crusades in order to take advantage of the situation so that their rival naval republics would not gain the upper hand. In return for aiding the King of Jerusalem, Venice was rewarded with land and tax exemptions in the city. Even on the journey back from the Holy Lands the Venetians took many ports, such as Rhodes.

It was in 1126 the emperor of the Eastern Empire, John II, called for peace with Venice once more, and again Venice was given a seal to show their right to tax exemptions, so long as Venice aided in the fight against the Saracens and Normans that plagued the waters of Byzantium.

It was during this time of near constant warfare in the seas that Venice acquired the pink granite columns that stand in St Mark's Square. On top, once they were erected, symbols of Venice were placed. These symbols were St Theodore, the original patron of Venice, and the winged lion of St Mark. It was at these columns that the criminals would be punished and executed.

It was also around this time that the Arsenale, the place where warships were built, stored, equipped and repaired, was founded. It was the lynchpin in Venetian domination of the seas. This domination of the Mediterranean

by Venice and other naval republics caused the Byzantine Empire much anger, and in envy the Emperor of Byzantium had many people from the Venetian quarter of Constantinople held, their possession and goods destroyed or confiscated.

Soon after the failed excursion in 1171 by Doge Vitale Michiel II, the electoral system for the selection of the Doge was reformed and the Great Council was formed. This group of over four hundred nobles would elect the Doge in one of the most complicated systems ever devised.

It was the alliance of cities with the pope that prevented the then Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, from invading the lands of Italy. In return Venice, through politicking and diplomacy, achieved peace with the Pope and true independence from Rome.

THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

In 1203 Venice was contracted to transport and protect the troops of the Fourth Crusade. However, the leaders of the Crusade did not have enough money, and so the Doge Enrico Dandolo diverted the crusade from its course to Egypt. Instead they first landed on the Dalmatian coast and sacked Zara. Then the fleet moved on to Constantinople, seeking revenge for the treatment of Venetians in recent times.

At first the siege on land failed, and the Crusade forces were repelled. But then they changed tactics and assaulted the walls of the city from the sea. Lashing together ships they were able to construct siege towers and so were able to scale the sea walls.

Constantinople was sacked, its riches taken away by the crusading forces. One treasure of importance was the four bronze horses that now stand atop of St Mark's Basilica.

The lands of the Eastern Empire were then divided up and a new puppet emperor was put in place to rule over the empire. In total the lands now under the rule of Venice accounted for three quarters of the Roman Empire. Venice was now indeed mighty, and its

influence was over the entire Mediterranean.

Of course this colonial empire of Venice was not left unopposed. The forces of Genoa and the revenge-thirsty Byzantines formed an alliance against the Venetians.

In Syria the Venetians broke the chains barring the port and destroyed the Genoese ships. But soon after the Genoese-Byzantine alliance retook Constantinople from the Western Empire. However the Venetians were not prevented from trading in Constantinople by the Byzantines. Aggression between the Genoese and the Venetians came to an end with a peace treaty that was overseen by the king of France.

Election Day

The complex election system of the Doge was introduced in 1268 by the Doge Lorenzo Tiepolo.

The system was designed to ensure that it could not be influenced by just one family or subject to fraud.

The Great Council, over four hundred nobles, would select 30. Those 30 chose 9 of themselves. Those 9 selected 40 from the Great Council, who in turn selected 12 of their own. These 12 chose another 25 from the council who reduced themselves to 9. Those 9 chose another 45 from the council, who reduced themselves to 11. These 11 chose 41 councilors who then elected the doge.

Easy, neh?

The 13th century saw Venice undergo much social reform. There was the new election system already, but also many public works, including state funded doctors and management of the lagoon itself. But of course all these are nothing compared to the might of an earthquake, and one such major tectonic event caused much suffering to Venice. This century also saw Venice extend its hand ever further, enforcing their dominion over others, securing their trading rights and even minting a coin that would be used beyond the

boundaries of their empire, such was the prestige that came with the name Venice.

It was also in this century that the explorer Marco Polo returned to his homeland. He brought with him tales of the distant lands of China and India, and spoke of the great wealth and opportunity that such a trading route could give.

The end of the 13th century was not easy as enemies at home and abroad moved against the Republic. Doge and Saracen, Byzantine and Genoese - all had their eyes set on Venice.

The early 14th century saw more changes to the way Venice was administered, with the Great Council being 'locked'. This meant that eventually only those houses that were members would be members for life, and so membership to the Council became hereditary. The Doge was now elected by the elite and not by the masses. Though such a change led to stability, the removal of the public's right to vote on the Doge meant that they would become disenfranchised and rebellious.

Conspiracies against the Doge were not uncommon, but the Doge had his own allies. The punishments meted out to those insurgents were not light. Exile was a light sentence, the worst being torture and execution in front of the pillars in St Mark's Square.

A SHIP IN EVERY PORT

The influence of Venice extended far and wide. Ships laden with cargo would set sail to Constantinople, the Black Sea, Spain and London. Venice even began to make inroads into land-based trade routes to the north, much to the annoyance of the merchants of Padua and Verona.

The mid 1300s were not the easiest for Venetians as the city was hit by an earthquake, and the Plague finally arrived in Venice. No surprise in hindsight, as Venice had ships travelling to all ports in the Mediterranean. Over a half of all Venetians died.

War once more hit the Venetian traders. Again it was from Genoa. However, for once the Byzantine forces were the

Venetian's allies. With a shortage of troops, and Venetian forces depleted by the Plague, the Venetian galleys were also manned by troops from Dalmatia and Byzantium. But as the war came to an end between the two republics a new Doge came to power. A great traitor - Doge Marin Falier.

Falier was the model citizen and statesman. He was a count, a lord, a knight and a merchant of high renown. Brought to the palace on the Doge's galley, he passed between the two pillars in the square. This was considered a bad omen. Falier had plans to take Venice and appoint himself as dictator. Whether it was out of revenge for a previous slight against his family or just political ambition, Falier formed a conspiracy to take the throne for his family. But the conspiracy was uncovered, Falier executed and his co-conspirators were either hanged or exiled.

Falier was executed on the 17th of April 1355, a day considered unlucky in Italy. He was decapitated on the grand staircase of the palace, his head displayed to the public and his body buried in an unmarked grave. In thanks to God for stopping this plot against Venice, the event was honored by holding a public Mass in St Mark's. By decree of the Council of Ten the traces of Falier were removed from the palace, his portrait painted black and inscribed upon with the following: 'This would have been the place of Marin Falier, beheaded for the crime of treason.'

War with Genoa was followed by battles against the Padua, Austria, and Hungarians, any who laid their sights on the lands of Dalmatia. The new Doge of Venice was the captain Lorenzo Celsi. He was brought back to the city as he had been elected while he was out at sea. However, peace with the Genoese was never permanent. Plagues swept the city at the end of the fourteenth century and the lagoon of Venice even came under attack.

At the start of the fifteenth century Venice was a growing power on land and in the seas. The start of the century was a time of celebration, with jousting contests held in honor of the new Doge. But soon enough war came to Venice again. And once more it was

Hungarians, Turks, and the leader of Aquileia. But the lands of the Venetian Empire grew. But with this came rivals. The Visconti of Milan, the Carraras of Padua and the Scaligeri of Verona.

Doge Francesco Foscari came to power in 1423, but was the first Doge whom was elected without the blessing of the people. The Council of Ten now was fully in command of the selection of the Doge. But the previous Doge, Tommaso Mocenigo had warned the Council against Foscari, calling him a warmonger and a liar. He was not wrong. There was war against Milan, and it cost Venice dearly, with Foscari eventually forced out of office by the Council of Ten.

The fifteenth century was also an age of exploration, with Venetian merchants traveling the world and bringing back new goods, and new ideas, making Venice the unique city that it is. Merchants traveled as far as the Atlantic African coastline and beyond. This century also saw the end of Venice's old rival, Constantinople, at the hands of the Turks.

RENAISSANCE OF VENICE

In Venice the new trade was the printed word. It was a new export that made up for the lack of trade due to the fall of Constantinople to the Turks. Trade routes had to be shifted for safety of the merchant fleet, and the loss of trade would have hit the purses of the Venetian merchant if not for new forms of trade. Venice was the growing centre of the printed word, publishing hundreds of books constructing hundreds of printing presses. It cemented Venice as the intellectual capital of the world, publishing books on art, war, religion, history, and science.

Meanwhile the war against the Turks was escalating. Venetian ports in Greece were overrun; the coast of Dalmatia was attacked. But peace was eventually made, and Venice's new sign of prestige, their new export, was art. So as a sign of peace Venice sent the painter Gentile Bellini to paint the Sultan's portrait. In the Renaissance, Venetian artists were more than artists, they were celebrities and

ambassadors. One prominent artist was Titian who studied under Gentile and Giovanni Bellini. He studied the classical forms and painted some of the most erotic nudes ever to be seen. Other paintings depicted scenes from the Bible, but the painters pushed the boundaries of accepted art. In particular Veronese was deemed a heretic for including images of fools, drunks and dwarves in his painting of the Last Supper. The artists of Venice were incurring the wrath of the Church as they pursued art.

The Renaissance was not all good for the Venetians. With the Americas discovered and new trade routes to the Indies, the Venetian markets for their goods plummeted. To be rivals of these new markets, it meant that Venice had to face the might of powers such as France and Spain, and at the start of the 15th century these countries looked to Italy for new territory. Old Italian enemies of Venice were now new allies against the powers of Europe. Worse still was that rivalries with Milan led to the Turks renewing their attacks against Venetian lands in Dalmatia. Venice was being attacked from all sides, Christian and Muslim alike. Venice had to make a choice, and for the time being they had to hand over their dominance of the seas of the Mediterranean.

In 1508 war was declared against Venice once more. This time the threat was the League of Cambrai. The League was formed by all the great powers of Europe - the Pope, the Holy Roman Emperor, the Spanish, French and Hungarians. All of these European kingdoms and lords wanted a piece of the Serenissima. Though they lost land to the Spanish, the Pope, Julius II, was convinced that the end of Venice would be worse for Christendom than if it remained. But soon enough the League fell apart and allies turned upon each other, this time against Spain. These wars had a lasting effect, leaving Italy a fractured land and weak, with Venice retreating to its old borders. Venice had held out against all odds and was revered for its resolve.

A Maze of Water

Venice as it looks today has barely changed since the end of the 15th century. Venice consists of the canals, streets called calli, and squares called campi.

Venetian architecture is unlike any in Europe, fusing Western Gothic with Eastern Byzantine styles. Palaces (palazzo) were the merchant's homes, but also a place of trade and warehouses. They consisted of a central courtyard that let light in, a main entrance that opened onto the canals, and the upper stories were given over to living space, with further levels added in later years to some of the palaces. In fact the palaces were only able to be so boastful due to the protection given by the Venetian fleet and the lagoon defenses.

Venice is also the origin of the Classical style, first seen in the construction of the land entrance to the Arsenale. The Classical style was large and grand, echoing the Empire of Rome and the times of the Greek philosophers. It features clean lines and imposing scales compared the more modest and intricate Venetian Gothic. So while St Mark's Basilica is clearly of an eastern style, the Doge's palace boasts a merger of styles, with a Venetian Gothic front, but also the magnificent Giant's Staircase, a Classical staircase on which statues of Neptune and Mars stand.

END OF AN EMPIRE

At the turn of the 16th century Venice burned. Twenty four hours of fire ravaged the Rialto. Venice was rebuilt, but not as it was. It was now Classical, and what had begun with the Arsenale now was to adorn the Doge's Palace and the Basilica. But this was all a show of power while the Venetian Empire was slowly being consumed by the growing powers of Spain and France. One possibility to regain their might was that Venice was to undergo an overhaul, start the construction of ocean going ships and engage in the dangers of traveling through Spanish and Portuguese waters, so

that they might journey to the New World. But Venice was no longer the naval power it once was.

In an alliance with Spain, Genoa, and the Pope, Venice once more went to war with the Turks, and finally the march of the Turks was halted and the powers of Christendom and Islam began a long standing rivalry. But at last the tide of the Turks had been ended. It was this victory in the waters of Lepanto that spread around Europe, news that the Sultan had been killed by the might of the Christian fleet.

Venice not only felt the pressure of enemies beyond their borders, there were traitors ready to see the Republic fall. But amongst all the backstabbing and fear of the Inquisitors of the Supreme Tribunal worse was to come. But it did not arrive in the form of Venetian or foreigner, but disease.

The Plague hit Venice. Often the lagoon would prevent the spread of illness. But not during the outbreak in 1575. The city was suffering under the unbearable heat of the summer, and the canals were swarming. Boats were now filled with the dead rather than the living. In fact the dead were now filling up the canals with their unburied bodies and those who fell sick and sank into the water. Venice was at a loss as to what to do or why they were suffering. Of course Venice's trading was hard hit, with ports fearing the Plague being brought to their lands. But Venice was not ruled by fools. Ships coming to Venice were subject to health inspections and quarantined. The Lazzaretti Islands were where the ships would be taken. One island, Lazzaretto Nuovo, was used to observe the ships and fumigate them. Lazzaretto Vecchio was where the ill were taken and watched for 22 days. If they stayed healthy they were free to leave. But all the Venetian precautions had failed. All the best investigations could not find the cause of the outbreak. Most saw that it was a punishment from God. To maintain order it was decreed that every house in the Great Council present at least one person.

Venice's population was reduced by a quarter. But the skills and lessons learned during the epidemic would save the city in the

future, and taught other countries how to survive diseases.

Even after the death of some fifty thousand people, Venice once more rose from the ashes. In 1587 the first public bank was formed, and soon followed by a second. These banks were critical to the future of Venice as they would help fund future wars. These banks were revolutionary, allowing for credit, where paper replaced coins and gold, and loans were available. These public government run banks were different to the previous private banks as they allowed direct transfer of funds from the books under one name to another name. It was also about this time that the Rialto Bridge was built. This bridge was Classical and signified man's defiance against the elements. But as always there were enemies at the gates. The Turks and the Hapsburgs were expanding into Venetian territory, while the Pope excommunicated the Doge for imprisoning priests for common crimes. Venice of course did not care.

At the turn of the 17th century Venice had to act as diplomat to the array of countries around it. But this unenviable position led to confrontations with the Austrians and their new allies the Uskoks. The Spaniards also tried to lay claim to the Adriatic but met a defeat at the hands of Venice's superior naval might. Within Venice things were not easy as traitors sought to take advantage of the situation. One group, known as the Bravi, were rounded up and hanged for their conspiracy. Another traitor was Senator Foscarini, hanged for giving secrets to the Spanish. But after his death it was found that Foscarini was the victim of a plot, and those that had perpetrated the lie were executed.

Plague once more hit Venice in 1630, following a famine. The end of the epidemic was marked by another church, Santa Maria della Salute, constructed in thanks for the ending of the disease, joining the church from the last epidemic, Il Redentore.

AN AGE OF DECADENCE

Even after another plague and the famine, Venice was still considered a grand and beautiful city. But this beauty masked the

darker side of Venetian life. Venetians were always Catholics when it counted, otherwise they were often happy to act in ways that contradicted their faith and the words of the Pope. This was true of all Venetians, even their priests and nuns who engaged in dangerous activities. Monks would attend parties, and nuns would engage in sexual activities. The lifestyle of the nobility of Venice was no less extravagant.

The Life of a Young Nobleman

The young nobles of the time wore the latest fashions of France, though they hid themselves under dark cloaks and dark caps. But these simple cloaks were embellished with gold thread, silk and lace, and many wore noble wigs. On special occasions red robes would be worn, but more outrageous were the rituals of greeting each other. This obsession with position and titles was not limited to the nobles, as all Venetians expected to be referred to by the correct term.

However, this was just the surface. The nobles of Venice were far more involved in the day to day affairs of the city and their businesses, fighting on the front lines against Turks. They were also admired for their intellect, good nature and undaunted by bad turns of luck. The nobles were also well instructed on matters of the state.

The nobility of Venice considered themselves the equal to princes as technically they all had a right to be elected as Doge. However there were ranks within the nobility. The highest rank consisted of the oldest families, who could trace their titles as far back as 800. Then there were the 'new' families who were given titles after this year. 'Very new' families, the third rank, gained their titles after they helped support the war with Chioggia in 1380. The final ranks of families were added to the ranks of the nobles during the war of Candia in the 17th century and the later war with Morea in the 18th century. These later nobles did not get their

positions for free; instead they had to pay 100,000 ducats.

Nobles were well fed on fish and meats, but laws prohibited both being served during the same meal. The same laws also prohibited what people could wear. Of course those below the nobles could only be as well fed on the mainland.

Below the nobles were the middle class, made up of the trained, skilled craftsmen, doctors and city officials, merchants and bankers. Below them were the commoners, gondoliers, dock workers and fishermen.

In 1638 war with the Turks continued as the Venetian fleet destroyed pirates from Africa, with battles escalating in 1644. The Turks used the capture of the Sultan's harem as an excuse to invade Crete. Further battles took place along the southern coastline of Greece, and at the head of the Venetian force was the dishonored Francesco Morosini, who took Athens and returned to Venice a hero. He was elected Doge and continued the fight against the Turks until his death in 1693.

The start of the 18th century saw the Turks take back the islands south of Greece, but Venice was now taking the stance of neutrality, and let these islands fall to the Sultan. Venice's naval power was in decline, the Arsenale now silent. However, Venice's shops still had a booming trade. The Rialto Bridge was lined with shops, and in the area of the Rialto there were stalls selling fish, silk, fruit and vegetables, cloth and gold.

But Venice had lost all of its trading might and instead was known for its depravity due to the antics of Giacomo Casanova.

The end of the 18th century brought the end of mysticism as science changed the face of the world. Steam power and electricity would push back the boundaries of the world, and as the nations of the world expanded, Venice looked inward, remembering times long lost.

Venice slipped ever more into its grave while enjoying the feasts and balls of all the festivities that the city followed. Gambling was rife, and the nobles walked the streets under the cover of a mask. Theaters showed

opera and the improvised shows of the *commedie dell'arte*. Music entertained the people in these dwindling nights of the Republic, such as the work of Vivaldi, Galuppi, and the plays of Goldoni.

Royals and nobles from all of Europe visited Venice, but their presence was not enough to halt the decline of the city. New ideas from revolutionaries were creeping in and the Republic was in danger. The nobles of Venice were lost in debt and the wealth of ages past was now gone.

In 1786 Venice's fleet took to the seas for the last time, responding to the piracy of the Barbary Coast Pirates. They were able to get a truce, but the piece of paper meant nothing as the pirates continued their attacks in the Bay of Tunisia. But worse was to come. In France the Revolution had struck; King Louis XVI deposed. Venice stood neutral to the growing wars with France as the greater powers of Europe turned upon the rebel state.

In 1796 Napoleon marched on the lands of Italy, sweeping through the north of Italy, his sights set on the treasures of Venice. On the 16th of May 1796 French troops entered Venice. The Republic was over, and Venice was handed over to Austria. In 1802 the last Doge, Lodovico Manin died.

A few years later Napoleon returned. This time Venice was taken back and became part of the new Kingdom of Italy, which he himself had established. However, soon after the Austrians returned, taking Venice and Milan. But the delights of Venice were not gone. Venice attracted the eccentric and debauched, such as the incestuous Lord Byron, who indulged in the women of Venice and the Carnival. Poets and artists like Byron still found romance within the city, the decaying islands being at their height of beauty.

In the mid 19th century the bridge from the mainland to Venice was finished and it carried modern steam trains. Gas light now illuminated the squares of Venice, and for some this progress was too much, ruining the romantic beauty of the city. Rebellion soon followed and Venice once more had the chance of being a free republic. But the Austrians retook the area of the Veneto, and

were only halted by the destruction of parts of the lagoon bridge. Starved and bombarded, the Venetians allowed the Austrians in once more.

Over the course of the mid 1800's wars of independence were fought, and through a series of uprising against their oppressors the Italian states were unified after Venice was handed to the French by the Austrians, who in turn handed the territory over to the new Kingdom of Italy.

Within this new state Venice continued to crumble as its coffers were empty and its great treasures were handed over. But efforts were made to revive the port, with hotels built, expansion of the lagoon bridge and the use of modern boats along the canals. Electricity and gas now powered the city, and slowly the city awoke to the 20th century.

FROM THE ASHES

Venice was becoming home to the arts, with opera premiered in the Teatro La Fenice, and the first moving picture films were shown in the city. Art was Venice's new life blood.

The regeneration of Venice was brought to a standstill with the start of the First World War. At first neutral Italy joined the Allies, hoping to settle old scores and regain territories lost years before. Italy set its sights on the old rulers, Austria, who in retaliation bombed Venice.

After the war Venice continued to modernize. A new industrial region was formed and the port became the center of commerce and production. Fascism swept the nation, the regeneration of the country came at the price of freedom. Italy pushed into Africa, and the League of Nations declared sanctions against the country. As an ally of Germany, Italy entered World War II and Italian troops fought French, Greek, Russian and in North Africa. But Venice was lucky, as the enemies of Italy spared it destruction in favor of hitting the industrial towns of Mestre and Marghera.

In 1943 Italy overthrew Mussolini and the Allies surged into southern Italy as German forces came from the north to turn them back, with Italian guerillas aiding the Allies against the Germans. Eventually British

forces liberated the city.

After the war Venice continued to grow, influencing the trade of refined chemicals made on the mainland of the lagoon. But progress had come at a cost, an unseen one. The very nature of the lagoon, its chemistry and dynamics, had been ruined by industry.

In 1966 rain and wind caused Venice to be flooded in a way unseen before. Underground oil reserves were flooded and burst, and the electricity was shorted out. But the flood brought another type of flood. Tourists. With Venice now in the spotlight, the sinking city was the place to go. Now major projects were funded by the world to save the city. But now the population of the city dwindled and homes became hotels. Venice was maybe not dying on the outside, but the people themselves were leaving.

VENICE IN MODERN NIGHTS

The Venice of today is a centre of the arts, films, fashion and a tourist location that attracts thousands every year. Venice plays host to a number of events all year round.

The city is part of the northern region of the Veneto, along with the cities of Padua, Verona, Vicenza, Treviso, Rovigo and the towns of Mestre and Chioggia. To the north the Veneto is bordered by Austria.

Venice itself has changed little since the end of the 17th century. Venice consists of a number of islands interconnected by bridges and canals. The natural defenses of the city are the shallow waters within the lagoon and the barriers of the lagoon itself. Rivers were even diverted to prevent silt building up in the lagoon and thus allowing for attacks from the mainland. However the islands of Venice are low lying and subject to flooding. The 'acqua alta', or high waters are due to a number of causes. First there is dredging of the lagoon to allow large ships into the very heart of Venice. These underwater trenches helped the surging water in the winter months to flow into Venice. Secondly there is the issue of subsidence. The industries along the coastline began to suck water from wells, drawing it out from beneath the lagoon itself. This has caused

the islands to slowly sink. Of course the final contribution to the Acqua Alta is global warming and the rising sea levels as the ice caps melt. To tackle this threat a series of barriers have been planned to that will inflate and prevent the incoming tides from the Adriatic. But future plans see the city being raised higher by pumping material into the earth beneath the city.

Venice consists of 6 main districts, called sestieri. Three lie to the western side of the Grand Canal. These are San Polo, Santa Croce and Dorsoduro. On the other side are Castello, San Marco and Cannaregio. The largest island is Castello, originally called Olivolo where the Roman fort was standing.

Getting to Venice is of course easier now than it ever was. Venice is connected to the mainland by a bridge along which trains are carried to the station in Cannaregio, and the main transport hub for cars and buses in San Marco in Piazzale Rome. The Piazzale is only a short walk from the fourth and newest bridge over the Grand Canal that takes people to the train station.

Most tourists arrive in the Veneto at the airport of Marco Polo, located on the mainland to the north of Mestre. Of course the area can also be reached by air by arriving at the Treviso Airport, which lies further inland from Mestre. Arrivals at Marco Polo can either take a private car or bus to Venice, a journey that is only 20 minutes long. But those who wish to arrive in style may hire a water taxi and travel to the city. From the train station it is easy for travelers to reach other cities and towns in the Veneto, with Verona only an hour or so away.

Travel about the city is primarily by foot, with four bridges crossing the Grand Canal. The Rialto bridge crosses the canal at the very heart of the city. The Accademia bridge crosses from the Peggy Guggenheim museum of modern art in Dorsoduro, and leads into San Marco. The bridge is wooden, and replaced a dreadful iron bridge made in the 19th century. The Ponte dei Scalzi is another arched stone bridge made by the Austrians and joins Cannaregio to Santa Croce near the train station, which is where the fourth bridge sits,

the, Ponte della Costituzione.

The Rialto and the Devil

Numerous plans for were made for the new Rialto Bridge. The previous bridge had collapsed under the weight of a crowd watching foreign ambassadors and nobles. The new bridge was designed as part of a competition. The winning design was single grand arch that spanned the canal. This winning design by Contino was subject to a number of problems over the course of its construction. Legend has it the problems were the work of the devil, who would tear chunks of stone from the bridge in the night. A foreman did see the being, and heard its vow: 'No man will ever succeed in building this stone bridge, but for a price I can help you.' The devil didn't want the soul of the foreman. Just the soul of the first man to cross the bridge.

When the bridge was finished the first person to cross the bridge would be a priest, except a dog was seen to rush ahead. The act saved the priest and trapped the devil's soul.

The fastest way to travel between places in Venice is by foot, but for those who wish to travel from one end of the Grand Canal to another, and then onward to the outer edges of the city and to the other islands of the lagoon, there are the water buses called *vaporetto*. Travel by motorized boats up and down the canals is limited in speed to prevent damage to the canals. Only the emergency services can break this limit. Of course most produce and waste is transported from the islands by boat, with goods being taken to the morning markets.

THE SIX SESTIERI

SAN POLO

San Polo lies at the heart of Venice and starts at the western end of the Rialto and extends as far as the Piazzale Roma. To its north is the sestieri of Santa Croce, and to the

south is the region of Dorsoduro. The main focus of the San Polo district is the market area of the Rialto, with two main routes winding through San Polo leading to the Rialto bridge, Campo di San Polo, and the church of Frari.

The Rialto is a garish and cluttered collection of shops and stalls. The tables and windows are filled with Murano glass, lace, models of gondola, paper and writing journals, masks and hats. The shops are pressed together in the narrow streets, and even line the bridge itself.

Near to the Grand Canal, just off the Rialto bridge, is the more traditional market of fresh produce that is brought into Venice daily. Here there is fish brought in from the lagoon and the Adriatic that morning, vegetables and fruit from the mainland, meats and spices. By midday the stalls close down, bar a few of their number, but about the area are a number of cafes and bars, these osetria staying open late into the evening.

Over looking the Rialto is the church of San Giacomo di Rialto, apparently the oldest church in Venice. The church was rebuilt in 1071, and now as an underused church it is often the location for music concerts.

The Gobbo di Rialto

Opposite the church of San Giacomo is a stone figure of a hunchback. Carved in the 16th century, the figure supports a platform from which messages of the state were read aloud.

In the past criminals would be forced to run the gauntlet from St Mark's square to the Gobbo, naked.

Other rumors and legends abound as to the nature of the statue. Some claim that the statue is an Ogre that broke a pledge to a lover, others say that the changeling was turned to stone so that the Rialto Islands would forever stand above the seas and some say that the statue is the remains of one of the Gentry. Either way it has been ritual for the changelings of Venice to touch the statue on its nose when passing by.

SANTA CROCE

Moving south from the Rialto, we push deeper into San Polo and to Campo di San Polo. The square is the second largest in Venice. The square is overlooked by the church of San Polo, Palazzo Soranzo, Palazzo Corner Mocenigo and Palazzo Bernardo. San Polo Church is a stark church that houses a painting by Tintoretto of the Last Supper. More unusual is the campanile which has at its base two lions, one toying with a snake, the other with a severed human head.

Continuing west is the Frari, a collection of buildings holding a great many paintings. The Frari is dominated by the church of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari. Constructed by the Franciscan monks, they had first built one church and then planned an even grander one to replace it. Over a hundred years of work, the church is visible from the Campanile in St Mark's square. Within the church are a number of works of art by Titian, and even the tomb of the artist, one of the few people to ever be entombed within a church during a plague.

Next to the Frari is the Archivio di Stato, the state archive that houses all of the documents of the Republic of Venice, packed into just 300 rooms. The church of San Rocco, and the adjacent Suola Grande di San Rocco contain many more of Tintoretto's work, and the Scuola acted as a mission which was concerned with the treatment of the sick, just as like its patron, Saint Roch.

At the far western end of the sestieri is the public gardens of Papadopoli and finally the church of Santa Maria Maggiore which forms part of the city prison.

Starting at the Rialto and the markets, Santa Croce sits to the north of San Polo, following the curve of the Grand Canal. The area was apparently settled by people fleeing the Lombard invasion, or was land taken from Benedictine monks.

The area just adjacent to the fish market is a winding pack of workshops. The nearby Campo San Cassiano was where the first public opera house stood. Packed in amongst the streets is the Ca' Pésaro, which was given to the city by Felicità Bevilacqua La Masa. She was a patron of the arts and left her home to be a studio for artists. But instead the palazzo became the home of the Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna. This museum of modern art houses many pieces by Klimt, Kandinsky, Matisse and Ernst. On the top floors of the Ca' Pésaro is the Museo Orientale. Now refurbished, the museum boasts many cases of ceremonial samurai armour, clothing, paintings, silks, swords and many weapons.

Heading further west from the Ca' Pésaro is the 17th century Palazzo Mocenigo, a museum to period clothing and furnishings, where the delicate fabrics are protected by the curtains being closed at all times. Nearby to the Palazzo is the deconsecrated church of San Giovanni Descollato. The church is closed at all times and the name means 'St John the Beheaded'. This church dates back to the 11th century and claims some of the oldest examples of Venetian frescoes.

Further along towards the Piazzale Roma is the Museo di Storia Naturale. The museum contains examples of local marine life and many dinosaurs, including a huge example an ancient crocodile.

Continuing west from the museum there is the church of San Giacomo dell'Orio, and then the church of San Simeone Profeta. Near to the last of these churches is the Riva di Biasio. Between the columns that lead from the stretch of street to the Piazzette, a butcher by the name of Biasio was decapitated for selling human flesh as pork.

DORSODURO

Dorsoduro lies to the south of San Polo and follows the curve of the southern section of the Grand Canal. Dorsoduro stretches from Piazzale Roma in the west to Santa Maria della Salute.

The church of Salute, meaning 'salvation', was built in 1630 in thanks to the Virgin Mary who the Venetians think saved them from the Plague. The Salute is a huge structure of white stone, the central chamber illuminated by a circle of windows high in the dome. This circle of eight windows, a Marian star, signifies the crown of the Virgin Mary. Meanwhile the mosaic floor has a coded reference to Mary's feast day coinciding with the date of Venice's foundation. The enormous structure of the Salute required 100,000 wooden piles to support it and over 50 years to complete it. Still celebrated to this day is the feast of the Presentation of the Virgin. On the 21st of November the salvation of the city is remembered.

Next to the Salute are the museum of Seminario Patriarcale and the old customs house Dogana di Mare. On top of the Dogana di Mare is the figure of Fortune, standing upon a gold ball and acts as a weather vane.

The Beast of Dogana

In the water right beneath the Punta della Dogana is a hole from which a sea beast is said to emerge on moonless nights. The beast is said to have a head of a horse, and is eight meters long, and almost a meter thick. It was last seen in 1933 by fishermen who said that the beast rose up out of the water and swallowed a seagull.

As for the nature of the beast none are sure. Some may think it is similar to the Loch Ness monster or the Kraken. However a number of changelings who have seen it think it is one of a number of beasts, for example a water-based hobgoblin that works for the True Fae Commodore Fathom.

Following the Grand Canal west leads to the church of San Gregorio where the skin of one of Venice's heroes was kept. The hero, Marcantonio Bragadin, was skinned by the Turks in 1571 and first laid to rest here.

Next along the way is the Ca' Dario, or the 'Cursed Palace'. The story of the palace is that the Giovanni Dario had an illegitimate daughter. She married into the Barbaro family. The Barbaro then inherited the house. Giovanni Dario was then expelled from the Grand Council. Dario's son-in-law lost all their money, and Dario's daughter died of a broken heart. In the 17th century Giacomo Barbaro was assassinated in Candia, and the house was bought by an Armenian merchant. The Armenian lost all his money and died. Over and over owners died. Even the manager of 'The Who' died. The house is cursed and haunted by the ghosts of the dead owners.

Casanova and Cagliostro

Legend has it that the lover and fiend, Casanova, was cured at the age of eight of a strange disease by a sorceress who closed him a trunk and he emerged cured, a form of magical rebirth.

Another story says that he met the magician, the Count of Cagliostro, in the Squero of San Trovaso in order to exchange secrets. Apparently the Count knew the secret of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of youth. Cagliostro was also a founder of a group under the title of Egyptian Freemasons. It was said the members were taught how to be returned to the state of being before the loss of their original sin, and live for 5557 years.

Casanova, armed with this knowledge, may have succeeded in making the formula. He officially died the 4th of June 1798, but his tomb disappeared, and now lives in Venice.

Nearby the Ca' Dario is the Peggy Guggenheim Collection of modern art held in the Palazzo Venier dei Leoni. Then there is the Gallerie dell'Accademia, located in an old school of art, one of Venice's most renowned

galleries. It is outside the gallery that one of the bridges crosses over the Grand Canal.

Further west is the church of San Trovaso, and the Squero di San Trovaso. The Squero is named after the people that manufactured the gondola.

Heading north from the Squero and across the Fondamenta di Borgio is the Ognissanti, a former Benedictine convent that is now a hospital.

Following the Fondamenta north and crossing back over toward the Grand Canal is the Palazzo Loredan which overlooks the canal. Together with the Palazzo Farsetti they now house the town hall.

Across the Rio Malpaga is the Ca' Rezzonico and the church of San Barnaba. The parish about the church was where the noble families would live if they had lost their wealth. As they were prevented by law to run shops, the nobles would sell their votes to the other families. The Ca' Rezzonico is a museum of the work from the 18th century. Just off the square outside the church of San Barnaba is the Ponte dei Pugni. Here the rival factions of the Nicolotti and Castellani would fight.

Following the Grand Canal from the Ca' Rezzonico is the Ca' Foscari. It was here that Henry the III once stayed, and now is home to the university. Across the Rio Foscari is the Palazzo Balbi. West from the Palazzo is the church of San Panteleone, a place renowned for its healing abilities. The area about it is filled with cafes and bars due to the presence of the university nearby.

Crossing back over the canal and south is the large square of Campo di Santa Margherita. A true centre of Venetian life this square is also filled with bars and cafes due to the number of students that study nearby. The church in the square is adorned with dragons which relate to the story that the church's patron, Saint Margaret, was swallowed by a dragon but emerged unscathed when the dragon exploded.

Off the southwest corner of the square is the Scuola dei Carmini and the church of Santa Maria del Carmelo, also known simply as the Carmini church. Following the Rio di

Santa Margherita to Rio di Carmini we come to the Palazzo Zenobio.

The Shrieking Skull

On the other side of the canal is the Fondamenta Gheradini; behind the Carmini church an 18th century merchant called Grimano Grimani called the area home. He had spent some time in Cyprus and returned with a servant from the island.

Both fell ill and the servant was promised to be buried in his homeland by his master. But of course this never happened. The servant was buried in next to the Carmini church, and on that night there were screams from the servant's grave. The skull was quickly dug up and placed in the Grimani house. The removal of the skull causes it to scream and no one has ever removed it since, with it still hidden in the house.

The Palazzo Zenobio was built by the Zenobio family who were one of the wealthiest in Venice. Now it is the Armenian college and boasts a ballroom which is a hall of mirrors. The hall is often used as a venue for showcasing modern art. Next door to the Palazzo is the chapel of Santa Maria del Soccorso. This is where the courtesan Veronica Franco founded a house to help prostitutes who wanted to end their lives as whores.

A Personal Note

Venice to me is not just an amazing city to visit, with some of the most gorgeous architecture and absorbing history. No, Venice is also a place of romance for me as I have had the joy of visiting twice. The first time was with my girlfriend, and we got engaged there (a mutual engagement, I didn't get on one knee, but instead a ritual of engagement to each other). The second time was for my wedding the following year, which my wife and I dressed in period clothing for and had performed in the Palazzo Zenobio hall of

mirrors.

So if reading this book you want to visit then please do so. If you want to be all romantic when you go, then go for it!



Following the canal of Rio di San Nicolo from Zenobio is the Palazza Arian, the church of Angelo Raffaele and the nearby church of San Sebastiano and finally the church of San Nicolo dei Mendicoli.

Dating from the 7th century the church is one of the oldest. The church is well known as being a location used in the film *Don't Look Now*. Near to the church is a statue of the Virgin that is crushing a serpent under foot. The statue also has an inscription that translates to 'you are very beautiful, my friend'. The story linked to this inscription is that a young 16 year old woman called Dorina Lotti, having only just had her birthday the other day, was met by a woman dressed in white while returning home. The woman just stood and stared at Dorina. The same thing happened for three days. The fourth day was different. The woman spoke and said, "Little Dorina, wouldn't you like to be as beautiful as I am?" The girl was shocked that the woman knew her name. She asked if she was a witch but the woman said no. She said her name was Laura, and was impressed by the young girls faith and wanted to reward her with the secret of beauty. To do this the girl was told that she had to cover all the furniture in white sheets. Then she had to undress and anoint herself with the contents of a vial that the woman gave her, and then light some candles. The woman went on to tell her that she was to leave the window open and three women would appear dressed in white. Most importantly the woman told Dorina not to invoke the Virgin Mary or God, nor leave mirrors in sight or knives.

That night Dornia did as she was told but left a mirror uncovered. The women arrived and asked her what she wanted. But as Dorina answered Dorina looked at the mirror and saw the backs of the women, covered in hair and like that of an animal. Dorina fled in fear and headed to the church. The woman

from the days before was in the same place as before on the street and told Dorina to be quiet, but Dorina saw that the woman had the feet of a goat. Dorina exclaimed and called out to the Virgin, and the fairy faded away. The statue is in thanks for this act.

CANNAREGIO

Cannaregio is located to the north of the city on the other side of the Grand Canal from Santa Croce, and stretches from the train station in the west to church of San Giovanni Crisostomo and the Rialto bridge.

Cannaregio is one of the quietest districts of Venice, and remains more like a collection of parishes. It is here that most people will find something like authentic Venetian life.

Starting at the train station there is the church known as the Scalzi. The outside is adorned with angles and white stone, while the interior is dark and brooding. Within the chapel lies the tomb of the last Doge of Venice, Lodovico Manin.

The main street from the Scalzi is the Lista di Spagna, a street overrun with tourist shops, sweet shops and stalls selling cheap goods. Pressing onward away from the station is the church of San Geremia and the Palazzo Labia. The Palazzo gets its name from the Lasbias family who lived there and had bought their way into nobility, a family that was notorious for its expenditure of wealth.

Crossing over the canal from the Palazzo we enter an area that is dominated by the Ghetto. The Ghetto, getting its name from the word for forge, was where all the Jews were to live in Venice. Jews fled to Venice in fear during the war against the League of Cambrai. In return for being given a place to live, the Jews helped fund Venice's defenses. At night the Jews were forced to stay in the Ghetto, but were protected by soldiers they had paid for.

The Jews of the city were not allowed to have professions such as architect, and so this led to the Jews having to employ Christian architects to design and build their homes and synagogues. For this reason the scole, their synagogues, have a Christian flavor, free of

marble as this is not allowed, and decorated inside with stucco and gold.

Plague Children

In 1575 the plague struck Venice, and while it ravaged the city, in the Ghetto it killed only the children. Confused by the selective nature of the disease, the rabbis gathered to conduct fasting and prayers in order to ask for God's forgiveness. However this was in vain.

While the leader of the rabbis, Rabbi Sterchel, searched the books and tomes for a solution, he was visited by the prophet Elijah. The prophet led the rabbi to the Jewish cemetery where they watched the ghostly children playing.

The next day, Sterchel ordered a disciple to go to the cemetery at night, and while there to take the death shroud from the ghost of one of the children. Obeying the disciple did as he was told and returned to the rabbi. Later that night the ghost of the child came to the rabbi, asking for his death shroud to be returned. But the rabbi refused, and demanded to know why the children were dying. The ghostly boy told Sterchel that the reason why the children were dying of the plague was that a mother had killed her newborn son.

The next day the rabbi ordered the woman and her husband to come before the rabbis to be judged for their crime. And so with justice served the children no longer died of the plague.

North of the Ghetto is one of the most modern parts of the city and the district, where continual land reclamation has led to the canals of the area being very angular and less natural. To the northwest is the more attractive area near the church of the Madonna dell'Orto and the church of Sant'Alvise. The church of Sant'Alvise was founded by Antonia Venier, the daughter of the Doge Antonio Venier. She was moved to create this church after she had a vision of the saint.

The church of Madonna dell'Orto was originally a church dedicated Saint Christopher as the area was once the main port for ferrymen who traveled to the northern isles. The name was changed after a statue of the Madonna was found in a garden of vegetables nearby, a statue that began to perform miracles. The church, redecorated by Tintoretto after insulting the doge, holds the ashes of the painter and also those of his son and one of his daughters.

The outside of the Madonna dell'Orto is a series of twelve niches that contain statues of the Apostles. Legend has it that the statues were cursed. The statues were sculpted by the Delle Masegne. The youngest, Paolo was devoted to the devil, and had been given one of the silver coins of Judas which was to be inserted into the statue of the Apostle which had been carved to look like Judas. The statue only needed to be consecrated, but on the day it was to be blessed, the young woman leading the procession on Holy Week pointed out Paolo and declared him a Satanist. The boy was doused in holy water and the devil left his body. As for the statue, it is said that on the night of Good Friday it moves and flies to Jerusalem and goes to Akeldamà, the field that Judas bought with the silver.

Across from the church is the Campo dei Mori, a place that possibly is named after the Greek brothers who lived there that came from Morea. Nearby is the Palazzo Mastelli, which in 1757 was the centre of mysterious spiritual events.

On Campo dei Mori there are four statues, one of which sits just around the corner from the others. The statues are said to be of the Mastelli brothers, while legends say that they are in fact the actual brothers themselves, turned to stone as punishment for their dishonesty and greed.

Tintoretto and the Witch

Tintoretto lived at 3399 on Fondamenta dei Mori. It was here as a young father he and his daughter came into contact with a witch.

His eldest daughter was to have her

first communion, and for ten days she and other girls of her age would receive the eucharist each morning. However, on the first day the girl met an old woman who convinced the girl that if she kept the wafer at communion and hid it, and did so for ten days, she would be shown how to be like the Madonna.

Tintoretto's daughter did so and kept the wafers in a metal box hidden in the manger in the barn where Tintoretto kept pigs and a donkey. But after 6 days the animals would not move from the barn, kneeling in front of the manger. His daughter confessed what had been happening. Tintoretto was no fool. Through his work and studies he had come into contact with the occult and knew of the methods employed to recruit followers.

Tintoretto took the wafers and returned them to the church and then awaited the witch on the tenth day, a stick of the linden tree ready to beat the crone. He asked his daughter to invite the witch in if she appeared. The witch did, and when she was in the house Tintoretto struck her with the stick, but she soon fled, changing into a cat and then into smoke before leaving the house through a hole in a wall.

In order to stop the witch returning by the same means, Tintoretto placed a statue of Hercules on the outside of the wall, the hero standing with club in hand.

Past the Palazzo Mastelli are the Palazzo Minelli Spada and the Palazzo Contarini dal Zaffo. Further east is the Scuole della Misericordia and the Casino degli Spiriti.

The Scuola Vecchia della Misericordia is known for the story of the old money lender who if seen and offered help turns into a burning skeleton. This ghost of Bartolomio Zenni is cursed to exist this way as punishment for not helping children flee a fire, instead choosing to save his own belongings. The nearby Casino degli Spiriti gains its name as it is a rumored gathering place for restless spirits.

Across the waters of the Sacca de la Misericordia is the Fondamenta Nuove

Theatre. This area is avoided by fishermen as it was here that in 1947 a smuggler, a woman called Linda Cimetta, was stuffed in a trunk and drowned. It is said that the squid here now have the eyes of a woman.

It is across the lagoon from the Fondamenta Nuova Theatre is the Venetian island of the dead, the island of San Michele, the cemetery of the city. The island, once a monastery and a prison is surrounded by high red brick walls. In times past the island acted as shelter to those boats that were making their way out to the northern islands. The island is the location of the church of San Michele in Isola, a revolutionary example of Renaissance architecture. The island was made a cemetery by Napoleon after it was forbidden for there to be burials on the main Venetian islands. Bodies lie there for ten years, after which their bones are moved to the ossuary. However Jewish burials take place on the Lido and so San Michele is where all others are buried.

One denizen of the island was fra Mauro, the most renowned cartographer of the Medieval age. If legend is correct, the cartographer was able to draw such maps by capturing the dreams of the devil, seeing them in the clouds over Venice.

The island is also filled with ghosts and spirits, and the waters about San Michele are no different. At night in November it is said that the candlelight from a casket floating on the water can be seen. This is the ghost light of a young girl who was never buried.

South of the Ghetto is the church of San Leonardo and the Rio Terrà San Leonardo, a former canal that was filled in by the Austrians in 1870s. This street is filled with more shops that cater for the visiting tourists and day trippers. Nearby is the church of San Marcuola, where once a priest, while at the pulpit, claimed to not believe in ghosts. In response that night the dead rose from their graves and dragged the priest out to beat him.

Continuing east is the Maddalena district, and here is the Palazzo Vendramin-Calgeri, the place where Richard Wagner died in 1883 and is now home to the city casino. Further along is the Palazzo Diedo where in 1606 an astrologer claimed to have seen a

vision of gun-powder under the Sala del Maggior Consiglio. The Council of Ten found this but suspected the astrologer, having him shaved and tortured to death, even as the man claimed the stars had shown him everything.

Past the Palazzo Doria Giovanelli is the the Strada Nova, a street that cuts through towards the Rialto, and along the way the most famous of palazzos, the Ca' d'Oro.

Meaning House of Gold, the Ca' d'Oro is a masterpiece of Venetian Gothic architecture and now is home to a gallery and once boasted a façade that was once covered in gold leaf. These days the Ca' d'Oro is now home to the Galleria Giogrio Franchetti.

Across the Strada Nova is the church of Santa Sofia, and further down the street is the church of Santi Apostoli. It is over the campo from Santi Apostoli that the Ca' da Mosto sits on the Grand Canal. Heading south towards the Rialto bridge is the church of San Giovanni Crisostomo and the nearby Teatro Malibran. Between these two buildings are two squares named after Marco Polo, well at least his nickname, Milione, for Marco Polo would always talk about the millions of men and ships and forts held by the Emperor of China, Kubli Khan. The Teatro Malibran contains the remains of the Polo house.

The Princess of Marco Polo

Marco Polo returned from China with a wife, Hao Dong, one of the daughters of Kublai Khan. Though beautiful and an enchanting singer, she was despised by Marco Polo's family and as a foreigner and non-Christian, watched intensely by the Church. For these reasons she remained in the family home so that she did not draw attention.

When Marco was captured by the Genoanese she was informed by her sister-in-law that Marco had died. Distraught with grief the Chinese princess set herself on fire and flung herself to her death from the windows of the Polo palace.

Now, at sunset on summer evenings the princess can be heard singing, or even seen floating from the windows of the Polo house, her hands holding a blue flame as she begins

her nightly journey to the other end of the world to be with her family.

North of Santi Apostoli is the Gesuit region of the city, and the church of Santa Maria Assunta. The outside of the church is enormous and disproportionate, while the interior is more beautiful and extravagant, the entire interior decked in green and white marble. For this reason the building is a huge weight and is slowly sinking.

CASTELLO

We will first discuss the section of the city known as Central Castello. It is denoted by the church of San Lazzaro dei Mendicanti to the north, Campo di Santa Maria Formosa in the centre, and San Zaccaria to the south.

The church of San Lazzaro now sits within the city hospital. Attached to the hospital is the Scuola Grande di San Marco which acts as the façade and foyer to the hospital, a grand display and the hospital itself is home to a number of pieces of art by Tintoretto and Veronese. To the east of the Scuola is the church of the Ospedaletto which features giants' heads looking down and decoration that English art critic, Ruskin, took a great dislike to.

Next to the Scuola is the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo. This gothic brick church is known in Venetian dialect as the church of San Zanipolo. The church was home to a mendicant order of Dominican priests that acquired wealth through begging and working to help the poor of the city.

The church itself was first built in 1246, the Doge Giacomo Tiepolo handing the land to the priests after having a vision of white doves marked on the head with the cross, the flock flying over the area where the church was to stand. Later in 1333 the church was replaced and consecrated much later in 1430. The church itself is huge inside, and filled with many tombs, many of the Tiepolo family and the Mocenigo family.

The Three Doges

On Calle della Cavallerizza, behind San Zanipolo, every night the ghost of a doge is seen. Here in 1355 the Doge Marin Falier gathered his men to plot the takeover of the State, overthrowing democracy. However, the plot had been discovered and the Doge was executed, beheaded on the scala dei Giganti at the Ducal Palace. Now the ghost of a headless corpse wanders the streets about San Zanipolo in search of its head.

Another ghostly doge, the blind Enrico Dandolo, the same doge who led the Fourth Crusade to Constantinople, also walks the streets here. His eyes are burning coals, a sword, held by the blade in his hands so that he may atone for the brutal sacking of Constantinople. He is said to wail as he searches for the ghost of Falier, his task to punish the ghost for his attempt at usurping power. Over time they have not met, but they get closer and who knows what will happen when they meet?

Some distance away another doge's spirit walks the streets. The prophetic doge, Tommaso Mocenigo, so-called because on his death-bed he foretold the ruin that the next Doge, Francesco Foscari, would bring to the city if elected. The ghostly Tommaso walks the streets, silent, with a roll of paper pouring from his mouth, every word printed upon it saying 'Veritas'. He chokes as this happens, stumbling as his feet are caught up in the ever growing length of paper. Tommaso is a kind ghost to those who take the time to free his legs.

South of San Zanipolo is campo Santa Maria Formosa. The square hosts a food market and is overlooked by the church's grand campanile which at the base has an ugly, grotesque mask, a face that grimly leers down on pedestrians. The critic, Ruskin, found it disgusting, while the historian, Molmenti, stated that the head is a talisman against evil.

From the campo Santa Maria Formosa

towards the Rialto is the church San Lio and Santa Maria dell Fava. Heading towards these churches are many sweet shops, selling typical Venetian sweets and pastries.

South of campo Santa Maria Formosa are a number of the most opulent houses in Venice; the massive palazzo Grimani, the palazzo Trevisan-Cappello, the crumbling deconsecrated church of San Giovanni in Oleo, the gothic palazzo Zorzi-Bon and the palazzo Zorzi, and the palazzo Querini-Stampalia which houses a eclectic collection of art.

To the southwest corner of Central Castello are the churches of San Zaccaria and San Giorgio dei Greci. The convent attached to San Zaccaria was infamous for the sexual relations of the nuns, many of whom had been sent there for being troublesome or because their fathers were unable to pay a dowry. In fact the convent became one of the most important salons of the city.

From the Ducal Palace, running along the lagoon edge to the entrance to the canal before the Arsenale is the Riva degli Schiavoni. A promenade that is heaving with tourists and souvenir merchants, the Riva gives a view of the southern lagoon. Along this route is the Hotel Danieli, a favorite place to stay for the movie actors that arrive in Venice for the film festival. Along the Riva, marking the end of Central Castello is the Pietà. It is here at the orphanage that Vivaldi worked on many pieces and worked as choirmaster. Many parents of the time attempted to get their children into the orphanage, such was their need for their children to be trained in this prestigious school.

Eastern Castello is dominated by the shipyards called the Arsenale. Between central Castello and the Arsenale is the church of San Francesco della Vigna. Though the area about it is rather run down this is the spot, if legend is to be believed, that Saint Mark was visited by an angel who told him that these islands would be his final resting place. The area remained a vineyard until 1253 when the Franciscans were given the land to build a new church.

South of San Francesco della Vigna is

the Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni. This scuola was built for the Slavic population of Venice. By the mid-fifteenth century the Slavs were no longer slaves of the city but citizens so the scuola was to represent their people.

Further south is the church of San Giovanni in Brágora. The church is renowned for being the location of the baptism of Vivaldi. Dating from 1475 the building is gothic and shows no sign of the Renaissance architecture that had begun at about the same time.

Near to the campo where San Giovanni in Brágora sits is the infamous dark alley, the calle della Morte, the Street of Death. It is here that the Council of Ten had their unofficial executions carried out. The typical recipients of their judgment were those who were considered dangerous to the state.

A Lover's Good Luck Charm

Behind the church of San Giovanni in Brágora is the street called sotoportego dei Pretti. Here as you walk along look up and you will find an arch with a brick heart at the top. If touched by two lovers they are destined to be together forever.

If alone, the person can make a wish and if made with a true heart, they will find love within the year.

East from the San Giovanni in Brágora is the church of San Martino. Founded by Paduan refugees in 593, the church is one of the oldest in Venice. Of course one of the grandest sights from the church are the walls of the Arsenale.

The Arsenale was one of the first factories in the world, producing numerous ships a week. The Arsenale dominates Eastern Castello, the huge red brick walls looming over the houses of the islands. The Arsenal is most famously seen in paintings and is the inspiration for a passage of the *Inferno* by the poet Dante.

The Arsenale was created in the early

12th century as the area of the city was turned to the task of ship fabrication and repair. The Arsenale grew over the years and was the one location in all the state where ships were made. At its height the Arsenale employed 16,000 men. After the rounding of the Cape of Good Hope the number of ships registered at the Arsenale was halved. The arrival of Napoleon marked the end of the Arsenale, the docks were burned to the ground and the remainder of the Venetian fleet was confiscated. The Arsenale was reconstructed by Napoleon and was used up to the end of WWI when it was finally closed.

In modern times the Arsenale is open during the Biennale only. It also now acts as a marine research centre funded by the EU, with further plans to modernize the buildings and docks.

A Heart of Stone

After two nights of bad weather in November 1719, mangled bodies began turning up. There were the bodies of two sailors, one Greek and a Maltese, their bodies found outside the entrance of the Arsenale. There was no apparent reason for their deaths or connection between the men. Even stranger was that the sailors appeared to have been killed by wild animals. After much speculation blame was laid upon the lions of the Arsenale, the four statues that sat proudly outside the entrance to the docks. It had to be magic.

Another bad spell of weather happened six nights later, and another body was found in a crumpled mess. This sailor shared a home nearby with his young wife, both local Venetians. A young captain was assigned to the case. A couple of days later the young widow, a known prostitute, stood outside a tall house yelling "Murderer!" to a man, an old merchant, called Fosco. The widow was livid and was soon dragged away. Fosco came to the window and replied to her cries. "We'll see, woman, where your boldness will take you, just wait till the next stormy night!" The captain took note of this. The captain knew that the old man never left his home so he instead followed the widow. The woman, now hard up having lost her husband, now took to

the streets more often with a friend, selling her body. Another storm hit 10 days later, and the young captain hid in a boat near the Arsenale entrance. In the dead of night, under torrential rain, a stream of fire rose from the houses nearby and from it the old man appeared before the lions. First he cast a spell, freezing the guards in place, and then Fosco read the inscriptions on the lion, running his bony finger over their forms. At the apex of the gate to the Arsenale a globe of energy formed and from it lighting sprung out and touched the first lion. The statue was transmogrified into a bloodthirsty animal and attacked the widow and her friend.

The captain, overcoming his fear, attacked the merchant, this wizard, but now the second lion was alive and moving to attack the widow. The captain struck Fosco and his sword plunged into the old man's chest. With a flash the lions were immobile and the captain's sword was blackened. The wizard was gone, but there was a stone heart on the ground. The guards awoke and rushed to the aid of the women, and the captain seeing that the third lion was half alive, decapitate the beast. The head did not simply fall away, but rose into the air and exploded.

The reason for this death was put down to the widow's dead husband swindling the merchant. The other men were just decoys. The head of the third lion was replaced. Of course it is easy to check which of the lions is the third. To this day the inscription on the lions is still visible, if not worn, and is supposedly the runic graffiti of a Norse mercenary.



Near to the Arsenale are the Museo Storico Navale and the church of San Biagio. The museum is located in an old granary and houses the numerous documents that detail the history of the Venetian navy. One curious item here is a manned torpedo.

The church of San Biagio served the local Greeks and as a naval chapel, but is rarely used.

Past the Arsenale is the main street of Eastern Castello, Via Garibaldi, a former

canal. This street is lined with shops, bars, cafes and restaurants. Following the street to the end and keeping right takes you to the island of San Pietro.

The church formerly known as Castello after the castle that once stood in the same spot. The church was the home of the first patriarch of Venice, and the church remained as the cathedral of the city until 1807.

The island is the site of the Festival of Marys. Slave pirates interrupted a multiple marriage and stole away the brides. Venetian men succeeded in bringing back the brides and the festival celebrates this with weddings of two women from each district of Venice.

A strange relic of the church is the Throne of St Peter. This marble seat is 13th century and inscribed in Arabic with text from the Koran.

Along the Via Garibaldi are the public gardens, in particular the Giardini Pubblici and the adjoining gardens that are used for the Biennale arts festival.

SAN MARCO

On the eastern side of the Grand Canal, sitting to the south of Cannaregio and the east of Castello is the sestiere of San Marco. The region is the centre of Venice. The district is dominated by the Piazza San Marco where the Palazzo Ducale and the Basilica di San Marco stand.

The Piazza lies to the southeast corner of the district. It is bordered by the Palazzo, the Basilica, the Procuratie Vecchie, Procuratie Nuove and the Libreria Sansoviniana.

The first Palazzo Ducale was built in the 9th century, and in the 12th century the rest of the land was made available as a public space, with canals redirected and removed. The piazza in general hasn't changed since the 12th century save for the buildings that now stand on square. The piazza is a nexus for the tourist trade of Venice. In the past the area was used for markets, moneylenders, the slave trade, and a variety of stalls. These days things are not much different. The large open space is often filled with tourist groups taking photos, purchasing gifts from the shops that look out

onto the square, enjoying coffee shops, and feeding the thousands of pigeons whose presence is seen as more of a problem as their droppings damage the fine buildings that make up the piazza. Notable places to drink while in the piazza are the *Florian*, an 18th century tea house that once used to be a salon, the art in the house still reflecting this past trade; the *Quadri* and the *Lavena*. Thus even in modern times the Piazza San Marco is a focal point of Venetian trade, life and festivities.

The Basilica di San Marco looms over the piazza, the domes of the Basilica dominating skyline. The Basilica is representative of the Venetian goal of having their city blessed by God. Their actions were in order to bring about an ancient prophecy and make the words of an angel come to pass.

The Basilica was consecrated in 832 and reflects a mixture of western and Byzantine design. However the current Basilica is the third to have been built on this spot. These reconstructions have allowed for numerous different styles and pieces of art to be incorporated into the building, items that have been stolen from across the world. Initially the Basilica was just the Doge's personal chapel, but now it serves as the cathedral of Venice.

The outside of the Basilica is characterized by the Byzantine domes and arches. However, these eastern features are accompanied with 17th-19th century mosaics, gothic arches and the Tetrarchs, the four giant bronze horses of San Marco. Legend has it that the horses once had rubies for eyes, but these were lost when the horses were taken to France. As a result, these horses now are said to move, searching the piazza for their lost eyes, and now with electric lighting, the horses no longer move. But the original horses now sit within Museo Marciano, while those on top of the Basilica are fakes.

Other notable items that adorn the Basilica are the two square columns from Acri. These columns are covered in Egyptian and Syrian monograms. Deciphered, two read "A God supreme, ultimate, maximum, benefactor" and "To God advocate and saviour". Another is still legible while another is lost to time.

Within the Basilica there are numerous points of interest, including a number of tombs of dead doges, the many mosaics that decorate the interior of the domes and ceilings, and the collection of artifacts taken from around the world. The inside of this cathedral is unlike any Catholic church and is more like an eastern mosque. The remains of Saint Mark were more than likely destroyed, immolated during the fire of 976, but there is the golden altar screen, the Pala d'Oro, a dramatic piece that has grown and been added to over the years, especially to include the jewels taken during the 4th crusade.

If the altar screen is a mass of jewels then the treasury is just as eclectic, hosting a large collection of chalices, icons and works of silver and gold. Most was taken from Constantinople during the 4th crusade, but then a lot was lost when the French invaded during the 18th century.

Too Much to List

If you really want to know the Basilica and the Palazzo inside out, it is suggested that you go online or pick up a reference book or guide book. There is just far too much to list here, but every piece of art, every item, every sculpture, could be a story hook just waiting to happen.

The Palazzo Ducale, just like the Basilica, is not the first building to stand in its spot. The first was built in the 9th century and destroyed by fire in 976. The second was also ruined by a fire in 1106. The third was finished in 10 years and underwent further extensions and alteration over the following centuries. The Palazzo Ducale is a mixture of eastern and gothic styles, bearing striking geometrically-patterned stonework on the exterior, with a more Classically styled central courtyard. The central courtyard is dominated by the Scala dei Giganti. This enormous staircase is watched over by the Classical figures of Neptune and Mars.

The Palazzo itself was the centre of the

Venetian Empire. It served as palace, administration centre and prison. Like the Basilica, the Palazzo is filled with art and artifacts and today is open to the public as a museum displaying the art and weapons of the Venetian Empire. The most notable room within the entire palace is the Sala del Senato, where the painting on the ceiling by Tintoretto shows Venice, depicted as a woman, sits as an equal amongst the gods and angels. Within the armory are curious items like a pronged chastity belt, guns that were also swords or maces, armor and swords taken from around the world, and even a twenty-barrelled gun.

The prisons lie across from the palace on the other side of a canal. Going through the appeal court the prisons are reached crossing the Ponte dei Sospiri, the 'Bridge of Sighs'. The name comes from the sighs made by the prisoners as they cross the bridge from the palace to the prison.

The Piazzetta lies between the Palazzo and the Libreria Sansoviniana. It runs from the Basilica and the Campanile and leads down onto the waterfront overlooking the lagoon. It was here that councilors of the Republic would meet, and it was also where public executions took place. The typical location was between the two granite pillars on the stretch of water front called the Molo. There were supposed to be three of these columns but the first fell from the boat that carried them. Atop one of the columns is a statue of St Theodore, the patron saint of Venice during Byzantine rule, and the other column carries a statue of a winged lion.

The Campanile bell tower was originally a lighthouse and bell tower combined, constructed in the 10th century. It is the tallest building in Venice and from it the Dolomite mountains can be seen. The bells of the tower each had a specific function, rung to denote the start of a particular part of the day. The Campanile also played a part in the penal system, with prisoners hung from the south face in a crate. However, in 1902 on July the 14th the Campanile collapsed. The collapse was expected and so only a cat died. More miraculous was that the Campanile fell in a controlled manner and the nearby buildings escaped with only minor damage. Ten years

later the Campanile was reopened, rebuilt exactly as it was. To the north end of the Piazza, next to the Basilica is the Torre dell'Orologio, a clock tower built at the end of the 15th century. Legend has it that the designers had their eyes taken out to prevent them from making another such clock.

The Procuratie Vecchie sits to the west of the clock tower. This building was once home to part of the Venice administration, with the upper levels being given over as apartments to the nobles of the city. New buildings were established for the administration, the Procuratie Nuove, now home to the Museo Correr. These new offices, first built by Scamozzi, but then under the leadership of Longhena. The two buildings were then connected when Napoleon's stepson demolished the church that sat in the west wing of the square, just so that a ballroom could be built to connect the two.

The Museo Correr has existed since 1923 and is not the most popular of museums, but contains numerous paintings and examples of Venetian life. Maybe one of the more curious items on display is a key that was capable of firing poison darts.

The attached Museo Archeologico collection is predominantly made up of statues of Greek and Roman origin. The collection also consists of coins, gems, statue fragments and pieces from other ancient civilizations. The rest of the Correr consists of more paintings of Venetian life, ceramics, and the Museo del Risorgimento, a collection detailing the fall of Venice to Napoleon and the occupation by the Austrians.

Adjacent to the Molo, looking out onto the lagoon, is the Zecca and the Giardinetti Reali. The Zecca once served as the mint for the Venetian Republic. This building was constructed in the mid 16th century and was designed to be fireproof. The funds for the construction were gathered by selling the Cypriot slaves their freedom. It is from the word Zecca, that the other name for the Venetian coin, the ducat, was derived, the zecchino. The gardens next door, the Giardinetti Reali were once the site of the state granaries and now is one of the most popular

spots during the height of summer.

Heading north under the Torre dell'Orologio is the area known as the Mercerie, a section of the city that is crammed with shops and in essence the shopping mall of Venice, it is also the most busy part of the city and the part that is so commercial that the very essence of Venice is missing. But, if you follow your way north to the Rialto bridge past the shops and busy stalls the square of Campo San Bartolomeo can be found, a popular spot for the locals of the city to spend the evening after work. Nearby, past the church of San Salvador are Campo San Luca and the bar, Al Volto. The Al Volto is one of the most popular and well-stocked bars in Venice and hosts some 1300 wines from all over Italy.

Heading north and right from the church of San Salvador is the Campo San Bartolomeo. The church has been recently renovated, and now the church plays host to musicians for their recitals.

Rather than heading north from the Rialto bridge, heading south, following the Grand Canal, there is the Teatro Goldoni, and further on the Palazzo Loredan, the Palazzo Farsetti, both of which now are home to the town hall of the city. Behind these buildings is the church of San Luca and the Campo San Luca. The square is a frequent open-air spot for locals, as well as market traders.

Heading back towards San Marco is Campo Manin and the Frezzeria. The Campo Manin is modern and was where a printing press once stood, and has a monument to Daniele Manin, a lawyer who in 1848 led a revolt against the Austrians. A notable piece of architecture is the Scala del Bovolo. This spiral staircase is named after the Italian word for snail shell.

Continuing south down the Grand Canal from the town hall are the Palazzos Grimani, Corner Spinelli, Mocengio and the church of San Benedetto. Near to San Benedetto is the Museo Fortuny, another former palazzo. The Palazzo Mocenigo is the location where Byron stayed and indulged in a number of affairs, and it is also rumored to be haunted by the alchemist Giordano Bruno.

From the Piazza San Marco and

heading west to the canal to the Pazzo Mocenigo, we pass another large shopping district and a number of exclusive bars and hotels. There are also the churches of San Moise and Santa Maria del Giglio. San Moise is known as the most ugly church in Venice. In comparison, the church of Santa Maria del Giglio is far more beautiful and features a number of pieces of art and religious artifacts.

North of Santa Maria Giglio is campo San Fantin, the church of San Fantin, and the theatre La Fenice, and the eclectic museum the Ateneo Veneto. The main site of importance is the theatre, which lives up to its name of 'Phoenix'. Over the centuries it has been rebuilt after being consumed by fires, the most recent taking place in 1996. These days the theatre is the location of major musical events.

Further westward is the large campo Santo Stefano. The church sits at the north end of the square. As a large space it often plays host to festivals and event and often held bull fights until 1802. Also facing onto this large space is the Palazzo Loredan. At the other side of the campo is the campiello Pisani which is encompassed by the Palazzo Pisani, which is one of the largest houses and now acts as the city Conservatory of Music.

Finally if we follow the Grand Canal from the Palazzo Mocenigo are the Palazzo Grassi, the Ca'del Duca, the Palazzo Franchetti and the Palazzo della Ca'Grande. The Grassi is host to a large collection of modern art, owned by the French collector Pinault. Possibly one of the most impressive sights is the Ponte dell' Accademia. This wooden bridge was to be just a temporary replacement for the grim iron bridge that was built by the Austrians.

THE NORTHERN ISLES

Venice is predominantly known for the main island and its network of canals. However, about Venice are a number of smaller islands that are also important sites of historical interest and also play a major part in modern Venetian society.

SAN MICHELE

San Michele lies a short distance from Venice to the north and is the city cemetery. Originally known as the island of San Christoforo della Pace it was chosen as the location of the city cemetery by Napoleonic edict. The reason was sanitation, in order to prevent the spread of disease which can occur if bodies are kept on the main island. The island is in fact two islands that have been connected together, the other being the island of San Michele, which was formerly known as Cavana de Muran, the name referencing the fact that the island offered shelter to those boatmen who were travelling to and from Murano.

The island is surrounded on all sides by high walls, and within is the church of San Michele in Isola. The cemetery itself is home to the Catholic dead of Venice, packed together. After ten years the graves are dug up and the bones moved to the ossuary and the plot is then available to more recent dead.

The Cosmographer

One of the residents of the island was Fra Mauro. The priest was a skilled map-maker, and people did not know how it was possible for him to draw maps of lands that he had not visited himself. Legend has it that the priest was able to read the dreams of the devil. His skill, if legend is to be believed, was to be able to project the devil's dreams onto the skies above the island, the maps forming in the clouds.

MURANO

Murano, further north of Venice, just beyond San Michele, is well known for the fine glass that is blown there. In the past the noble elite of Venice would retreat to the island in the summer, taking advantage of the larger open spaces. It was also home to a renowned *accademie*, and here the sciences, arts, philosophy, religion, occult and literature were discussed.

The glass from Murano was famous all over the world, and even today tourists flock to the islands to watch the manufacturing process. In 1291 all glass blowing was moved from central Venice to the island in order to prevent fires from consuming the city. Such was the importance of Murano glass, the Venetian government attempted to prevent the secrets of the art from leaving the island, with those glass-blowers that left being called traitors.

The island is home to a number of attractions; churches and palazzos which boast their own pieces of art and historical collections.

BURANO

Burano sits next the quiet island of Mazzorbo. Once Mazzorbo was the location where disgraced nobles would be sent to live. Mazzorbo can be reached from Burano by a long foot bridge.

Burano, on the other hand, has a small settlement of brightly colored houses. The colors, if it is to be believed, allowed sailors to spot their home from the sea.

Burano is also well known for its lace. Lace is what the sailor's wives made while their husbands were at sea.

TORCELLO

Torcello was one of the first islands to be settled and as a result boasts some of the oldest buildings and the oldest church in the lagoon. Now, compared to the other islands, it is practically deserted save for the tourists that come in the summer months. One strange feature in Torcello is the chair of Attila, a seat which the town judges sat in and that legend says that if you sit in it you will be wed within the year.

LAZZARETTO NUOVO

This island served the purpose of controlling the travelers arriving in Venice, in particular to route out the plague infected. While the sick and their belongings were sent south of Venice to Lazzaretto Vecchi, the healthy crew of a ship were held in quarantine on Nuovo. These days the island is quiet,

empty save for a warehouse which lies abandoned, and the island still is surrounded by the fortifications erected during the Napoleonic period.

THE SOUTHERN ISLES

SAN GIORGIO MACCIORE

This small island just a few hundred meters south from the Piazza San Marco is the site of the church of San Giogio Maggiore. The church is enormous, taking 45 years to build, and has its own towering campanile which gives a grander view of the city compared to the San Marco Campanile. The church boasts a number of paintings, a few examples by Titian. The island is also home to a monastery, with the area also being used as an open air theatre.

LA GIUDECCA

Running from San Giorgio Maggiore and sweeping west, just south of Dorsoduro, the collection of islands, La Giudecca, once was home to the Jewish population until their removal to the Ghetto. The islands were once a place where the nobles of the city spent their summers. For this reason La Giudecca has a number of fine gardens. The islands also were once an industrial centre of the city, but in modern times these workshops and factories lie abandoned. However, the area is being slowly regenerated as old mills and warehouses are turned into modern homes.

THE LIDO

The lido is a long stretch of land that is one of the barriers between the Adriatic and the Venetian Lagoon. It is here that the doge would have performed his ritual marriage to the sea (see page XXX). The Lido was undeveloped until the 19th century, with the land becoming a bathing resort, and now is one of the most luxurious and expensive resorts in the world. Now numerous flashy hotels line the Lido.

One important site and event that takes place on the Lido in modern times is the Venice Film Festival which takes place at the

Palazzo del Cinema. The Lido is also the location of the Jewish cemetery, and nearby the Lido airstrip.

ONWARDS TO CHIOCCIA

Poveglia, a small island south of Venice, once was where plague victims were taken by the Romans and was routinely used by the Venetians as a hospital island and plague pit. It is estimated that 160,000 people died on the island. More disturbing is that in 1922 the island was a mental hospital, and rumor states that a doctor there began to kill patients and died after being thrown from the bell tower. But the same legend states that he survived the fall only to be strangled by a mist that came up from the ground. Today the island is a vineyard and of course is said to be haunted.

Chioggia sitting to the south of the Venetian Lagoon was once a Roman port and a salt producing town, the town was of strategic importance, and today is the second largest settlement in the lagoon and an important fishing port. Chioggia claims as good beaches and food as the Lido, but only at a fraction of the cost, making it an ideal choice for those that want the feel of the Lido without being movie stars.

Another curious island is San Lazzaro degli Armeni, which lies just to the north of the Lido, and near to Lazzaretto Vecchio. This island was used as a leper colony in the late 12th century, and so is named Lazzaro after Lazarus, the patron saint of lepers. The island has a library which has a collection of strange items, such as a mummy from Egypt, a throne of ivory an teak from Dehli, a Sanskrit Buddhist manuscript and many more items from around the world.

THE VENETO

Venice sits in the region of Italy known as the Veneto. This area is bordered to the north by Austria and the Dolomite mountain range. It is here that many wealthy Italians go skiing during the winter months. To the south lies the city of Ferrara, and to the west is Mantova and Milan. The other key towns and

cities of the Veneto are the industrial nightmare of Mestre, the university town of Padua, the modern and wealthy city of Vicenza, the historic and Shakespearian Verona, and the medieval city of Treviso.

MARCHERA AND MESTRE

Mestre sits at the other end of the bridge connecting Venice to the mainland. Because of the cost of living in Venice is so expensive, Mestre, and its neighbouring town of Marghera, boast far larger populations. After WWI both towns became important industrial centres, and grew in importance under the command of Mussolini's government. Of course this meant that during WWII both towns were of strategic importance and targets for the Allied forces.

The presence of these two industrial centres meant that the younger population of the Venice lagoon moved to the towns and the average age on the islands increased, further propagating Venice's slow decline and decrease in numbers of native Venetians. But more drastic has been the pollution and ecological problems that these towns have created in the lagoon. The large chemical refineries, that create the labyrinthine maze of pipes and lights seen from above when flying to Marco Polo Airport, have pumped out untreated waste into the lagoon, damaging the ecosystem and thus the livelihoods of the local fishermen. This pollution came to the attention of the world when people in gondolers were forced to wear face masks. Since 1988 the Italian government has implemented a number of initiatives to undo the damage.

Another consequence of the intense industrialization of the two towns has been subsidence. Water was drawn from beneath the lagoon causing subsidence, and the catastrophe was averted when in 1973 water was pumped back in beneath the lagoon.

What cannot be stressed enough is that these two towns are modern and urban nightmares. Crisscrossed with pipelines, motorways, rail lines, the two towns are bleak and depressing.

PADUA

Padua is a medieval university city that lies south west of Venice, just near the river Brenta. Along this river many Venetians in centuries past would have had villas as their summer retreats.

Padua was restored after WWII and is one of the key focal points of culture in northern Italy. The city dates back to 1185 BC, and is said to have been founded by Antenor of Troy. It survived the invasion of the barbarians after the fall of Rome. The university was founded in 1221, and in 1405 the city was taken over by the Venetian Republic and was in turn given to the Austrians after Napoleon's invasion.

Padua's renown for culture can be attributed to artists and scholars such as Dante, Petrarch, Donatello and Galileo.

There are many points of interest in Padua. The university itself is situated in the Palazzo del Bò. The university also boasts the first permanent anatomy theatre and that it once enjoyed the prestige of having Galileo lecturing physics. There are many fine townhouses and villas centered around the two main squares; the Piazza della Frutta and the Piazza della Erbe. Both of these market squares are busy and are lined with cafes, shops and bars. Of course Padua also has many historic churches and museum filled with art, in particular the Basilica del Santo.

Just south of Padua are two other medieval sites. The first is Monsélice, a fortress which only retains its towers, the five concentric walls having been demolished in the 19th century for their stone. The second is Montagnana, another medieval fortress and that was once the first line of defense for the Da Carrara family against the Scaligeri family.

Between these two medieval forts is the town of Este, which is well known for its ceramics and claims to be the oldest town in the Veneto. This claim of age is backed up by large numbers of pre-Roman artifacts.

VICENZA

West of Padua is Vicenza, a very modern city, the centre of Italian textile production and is also the Italian "Silicon

Valley”.

Vicenza has many buildings that mirror the design of those found in Venice. Before it was taken by the Venetian Republic, Vicenza’s main rival was Verona. Vicenza is surrounded by industrial estates, but at the heart are the remains of an ancient town, still partly circled by Gothic medieval walls.

Vicenza is one of the wealthiest cities in Italy, and this is reflected in the culture and the people themselves, the population being some of the most stylish outside of Milan.

In the heart of Vicenza is one of the oldest clock towers in Italy, the Torre di Piazza. Near to this tower, over-looking the Piazza dell’Erbe is the Torre del Tormento, which was what it was named, a prison. What is most striking is the style of many of the city’s buildings, most of which were designed by Palladio, who followed classical designs instead of following Venetian’s trends. Notable works are the Basilica, the Teatro Olimpico, and the Palazzo dei Signori.

VERONA

Verona is ancient, and so obviously, at its centre is the massive Roman arena, the amphitheatre and the large number of medieval buildings that still stand. Verona is obviously famous in its own right; in particular it is the location where Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet is set. But Verona can also be seen as an example of how Venice could have looked if the city had not been left to rot.

Verona sits further west of Vicenza and was an important Roman site as it sat between the west and east of northern Italy and Europe. After the fall of Rome Verona was controlled by Ostrogoths, then Franks, and it grew into a powerful independent state before it became part of the Venetian Republic in 1405. Before then Verona had taken control of Vicenza, Padua and Treviso, dominating the mainland. Following the invasion of Napoleon, Verona was given over to the Austrians and Verona eclipsed Venice in importance.

Unlike many of the other cities, Verona is far calmer and the centre of the city is pedestrianized. The centre of the city is encircled by medieval walls, of which one is

the grand Portoni dell Brà. Beyond these arches is the main city square and the Roman arena. The Arena dates to the first century AD and has survived earthquakes. These days the arena is used for open air concerts and shows.

West of the arena is Castelvecchio, a fortress that was built during the 14th century before the rule of Venice. The fort now is the city museum and holds a collection of art, weapons and sculptures.

The cultural centre of Verona is the Piazza delle Erbe, a square filled with shops and bars, bordered by medieval and Renaissance palazzo. The Casa Mazzanti looks upon the square, and to this day still bears the 16th century murals. Nearby the square are the towers of Torre del Gardello and the Torre dei Lamberti. Leading from the Piazza delle Erbe is the Arco della Costa. The ‘arch of the rib’, from which a whale rib hangs, has a superstition attached which says that if an adult virgin walks beneath the arch the rib will fall. However, this rib may well not be a whale rib, and instead be from a dinosaur.

Beyond the arch is the Piazza dei Signori, also known as Piazza Dante for the statue of the poet that stands in the square. The square was the location where city decrees were read out but these days now stands quiet.

Verona has impressive churches and cathedrals. The largest are the church of Sant’Anastasia, a tall and imposing Gothic building, and the Duomo. The Duomo, destroyed by the Nazis in 1945, was rebuilt from the original stones. The building has been in a state of constant construction and so changes in style as you move up the building.

The northern end of the city centre is marked by the curve of the River Adige. Across the river to the north of Sant’Anastasia is the Teatro Romano, a Roman amphitheatre which is still used today for concerts. Up the steep steps to the side of the amphitheatre is the Castel San Pietro. The castle is an Austrian addition. The building is grim and a replacement for the old Visconti castle; the castle offers a panoramic view of the city.

Of course we have to mention Romeo and Juliet. Near to the Piazza delle Erbe is the Casa di Giulietta, a courtyard where it is

claimed that the story took place. Of course this is all unfounded, and the walls of the courtyard are covered in graffiti from lovers. The courtyard is also host to a bronze statue of Juliet. The right breast of the statue is highly polished, smoothed by the constant grip of hands upon it, as holding the breast is said to give a person good luck in seeking love.

TREVISO AND THE NORTH

North of Mestre is the city of Treviso, and onward are the mountains of the Dolomites. The northern Veneto is also dotted with impressive forts and villas. Before Treviso was taken over the Venetian Republic, the city was already important, minting its own coins and attracting poets and artists. But in 1389 Treviso fell under Venetian control.

The centre of Treviso is characterized by the network of canals that cut through the city and the fresco adorned buildings with long porticoes that cover the sidewalks. The city centre is then surrounded by canals and the city walls and the River Sile. The city centre is also a compromise of modern and Gothic architecture, the city having suffered terrible bombardment during WWII. Many of the impressive buildings about the city social centre, the Piazza dei Signori, had to be reconstructed. Many of the frescos and paintings in the churches and palazzi of the city are the work of Tomaso da Modena who lived during the 14th century. The fish market of the city, the Pescheria, is located on a island in the middle of the widest canal, it being the law to have the market near to a waterway.

The Castelfranco Veneto lies to the west of Treviso. Five towers of the moated fortress still stand, with one tower, known as the Torrione, housing a clock. The fortress houses the work of the artist Giorgione, the piece being the Castelfranco Madonna. The painting is curious, using unusual techniques.

Another historical site is Cittadella, which lies next to Castelfranco Veneto. Cittadella remains untouched - a fortified town with four gates at the cardinal points. The one gate, the Porta Padova, sits next to the ominous tower the Torre di Malta, a former prison and dungeon.

Other important towns to the north of Venice are Bassano del Grappa, renowned for its grappa distilleries and mushrooms, and the grand Monte Grappa and the curious town of Maróstica where the central town square is a giant chess board where every other September the Partita a Scacchi, a chess game using human pieces, is played.

VENETIAN LIFE AND CULTURE

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A VENETIAN

Venice is the fifth most expensive city to rent an apartment in Italy. Compared to other cities in the region, Venice is far busier and this causes more stress on those who live in Venice. 12 million tourists visit the city each year, and so the economy of the city is focused upon taking advantage of this tourism. Of course it is not surprising why those that live in the city feel oppressed and invaded. This has an influence on the cost of living, making Venice the fourth most expensive city to live in. The cost of living makes life difficult for the youth of Venice. It is almost impossible to buy a first home in Venice. Most housing is occupied in Venice, but almost a third is used by short-term residents who are seeking to stay in the city for a less than a month. This has pushed the price of housing up to prices far out of reach of natives to the city. In an effort to curb this trend, the government has introduced housing zones where rent is capped and residents are provided tax breaks so long as certain regulations are followed. The job market is not much better. Most young Venetians leave the city and seek better opportunities elsewhere. It is due to this that Venice has an aging population.

A typical Venetian family is a large group, where the grandparents are looked after by their children who have moved back to live in the traditional family home. Children remain with their parents until they are married, and so a Venetian home can be very tightly packed.

The main focus of family life is the Sunday meal, where the family and relatives gather together. It is also very common for a family to remain in the same district of Venice, and so the local communities are tightly knit.

One of the defining features of Venice is the need to walk to get to somewhere. The lack of transport, especially cars, creates a unique Venetian lifestyle. Walking around means that you are more than likely to bump into someone you know. It is this lifestyle of random encounters that makes Venice so relaxed for the residents. If you meet someone along the way, you can pause for a few moments and have a chat before continuing on. This also means that you are more than likely to meet new people as you chance upon your friends and their own friends. This makes Venice a very social city. It also means that the entire lack of cars makes Venice laid back. No one is rushing about, stuck in a car and getting frustrated in a traffic jam. Your pace is determined on how quickly you want to walk.

Venice is a quiet city, and has no real nightlife to speak of. If seeking such distractions it's typical for young Venetians to go to Mestre and the mainland. This lack of night life makes Venice ideal for young families who seek to raise their children in a pleasant and calm city. In fact Venice is a city of opposites for its youth. It has the excellent university, but no jobs for those who leave. It has a unique and exciting environment that nurtures a social community, but of course not the exciting night life that young professionals and students enjoy. Venice is a place to learn and then leave. A sign of this disharmony is the amount of graffiti that covers the back alley walls of Venice.

The community life is a strong feature of the lifestyle of the older Venetians. Most older Venetians have lived in Venice all their lives while some have returned after following a career elsewhere in Italy or the world. Of course one of the major challenges for the elderly of Venice is mobility. Venice is all about walking, bridges and boats, all of which become difficult for the elderly and infirm. However, a good proportion of the elderly

population has attribute this need to walk as being a positive influence on their health. Those elderly Venetians that require more intensive care are looked after by *Batandi*. These individuals are nurses who are often of Eastern European descent.

VENICE SOCIAL LIFE

Venice is geared towards offering everything it can to the tourists that pour into the city. But this means that true Venetian life must be located off the main street.

The Venetian social life is distinguished by the *bácaro*. These bars open out onto the streets, allowing patrons to stand and chat on the streets while they drink wine and Campari, and serving a selection of snacks. Osterie are larger establishments which have a dining area of a few tables. Of course larger places are restaurants, which in Venice have two menus. Typically there is a menu that is focused on serving the tourists, and so lacks quality. Most of the best restaurants of course lie far from the main attractions of the city. Of course pizza is a readily available meal, while seafood caught in the Adriatic is the specialty of Venice.

If sweet snacks are in order Venice is in no short supply of such vendors. Numerous cafés and pasticcerie line the streets, and often these vendors also serve alcohol. These pastry shops are filled in the early mornings as Venetians stop off for a quick bite and coffee before continuing on to work. Of course the other main feature Venice is the large number of places to buy ice cream.

The Venetian nightlife has died out as the city has become more overrun with tourists. But even though it is quiet, there are a number of places to go beyond the theatres and concert halls.

One of the busiest locations is the Fondamenta della Misericordia in Cannaregio, and Dorsoduro. Here bars are busy affairs with plenty of music playing. There are just two nightclubs in Venice, the best being a members only venue called Club Malvasia Vecchia which is near to the Fenice. The other club is a student favourite called Round Midnight. Otherwise for a decent night out

there are just the clubs in Mestre, Marghera, and Jesolo. Jesolo sits north of Venice on the edge of the lagoon, and it a difficult place to get back from in the early hours. The route from Jesolo to Venice is a stretch of road that has the highest death toll in Italy, mainly due to the intoxicated youth that drive back from Jesolo to Venice.

One other option is the casino, situated in Palazzo Vendramin-Calergi, on the Grand Canal, those who go there to gamble must dress accordingly and must be over the age of 18. Most of the gamblers are affluent youth from the mainland.

VENETIAN FESTIVALS

Venice is of course famous for its carnival, something that we have explained in detail in the introduction of this book. But there are other important festivals in Venice that take place over the course of the year.

The Biennale is an arts festival, taking place every two years (on odd numbered years). The focus of the event is contemporary art, but is also tied to architecture, dance and film. The festival takes place in the Giardini where a number of pavilions are set up for a number of countries. There is also a larger hall which is managed by the curator of the event.

Making up part of the Biennale, but also running every year, is the Venice Film Festival. The festival is the oldest of its kind and plays host to famous directors and screen icons. Held in late August to early September the festival is located on the Lido, with screenings of upcoming films being held in the Palazzo del Cinema.

Other key festivals are All Saints Day, and the Feast of Santa Maria della Salute. The latter festival celebrates the end of the plague and the salvation of Venice, for which the church was built. On the 21st of November a floating bridge is laid out that connects the church to the main islands of Venice.

Chapter Two

Behind the Mask

“All great things must first wear terrifying and monstrous masks in order to inscribe themselves on the hearts of humanity.”
- Friedrich Nietzsche

THE CHANGELINGS AND DENIZENS OF VENICE

THE CITY OF A THOUSAND FACES

Venice, since the beginning, has been a refuge for people of all cultures, beginning with the Veneti who fled the invasion of the Huns. Venice, the collection of marshy islands defended by sandbanks and the lagoon barriers themselves offered the perfect protection from the invaders, and would do for the next sixteen centuries. Even in the early days of Venice, changelings have coexisted with the ragtag collection of colonists and fishermen. The earliest legends that the changelings keep recall that a changeling of the Elemental Seeming, simply known as Mother of Pearl. She called out to the sea and made a pact with it. In return for her soul and herself, the sea would provide the changelings of the island all the protection they needed. Mother of Pearl then walked out into the sea and vanished, and the changelings of the city were safe from the True Fae. The Hedge about Venice took on a new form. The marshy vines and stagnant pools shifted and were reshaped by the sea into a maze of tall arching vines, almost as if the Hedge itself had hidden the islands from the Gentry. The marshy islands in the Hedge were surrounded on all sides by the tall, tearing

vines and were interconnected by a network of trods that wound their way through the Hedge, only accessible by water.

For whatever reason changelings were drawn to Venice due to the protection the city offered. Venice was a true freehold defended against the Fae by the Hedge itself. But as the reputation of the city grew, the defenses in the Hedge were worn away and soon the largest trod ever known was formed. The Lion's Tail Trod as it came to be known, was formed in 828. With the arrival of the body of St Mark to the city an influx of escaping changelings arrived in the city. A large number of changelings marched out of the Hedge and into the city. For some reason Venice was a beacon to the Lost and attracted fleeing changelings regardless of where they had been stolen from.

The initial changeling court of Venice was ruled by the Court of Water, in honor of the pact made by Mother of Pearl. Water was both the element that gave Venice life and also allowed it to be kill. Water was sustaining and unforgiving, and in these early days the changelings of the city engaged in ceremonies and Pledges with the sea to ensure that the Hedge was maintained. However, as changelings arrived from other places within

Europe, the Court of Water was replaced with the seasonal courts. No matter which court ruled, the position of King or Queen of the seasonal court was referred to as Doge, and was elected by members of their own court. But even these elected Doges were not foolish enough to forget the Pledge made by Mother of Pearl.

As the population of changelings in the city grew, the courts became more elaborate, their rites and practices becoming long and dependent upon the acknowledgement of each other's rank. The changelings were nobles in their own right, merchants of dreams, traders of wishes—curses and enchantments were their coin. But as the wealth and security of the changelings became greater, so did their apathy and complacency. Unknown to the courts the changelings had traitors amongst themselves and they had been hard at work now for some time.

The Pledge made by Mother of Pearl to the sea was powerful indeed, and its catch was shrouded in mystery. A group of rebels, seeking to bring down the city and its court searched the city for the catch, the loophole, and after much searching found it. It was well known that when a person dies in the sea their soul must float along the waters, holding a candle, hoping that the Ferryman will pluck them from the waves and take them onto the other side. But the Pledge of Mother of Pearl with the sea relied on the sea being treated with respect by the changelings of Venice. The Pact should not be soiled or else the sea would be angry at the changelings and their vices. Through careful observation the rebels noted that the trods through the Hedge became more open when a child died in the waters of the lagoon. But worse was when men had killed them and thrown them into the waters to remove the evidence.

Over the course of a year at the end of the 13th century, the traitors stole away children from every district and from every level of society. Rumours that the True Fae had somehow found a way to the city started to spread, and the control of the city by the courts was crumbling. Venice was bursting at

the seams with changelings and now in this bitter climate many were taking the chance to settle old scores. It was only when a number of changelings allied to the seas made a gruesome discovery that the true ramifications of the Pledge hit home.

The rebels, through disguise or magic, had sought out and kidnapped 37 children, all of whom who had been born at sea. These treasured ones that the sea loved most were then ritually slain, their throats cut and bled at points about the islands of Venice, forming a large fairy circle. These children would act as candles to direct the Gentry to the city. When the courts learned of this it was too late. On the last day of Carnival the following year, a great number of True Fae invaded the city, dragging off changelings and mortals to their citadels in Arcadia.

Over the course of 40 nights the changeling population of Venice was halved and the Hedge defences were torn to shreds; now the trods led out of Venice and allowed the Fae in. One particular Gentry who struck fear and awe in the hearts of the courts was Commodore Fathom, Master of the Leviathan, His Eyes of Blackest Pearl. Arriving in a bank of fog, Commodore Fathom unleashed a horde of hobgoblins, the crew of his baroque ship, the Fathom. The hobgoblins, a Wyrd shaping of crustaceans and sharks and cephalopods, stalked the streets of Venice and captured numerous humans and changelings who would be forced to man the Leviathan for the crab-like Commodore.

With the hunt over and the remaining changelings of the city now living in fear of further attacks, many went into hiding. Others took on a more martial stance, rooting out the privateers and rebels who had led the True Fae to the city that they had thought was safe. For the next few years the Seasonal Courts took hold in Venice and the changelings, looking for someone to blame, turned upon each other with the Courts constantly bickering. Some could see that this could not last forever and that there was a need for stability and a leader who transcended the Courts and the old pledges and contracts with the sea.



<http://stockeffect.deviantart.com/art/Black-Carnival-1-277018956?q=boost%3Apopular%20in%3Aresources%20carnival%20masquerade&qo=20>

THE PACT OF THE BROKEN MASK

In 1427 the changelings of Venice were once more under siege from the predatory Gentry. Children were stolen, women went missing, and some people were found murdered, victims of the foul tastes of the Keepers. Once more the Leviathan was docked in the Venetian lagoon, its hold filled with fresh slaves. For one changeling enough was enough. Though his name is lost to time, the pledge that he forged his legacy still lives on. It was early February, and the festival of

Carnival had been in full swing since the end of Christmas. The people of the city were decorated in masks and gaudy attire, and none could tell the difference between servant and master. The revelry and disguises and costumes would be the very tool to protect the changelings of the city. The ancient ritual of the Carnival embodied the needs of the changelings of Venice. It allowed for the indulgence of the Spring Court, the displays of martial prowess of the Summer Court, the mystic rites of the Autumn Court, and the ability to hide in the open of the Winter Court. On the night of the full moon, on the last day

of Carnival the changeling, using a knife of glass, cut his own face from his skull. He collected the blood that fell from his ragged visage, an offering to Bacchus, and incinerated the tattered remains of his face in honour of Saturn. In the final act the changeling, their gender is even a mystery now as it was then, donned an all concealing mask of many colors, reciting a Latin verse to the god Janus. The new Doge of the changelings was born, and so was the Pact of the Carnival and the new Court of the Carnival.

His first act as Doge was dramatic and terrifying to the other Lost of the city. During a gathering of the changelings before the Winter Queen, Francesca Blue Lips, the Frozen Tears of a Hundred Lovers, the Doge marched in, adorned in gold and silver and red. His mask shifted with each step, and a smile would become a frown with every whisper in his presence. All of the freehold looked on in awe and fear as he stepped forward, brandishing in one hand a mighty sword made of a narwhal's horn, and in the other he held high the head of a twisted serpent-like being. Blood dripped from its severed neck and the tongue dangled slack from the cruel smile. One of the Lost present immediately recognised the harrowing visage as her Keeper and wept knowing at last she no longer had to fear being taken back to their bestial realm in Arcadia.

The Winter Queen was rightly shocked by this interruption and demanded to know who this new arrival was. In response the changeling strode forward, threw the head of the Keeper to the base of her throne and proclaimed aloud, 'I am Doge, if you like it! I come to you now to claim Venice as the domain of the Court of the Carnival. You, my subjects, can now live without fear, in plain sight, free to enjoy life as you once did, and protected from those who would otherwise take freedom from you!'

All about the Lost bowed in respect, seeing that the very aspect of Winter was banished from the court, the Winter Queen herself shrinking in stature and finding that upon their faces were now masks of all varieties and their mien now banished. Music

could be heard in the wake of the new Doge, wine and sweets could be tasted on the air. The Winter Queen, acknowledging her new ruler asked what was to become of herself and her cousins within the other courts. The Doge said, that if they liked, they would become his advisors and leaders of the Seasonal Houses that would comprise the court of the Carnival, and that so long as the Carnival was respected then so would the seasons. The Queen bowed and looked for similar gestures from members of the other courts, and at once their masks shifted and their regalia of power evaporated away, for only the Doge would be allowed to see past all masks within his Court.

Over the coming year the nature of this new Court was fully understood. The presence of masks and the shrouding of the mien within the presence of the Doge ensured that all appeared equal before the Doge. But it also meant that no changeling could be certain of the identity of who they were talking to within court, meaning that conspiracies no longer could operate so easily, and the Lost were now open to express their opinions before the Doge without fear of repercussions. The masks ensured that the members of the Freehold had to work together. But there were also other benefits. Balls and parties increased as the Lost found that the Gentry were now hampered by power of the Doge, and no longer could they identify their old slaves.

THE COURT OF CARNIVAL

The Court of Carnival is also known as the Court of a Thousand Masks, the Harlequin Court, the Court of Ecstasy, and the Violet Court. The Court of the Carnival grew and prospered. Every year new Lost poured in from the Lion's Tail trod, and in Venice they found refuge and security. The Gentry themselves also came into Venice, but masked by the power of Carnival, the changelings of the city were able to drag the True Fae into a world of madness and ecstasy from which they could not escape. It was in these parties of wine and meat and music that the unfortunate True Fae lost all sense of themselves, finding human emotions and worst of all, human weakness. Prone and drunk on the human

condition, the Lost would strike upon their 'Guests' dragging them before the Doge before either incarceration or execution.

For a time peace and tranquility reigned in Venice. That was until the Doge was assassinated.

The identity of the Doge is always an unknown. The power of Carnival means that whenever someone assumes the mantle of Doge, all history and knowledge of that person becomes masked by the Wyrd. Others may remember the person but assume they left for some other city, or that they died or were taken back by the True Fae. Either way all memory of the identity of the Doge is clouded, while the old Doge reassumes their old life as if they had always been there, whilst forgetting of their time as Doge. It is for this reason that the first ever assassination of the Doge came as quite a surprise to the Lost of Venice.

One of the Gentry, a self-made master of mirrors and masks, found their entire notion of Venice to his dislike. She was insulted that these wayward slaves, even some of her own, acted as if they were lords and ladies because they had the immunity granted them by the Pact of Carnival. This True Fae, a jealous fiend, Her Body of Cackling Wine, sought to show the Lost of Venice the error of their ways. She would find the Doge and pluck out his eyes to show all of the foul creatures that nothing comes without some sort of price. Through intrigue and dark pacts Cackling Wine duped and seduced a number of the Lost of Venice, bending them to her will so that the Pact of Carnival could be uncovered. This cat and mouse game continued for many nights and years as Cackling Wine discovered more about the Carnival, more about this ancient festival. And it was by understanding it that this True Fae discovered the secret to the Doge.

During the great fire of the early 16th century, Her Body of Cackling Wine destroyed a number of her entitlements, banishing her Arcadian powers given by these names. Her hair fell to the ground and pooled like oil, her eyes wept smoke and she found herself diminished. But with the ritual came the Doge, summoned by her sacrifice, by the

very Pact of Carnival. The Doge, their mask now shattered and their true self now open to all that looked upon him, confronted the True Fae, his rage visible as his elemental mien of fire ignited and burned bright. All over the city the Hedge opened into the city and the Hobgoblins and Gentry that had lain in waiting poured into the city to take back their wayward slaves. Meanwhile the Doge fell upon Cackling Wine, flame and fire setting the surroundings and oil a blaze. And then together, burning and fighting, the Doge and Cackling Wine fell into the waters and were lost forever.

After the city had burned and ash now fell from the skies, the Lost gathered together for safety, their grand ball over. They had paid the price of their decadence. Carnival had come to take the flesh it was owed. But one of the Lost went out looking for the missing Doge and discovered floating in the water the skull of the dead duke. Compelled to repay Carnival, this changeling used the teeth of the skull to pluck out his eyes and then donned the skull as his new face. Carnival had been appeased, and a new Doge had risen from the ashes.

CHARNEL HOUSE, EBON PALACE

The mid 16th century saw Venice hit with plague and the city dwindled in power. The Lost, once the dominant force of Venice, now had to tackle the strange vampires and ghosts who had snuck into the city, taking advantage of the chaos. Fingers were pointed at these entities for bringing disease to the city, but these were only suspicions. With Venice reduced by death and destruction, the House of Winter, the Ca' di Ghiaccio, flourished. The swell of mourners and feelings of loss brought much power to the House of Ice, and many more changelings joined their House, seeking to find shelter and safety. Winter cast a long shadow over Carnival, and so the balls and revelry were replaced by secret decadence and hidden orgies. It was also at this time that the House of Winter, the Ca' dei Crani, the House of Skulls, organized a new group of dedicated changelings who could deal with the threat of

the restless dead. The isles of Lazaretto are cursed places where things that should remain dead lurk in the dark and only those changelings that seek goblin fruits tainted by death dare to tread these shores.

As the years past and more and more foreigners arrived in the city, the changelings of the city feasted on their emotions. The Carnival still took place, and princes and lords from all around came to indulge. This decadence was all the Lost of Venice had to stave off the effects of the decline of the city and its Empire. The House of Spring, the Ca' della Consacrazione, fed off the dark desires of the visiting nobles. The Ca' di Sun, the House of Summer, feasted off the anger and rage that seethed within the Venetian sailors and lords as their lands were stolen from them. Those changelings of the Ca' dei Crani sipped at the fear of all Venetians, the fear that Venice would fall, the fear of plague, of death, of the end of the Empire. And the Ca' di Ghiaccio just hid themselves away, storing away what things they could while gnawing on the constant feeling of sorrow that had fallen on the city. Venice was falling and the changelings carried on their Great Carnival, ignoring the inevitable end.

Debauchery and revelry hit its height in the 18th century, and as the city found new depths of sin, the magic of the city was banished as science and industry altered the face of the city. Imagination, the *savage garden* of emotion, was gone, and the city was devoid of feeling. Glamour of all kinds ran thin within the city, the harvest was over and now was the city's winter of discontent. The Court of Carnival withered, and the Houses warred with one another for the little glamour that flowed into the city.

Then came Napoleon, and with him corrupt mortal sorcerers and vampires. The city, sick and empty of any form of emotion or passion, fell to the warlord and the Court of Carnival was broken. But not before the price of flesh was paid. The last Doge of the old Court hung himself from the Campanile in St Mark's Piazza, the pact with Carnival maintained. Their years of revelry were over and now their sins were to be weighed and

counted.

During the darker years of Napoleonic rule, and under the rule of Austria and Mussolini, the Lost dwindled, hunted down by mystics and Fae hunters. The magic of the city was gone, but those who remained, the remains of the Houses and the Court, kept the embers of Carnival alive. Secret balls, private parties, all these things helped keep the dream alive. In this desert of emotion the mask of the Doge was protected. But then there were those of the Houses who sought to destroy the mask, the crown of the Doge, and so replace the Court with the Seasonal rule. Changeling killed changeling and a shadow war ground the Houses down, and all the while mages and vampires stole their ancient artifacts and magical devices.

But worse was to come. Magical war, the loss of the great dream of Venice, the end of the Serenissima, had damaged the very essence of Venice. Like Atlantis and the Minoans, Venice was to be consumed by water. The city reflected darkly in the oily waters that flooded the city, and into these waters the Gentry dragged mortals to Arcadia.

Flooding became a frequent event and people were lost to the waters as the mirror-like floods allowed the Gentry to hunt far and wide within the city. The very defenses of the seas had been turned against them, another cost of their debauchery.

However, Carnival returned. A new pact was made with the great festival, and this time the price was even higher. In return for Carnival's protection, for returning the city to its former glory, the Doge and his court would have to pay the ultimate price, their souls, when Carnival comes looking from its payment of flesh.

THE LAST DANCE

Ever since the re-emergence of the Carnival in the early 80s the Lost of Venice has grown in strength. The Freehold is once more stable, and the dream of Venice now draws tourists in from all over the world and with them they bring their passions, their emotions, their imaginations, and their hope. Venice was once more a place where people

could indulge in their desires, sorrow, fear, rage.

Of course there were those who still opposed the Court of the Carnival and the Doge, but they could not deny that Carnival had caused a resurgence of emotion and energy with the city. Vampires were driven from their havens and terrible wizards were banished from their sanctums. Dreams of Venice's salvation were planted in the minds of those mortals that could save the city and the trods of the city were once more patrolled. But despite these things Venice was still terribly damaged. Floods still ravaged the city in Winter, and the waters still threatened to rise and consume the city forever. And of course the Gentry still came into the city, now more aware than ever of the high price of Carnival.

THE FREEHOLD OF VENICE

The Freehold of Venice has been held by the Court of Carnival for many centuries. During that time countless Doges have held office. Some were granted the position by the departing Doge, others were simply bestowed the seat upon the death of the last Doge. The identity of the Doge has always been one of the greatest mysteries of the city. Every time a new Doge is appointed, he is bound to keep that identity secret or he will die and the title is then passed on. Meanwhile the old Doge slips back into his old life as if he was never gone. Gaps in details are filled in, and all memory of his time as Doge is removed. The only tie between the Doges of the Court of Carnival is the Book of the Long Masquerade, a journal detailing the history and lore of the Freehold.

The role of the Doge is that of arbiter and chairman. He is the head of the Freehold but not a despot. His rule must first pass the approval of the Dukes of the Seasonal Houses. Only in times of great need can the Doge rule without question, but even that must be agreed upon by the heads of the Seasonal Houses of Venice. The Doge authorizes new laws for the Freehold, acts as the final judge of tribunals, and acts as the commander of arms when war is declared.

The Doge also plays a major role in the social aspect of the freehold, holding court and listening to the needs of his subjects. Thus the Doge performs an important part in the Freehold, acting as counselor and master of rites.

The Glamour that acts upon the Doge ensures that the identity of the Doge is a secret and his human face is concealed when in court. Outside of his duties as Doge, the Doge cannot reveal his title and the magic associated with the title is not revealed. For all intents and purposes the Doge is just like any other changeling.

The Glamour associated with the title of Doge is not just limited to the Doge themselves, but extends to all of those within court. When entering the official court of the Doge, all other changelings have their mien banished and their image is concealed by a mask. The Pact of Carnival allows for all changelings to associate with each others as equals at the price of not knowing whom they are with. This curious effect means that only changelings that enter court together are aware of which mask that they each wear. For others that arrive at the court, changelings must ask for their identity. Thus it is completely possible for changelings to remain anonymous in court, free to speak their mind to all others. Such a state of affairs means that concerns can be openly expressed without fear of repercussions. But it also means that rumor and conspiracy is rife, and paranoia reigns as changelings try to ensure that they are not identified and singled out for their views and actions. But this maddening court of intrigue, backstabbing and whispers is the price paid for their freedom. The Pact of Carnival gives the Lost of the city shelter from the Gentry. Carnival works its Glamour upon all members of the freehold, hiding their mien from the Gentry so that they appear as just mortals. This does not stop the True Fae however, it is just another mask and like all masks they can be looked past.

The most notable Hollow of the Court of Carnival is associated with the Ca' Pésaro, the museum for oriental and modern arts. This stone-clad gothic building is covered in

gruesome heads.

The Mantle of Carnival

The Court of Carnival, the Thousand Masks, the Quicksilver Court, the Court of Revelry and Laughter.

Some wish to hide, some wish to lose themselves to their desires, others give into their rage, and others wish to cause fear. But the court of Carnival is something else. It is farewell to the flesh, to let go of themselves and be lost within the festival of Carnival. If they are willing to make the sacrifice, the Carnival offers safety, pleasure, mystery, magic, secrecy and power. The ultimate message of Carnival is one of festival and showing that the Lost can turn the tables on the Gentry. Of course the question is when Carnival will come seeking to collect their debts.

For the above reasons the Court of Carnival is eclectic, maddening, and colorful, attracting changeling from all walks of life. But typically the court attracts those changelings that have a taste for politics, intrigue, revelry and magic, all at once. They are all self-styled princes of Faerie. But of course this intense mix is difficult for many changelings to accommodate, and often courtiers can be driven to insanity by the pressures of Carnival. But this is the cost of the power that comes from the Court.

Of course the most important rituals of the Court focus on the period of Carnival. Starting on the 26th of December the Doge, along with a representative of the House of Winter, leads the celebration of the start of Carnival. Masks are ritually burnt, signifying the start of the period of renewal. But first the changelings must give up their past year and confide to Carnival their sins. The real celebrations do not begin until two weeks before Fat Tuesday, and on the Sunday at the start of this period the Doge elects the Carnival Prince and Princess. These two lead the balls and parties and act as a focus for the Freehold's celebrations, culminating in their ceremonial marriage on Fat Tuesday. This marriage sees a grand ball and Lost from other

Freeholds beyond Venice are invited to join in the celebration.

The following day, Ash Wednesday, marks the start of Lent, and so the changelings of the Court of Carnival focus intently on their purpose and duties for the following year.

For the remainder of the year the Court is devoted to secrecy and study, defending the Freehold and rooting out dangers within the city.

The heraldry of the Court is a strange mix. It is the clear blue skies over the Adriatic in February, the bracing sea breeze, the smell of mulled wine, the sparkle of light from the crests of waves, the taste of hot chocolate, the sound laughter, the ringing of church bells, masks, tricorne hats, cats, lions, violins, gondola, mercury, salt, a sense of disorientation and loss of direction.

The Mantle of Carnival is somewhat a mix of all others. The Mantle gives a sense of Carnival as an overload of the sense as a means to hide the changeling. At Mantle ● to ●●● the mien of the changeling is confusing and sensual as the observer is assaulted by the smells and tastes of Carnival. When invoking a contract laughter may be heard or a cold wind blows. At Mantle ●●●●+ the mien of a Carnival courtier is even more intense as dimensions are confused, directions twisted, spices can be smelled in the air and laughter assaults the ears of the observer. Even more important is that this Mantle only manifests in locations where the Doge is holding court, or if the Carnival courtier wishes.

At Mantle ●+ a Carnival courtier become harder to spot and so those actively seeking the changeling have a -1 die penalty to their appropriate search skill (Wits + Composure or Wits + Skill) roll. At Mantle ●●●+ the changeling becomes even more masked by Carnival, their mien is diminished and they gain a +1 dice bonus to all subterfuge rolls. At Mantle ●●●● the previous penalties and bonus at previous levels increase by one. Thus their stealth/subterfuge rolls are increased by +2, and a -2 penalty to those seeking the changeling.

The emotion tied to the Court of Carnival is Carnival itself. Changelings

harvest the Glamour associated with festivity, celebrations, grand balls, and drunken parties. This emotion is brought to the forefront in others as a way of once more feeling what was stolen from them by the Gentry. Only by seeking out Carnival can the Court feel as though it has turned the tables on their debauched Keepers, stealing back their old lives and the magic of Faerie. But Carnival also means acknowledging that all great things come at a great price and that their freedom and powers come with strings attached. It is only when this is acknowledged that a changeling is free to celebrate his freedom, knowing what it cost to regain it.

The Court holds certain stereotypical views of the other courts.

Spring Court: They may indulge in their passions, but they lose themselves too easily to their desire and forget to celebrate all other aspects of life.

Summer Court: They may win the war but they never take the time to rejoice in their achievements. No, instead they just seek out more war, more bloodshed.

Autumn Court: They may try to steal the magic of Faerie, and use such things for their own war, to make the Gentry fear their own tools, but they do not take the time to enjoy the pleasures that it can bring, or celebrate the world that it reveals. But always know that all gifts come with a price.

Winter Court: They can hide but Carnival will always come, always seeking to take what is owed, that debt. But also, no matter how the Winter Court acts, they cannot deny that they have succeeded in escaping the Gentry, and not celebrating such an achievement is a terrible thing as then you have no drive to achieve greater things.



The current Doge is theorized to have been in power for the last decade at least. His rule has been characterized by his balance between tough justice and a light-handed rule. Balls and parties are allowed at all times, but in the shadows his agents are constantly on the lookout for loyalists, privateers, Gentry and militia. Within court the Doge has been

attacked openly for not being more proactive and has gained the hatred and distrust of those within the Summer and Spring houses. This revulsion has been born out of the disgust at the Court of the Carnival preventing seasonal rule, but also at the Doge clamping down on the parties and gatherings that have gotten out of hand, or the more militant Summer courtiers who think the Doge is not doing enough to actively hunt those who would bring down the Freehold.

The Doge appears in court dressed much like a prince or lord would during the 18th century. His attire is white and gold, with an opulent coat, buckled shoes and powdered wig. His mask fully conceals his face and is a shifting mask of emotions.

The Doge does not work in a vacuum, and has a number of aides that are known within Court. The Pact of Carnival allows for the changelings of the city to come to court and act anonymously, but there are changelings of the court who are identifiable, at least within court. Outside of court, it is up to these changelings to reveal their title.

The seneschal of the Doge is the Bauta. This changeling is in charge of keeping track of the details of the city, the funds that are kept by the Doge, files on the threats to the Freehold, and works with the Dukes of the Seasonal Houses to distribute titles and duties, maintaining the location of Freehold commons, safe houses and hollows.

Of all the members of the Court of Carnival, the seneschal is possibly the most important role but also one of the most disrespected positions within the Freehold. Many of the House of Autumn feel that the seneschal is intruding on their responsibilities, while the House of Summer and Spring see the seneschal as a puppet of the Doge.

The Bauta appears in court in robes almost as opulent as the Doge, and his mask is the Bauta mask. The Bauta mask is a full face mask with an angular pronounced jaw that disguises the mouth. The mask is covered in gilding and ornate designs.

The role of Volto is the official peacekeeper of the city. Dressed in the Volto mask, similar to the Bauta but in pure black,

and worn with a tricorn and a cloak. The Volto acts as both investigator and executioner, and works in unison with the defenders of the Freehold from the Seasonal Houses. Thus the Volto acts as leader and commander of these militant changelings, but this an uneasy alliance that leads to conflicts of interest. Of all the positions with the city the identity of the Volto is well known to all changelings in the Freehold.

The Larva appears similar to the Volto, however with a mask of pure white. The Larva is the official ghost hunter of the Freehold. Such a position is required when the city has such a deep and troubled history. Thus the Larva is normally associated with the Autumn and Winter Seasonal Houses. The other main duty of the Larva is that of assassin. Whenever things must be done quietly, the Larva is the one that is called upon by the Doge. This means, unlike the Volto, the Larva operates in complete secrecy.

Servetta Muta is always a female changeling and dresses in opulent robes and a black oval mask that has only slits for eyes. The wearer must bite down onto a bit so that the mask is held against the face. Thus the role of the Servetta Muta is that of a confessor. The Lost of the Freehold can reveal their sins and troubles to her without the fear that she will reveal these secrets to others, such is the Pact with Carnival that is made by the Servetta Muta. Over the centuries others have tried to pervert this position, but before long there is a new Servetta Muta, a changeling is missing and the Larva is cleaning his blades.

The Columbine and Columbina are the two changelings who are considered the most beautiful within the Freehold. The Columbino masks are the classic half masks, concealing just the eyes and nose leaving the lower portion of the face exposed. The masks are very ornate and so are the costumes that the courtiers wear. These two changelings are in charge of organizing the balls and parties of the Freehold, gifted in the performing arts, and also are notorious for their numerous and frequent sexual encounters at these parties.

The final official position within the Court of Carnival is the Medico della Peste, or

Plague Doctor. This changeling is dressed in the traditional black robes and wide brimmed hat, with a mask that covers the entire face. The mask features small eye slits covered in clear stones, and is completely white. The main feature is the grim looking curved wide beak. This beak, during the Venetian plagues, was designed so that it could be stuffed with herbs and spices that would prevent the doctor from breathing in the plague.

The Medico della Peste is the Freehold physician, but also acts as intermediary between the Freehold and the Vampires and sorcerers that live within the bounds of Venice and the Venetian mainland. Other than the Larva and Volto, the Medico della Peste is one of the most feared and respected changelings in the Freehold, and on rare occasions changelings that have been brought in for minor ailments have disappeared without trace.

The Contracts of Carnival

The Court of Carnival has power over the Masquerade, enabling Changelings to literally say 'Farewell to the Flesh'.

MASQUERADE (●)

This clause allows the Changeling to take on the visage of another.

Prerequisites: None

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Mantle

Action: Instant

Catch: Wear a mask worn by a stranger within the last hour

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Gain a face of a person who has bad luck attached to them e.g. they owe money and they run into their creditor. Last until sundown.

Failure: Nothing Happens.

Success: Your face becomes that of another and passes the inspection of others who know that individual. All other body features remain the same. Lasts for a number of hours equal to your Wyrd.

Exceptional Success: You may take on the face of the target, and in future this clause can be invoked and on success be used to reassume that face. All costs are as normal.

HALL OF MIRRORS (●●)

This clause allows the Changeling to take on the visage of another and all other features in appearance only – voice, mantle, smell, height, weight. Of course this does not extend to knowledge or personality.

Prerequisites: Mantle * Court Goodwill ***

Cost: 1 Glamour per feature (voice, face, height and weight, smell, mantle, aura)

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Subterfuge + Mantle

Action: Instant

Catch: Hold a mirror of polished iron to the face of the person you wish to mimic.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Changeling becomes the target all the hate and anger of the person they wish to mimic. Also those who have reason to hate the person they wished to mimic, now instead target the Changeling. Last until sundown.

Failure: Nothing Happens.

Success: You gain the features you have paid for. The effect lasts until sundown.

Exceptional Success: You take on all the features of the target, plus gain +2 modifier to all rolls when trying to act like the target.

THE GOBLIN BALL (●●●)

This clause allows the Changeling to increase the size of a party and make it more intense and harder for the revelers to leave.

Prerequisites: Mantle ** Court Goodwill ****

Cost: 3 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Socialize + Mantle – Resolve (highest of the group)

Action: Instant

Catch: The Changeling has had their finger in the drink of each person at the party.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The party falls apart in spectacular fashion e.g. fight, bickering, a police raid etc.

Failure: Nothing Happens.

Success: A success is required for every 10 people present. After that all extra successes increase the party by 25% of the initial size. The Wyrd has arranged for them to obtain tickets, money etc to enable them to go. Those at the party will remain there for a number of hours equal to the successes rolled. The party will have all the food and drink required, as the Wyrd has somehow manipulated fate for this to happen. To leave the party a contested Resolve + Wyrd roll is required between the person and the Changeling that invoked this clause. The people at the party will remain there for a number of hours equal to the half the number of successes rolled.

Exceptional Success: Same as above. Now the party will increase by 50% instead of 25% with the extra successes. The party now lasts a number of hours equal to (successes + wyrd)/2.

THE MOUTH OF TRUTH (●●●●)

This clause allows the Changeling to know of the location of the True Fae within the city.

Prerequisites: Mantle *** Court Goodwill *****

Cost: 4 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Empathy + Resolve + Mantle

Action: Instant

Catch: The Changeling eats a piece of paper which has on it the name and all the titles of their Keeper.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Changeling's location is revealed to the True Fae.

Failure: Nothing Happens.

Success: The Changeling speaks the word 'Ferrum' and then is able to know the location of a number of True Fae in the city, equal to the number of successes they rolled.

This lasts for 1 hour. If the catch is used then the Changeling knows the location of the named Keeper for a number of hours equal to the number of successes they rolled.

Exceptional Success: Same as above. But the power can be conveyed to other changelings by wearing a mask and then passing it on to others.

FAREWELL TO THE FLESH (●●●●●)

This clause allows the Changeling or another of their choice to undergo an inversion of their morality. For some this would allow them for a time to commit sins that they could not before, and for others it would give them a taste of what they have lost.

Prerequisites: Mantle ****

Cost: 5 Glamour + 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Empathy + Composure + Mantle (vs Resolve + Wyrđ)

Action: Instant

Catch: The Changeling performs the ritual on a night of a half moon, listening to a person reveal a sin of theirs to another.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Immediate test of degeneration of Clarity, (roll three dice).

Failure: Nothing Happens.

Success: The Changeling or their target (who is allowed to resist), has their Clarity (or equivalent morality rating) inverted e.g. 7 becomes 3, 2 becomes 8 etc. This means that things that were sins are now not, or vice versa. This lasts for a number of hours equal to the successes rolled.

For the duration if a sin is committed, based upon the inverted morality rating, the degeneration does not take place immediately. Instead check for degeneration after the power wears off.

When the power wears off the character will suffer nightmares for a number of nights equal to the highest morality rating they had from the two states of inversion. So if they inverted from Clarity 3 to 7 then they would have nightmares for 7 nights. The nightmares would mean the character would

suffer the effects of fatigue over this time.

Exceptional Success: Same as above. However, it also gives those inverting from low to high morality the chance to regain morality after the effect wears off, by spending a willpower dot.



THE SAVAGE GARDEN

What is obvious from above is that the Court of Carnival is a court of extremes. It allows for excessive revelry, but also harsh punishments and complex Byzantine politics. No surprise when within the court of the Doge all changelings are disguised by Glamour. This chaotic court extends to the Seasonal Courts. Because there is no rotation of the Seasonal Courts in Venice, something not required with Carnival's inherent concept of revelry and sacrifice, the Seasonal Courts have formed Houses. These houses function in much the same way as they would normally, except that instead of the rotation of leadership, the heads of each of the Houses act as Councilors to the Doge. The Doge has final say in matters, in laws and pledges and oaths, but not without the support and advice of the Councilors.

THE CA' DELLA CONSACRAZIONE - THE HOUSE OF SPRING

The House of Spring shares much in common with the Court of Carnival. Both promote parties, following desire, revelry and indulgence. But the House of Spring takes these things a step further without a thought for the cost of such indulgence. Their house, sitting on the edge of the Grand Canal, is the dilapidated Ca' da Mosto. The Mosto family was an influential family in Venice but then with the fall of the Venetian Empire, the house was sold on. The name Mosto comes from the word for grapes or the name for the priest of Bacchus, the Mustes. This house appears to be empty, but within the upper stories the House

of Spring often holds their decadent parties. The real House of Spring lies within the Hedge, where the Ca' da Mosto has been extended and replicated. The building is opulent, decorated in frescoes and mirrors, murals and statues, with curtains of plum and lime. This building is both the party house, with many rooms containing large beds, and the seat of power of the head of the House of Spring.

The head of the House of Spring is the Vernal Duke. The selection of the Duke is a simple popularity contest. Of course popularity is a fickle thing. You can be popular for being fun and promoting the desires of the House, or for being scathing, or for causing fear in those you dislike. Thus the Duke gains the title through their strength of will.

The Duke sits at the centre of a spider web of intrigue, listening to every piece of gossip and news that is brought to his court. A well placed observation or insult by the Duke could make or break a changeling in the city, and these views can be spread about the Freehold quickly by the Duke's agents.

The Duke is served by a number of his own household. The first of these is the Claviger. This Spring courtier is the official bodyguard of the Duke, but is also in charge of organizing security for the House of Spring, which often brings him into competition with the Doge's Volto. Typically the Claviger has a passion for weaponry and the martial arts, and in the history of the Venetian Freehold, is one of the most skilled sword masters of the city, equal to even the most skilled Summer courtier. In fact the Claviger is often recognized for bearing the Flowering Steel, a symbol of his office and also a powerful token in the hands of a skilled warrior. On rare occasions the Claviger has also been called upon to fight in a duel for the honor of the House of Spring.

If the Columbino of the Court of Carnival are the club kids of Venice, then the House of Spring's Sage Escort is the city's matron of whores. She is one of the most passionate of the house and is renowned for having harems that consist of Lost from all Houses and genders. In fact the Sage Escort, or

simply Veronica (a title based upon the name of the famous courtesan of Venice), is the best intelligence officer for the House. Pillow talk being the source of some of the best secrets, and damning information. Her position is seen as competition by the Columbino, and the Servetta Muta has a distaste for the Veronica's actions, often hearing confessions from those Lost who have disclosed their deepest sins to this Spring courtier.

The other prominent role with the House of Spring is the Joyeux. This muse of joy is holds a position of respect, helping other courtiers, not just those of Spring, in the pursuit of their work so that they may achieve happiness. Of course the Joyeux is a skilled listener and counselor, but can at times been seen as a meddler, sticking their nose into the business of others when they are unwanted.

THE CA' DI SUN - THE HOUSE OF SUMMER

Carnival means 'farewell to the flesh'. The Carnival is about sacrifice, and what greater sacrifice is there but giving yourself in defense of others. This is how the House of Summer, the House of the Sun, relates to the Court of Carnival. Carnival also promotes saying farewell to the Lost's former life as mortals and accepting what they are. It also recognizes that they are no longer slaves but free. But this freedom comes at a price; blood and flesh, and the House of Summer pays this price every day.

The House of Summer operates out of the Arsenale. The changelings make use of the most dilapidated sections of the former war factory, appearing to either work for the museum or as local homeless people. The Arsenale extends into the Hedge, and this Hollow of the House of Summer is a storehouse of weaponry and tokens that can be used against the Gentry. It is a grim fortress within the Hedge, similar to the Arsenale at its height of production, or the Ducal Palace prison. The Arsenale Hollow consists of barracks, a war room, numerous training rooms and armories, and a jail.

The House of Summer is modeled on the Venetian Empire's military, in particular

their navy. So like the sailors of old, the House of Summer is ready to take the fight to foreign lands, regardless if it is the territory of rival Freeholds or the Hedge. This structuring means that almost all members of the House hold titles derived from the navy.

The head of the House is the Admiral. The Admiral expects discipline within his house and punishes those who not give him his due respect. The position of Admiral must be earned, it is not bestowed, and typically this occurs when the previous Admiral dies or steps down and the Doge formally promotes a Summer courtier to the rank of Admiral. This can at times mean that the next highest ranked Summer courtier isn't promoted to Doge. Such a thing is rare but as expected can cause political strife within the House as the Doge snubs those who may think they have the right to the position of Admiral.

Below the Admiral are the Crimson Captains. Serving in the same role as Iron Adjutants in other Freeholds, thus they act as the Admiral within the field when he himself is otherwise engaged in other matters of the Freehold. There are always at least two, and there can be at most half a dozen, and these are the most obvious agents of Summer in the Freehold, executing the orders of the Admiral. They are not expected to be mindless servants, and so captains are often skilled soldiers and quick-witted. These captains are never just the leaders of motleys that consist purely of Summer changelings. Some captains are the only members of the House of Summer within other motleys. At times these captains are called upon to lead gatherings of soldiers of the Summer court, these soldiers being drawn from all motleys within the Freehold.

The soldiers of the Summer House come in two ranks, lieutenants and corporals. The difference is simple. The more skilled lieutenants are better armed and command more respect from their commanders, while corporals are expected to follow orders without question.

Some captains have duties other than just commanding the grunts of the House of Summer. The House of Summer has taken it upon itself to police the Freehold, and in

charge of these operations is the Constable of Calefaction, and so this has often led to the House to being at odds with the Volto of the Court of Carnival. However most times these two positions act together. The other position held by a captain of Summer is the Jager. This captain is a skilled hunter, especially within the Hedge, and is often called upon by the Admiral to lead hunting parties into the Hedge. The Jager and the Larva share similar expertise, but also know their respective specialties; the Jager often differing to the Larva when matters concern Vampires, the dead and Magi.

THE CA' DEI CRANI - THE HOUSE OF AUTUMN

Behind every mask is a mystery, and so there is fear, paranoia and horror. But there is also magic. Carnival is a festival of revelry, and also a chance to indulge in the magic of illusion and to enjoy the quick frights that it brings. Carnival allows for the reversal of roles; the beggar becomes the lord, the nun becomes the whore. For the Lost of Venice, Carnival allows for the reversal of power, and turning the tools of their enslavement on their Keepers. For these reasons Autumn and Carnival can be allied in their fight against the Gentry.

The House of Autumn operates in the Teatro Fenice. Here the courtiers of Autumn masquerade as actors and theatre hands. Within the Hedge the theatre is dark and brooding and it is here that they perform their *commedie dell'arte*. These improvised plays are designed for amusement, to invoke the magic of Venice, but also to teach. Often these plays are tales of morality, humility and mystery. For their changeling audience, these are a means to teach. For the mortals that see these plays, they allow the Autumn House to harvest fear. This gothic theatre is also a storehouse for all of the Autumn House artifacts, tomes and tokens.

The leader of the House of Autumn is often never seen by his subjects, instead cultivating a society of fear and mystery within his own House. His existence is only confirmed by meeting with the Doge, but

again this figure may well just be a puppet. The leader of the House of Autumn is known as the Silent Skull. This name is suggestive of the role of Lord of Autumn, a being that may well be watching the dark and causing events that terrorize the unwary so that they will be ready for when the Gentry come a calling. It is also in reference to the means of communication that the Lord of Autumn uses; messages magically sealed with a snarling skull.

The hierarchy of the House is often just as secretive, with changelings only knowing which changelings are their direct superiors or their students, and with changelings referring to each other as mentor and ward. This means that the House of Autumn is like a university of fear and secrets, and only a few know all the connections between the members of the House. This means that it is possible for members of the House to pass each other in the halls of the theatre but not speak or acknowledge each other as neither is aware of the other's respective rank.

Some Autumn courtiers are bestowed titles, but again these are secret titles that are only revealed when there is a requirement to do so.

The Ranger of the Thorns is entrusted with the duties of harvesting goblin fruits from the Hedge, hunting Hedge beasts and hobgoblins, mapping the trods and Hollows, and also acting as a guide to others. Such a role is easy to conceal but does lead to competition with other hunters and those harvesting. The Ranger is also distrusted as the Ranger is able to locate Hollows already taken by changelings of other Houses.

Venice Carnival would not be the same without fools and jesters, and the Fool of First Frost is a very visible role within the House of Autumn, and also within the Court of Carnival. The dark comedy of the Fool nestles neatly with the philosophy of Carnival, the jester poking fun, making satirical jokes, creating distractions and promoting the House of Autumn's *commedie dell'arte*. The fool's tales also act as warnings, designed to terrify and amuse.

The other most prominent role for

Autumn courtiers is the Ashen Notary. It is known that one exists in the Freehold, but no one knows the identity of this changeling, only that there is an Autumn courtier who investigates all Pledges and records their nature and their participants. Such information is used by the Silent Skull to root out those Pledges that have been used to orchestrate conspiracies.

THE CA' DI CHIACCIO - THE HOUSE OF WINTER

Winter is the season of sorrow. It is also the time of quiet, punishment, hibernation and hiding. Winter seeks the shadows, the darkness and camouflage. Winter is also about sacrificing comforts. Winter is about self-sacrifice, and that a changeling can only rely on their own skills when the chips are down. The Pact of Carnival meshes well with the concept of Winter.

The location of where the House of Winter meets is not well known to the other Seasons, and in fact the House is only a House in name; the House tends not to hold frequent large gatherings. One location where the House of Winter does gather, and is only known to the members of the House of Ice and their allies, is the Hotel Danieli. Once the most expensive hotel in Venice, the Danieli is a gothic palazzo which is favored by celebrities and the rich. The members of the House of Winter masquerade as hotel staff and make use of the store rooms for their meetings. Within the Hedge the Hollow located here is a dark brooding building that is a maze of hotel rooms, all surprisingly empty. This is because the Hollow is a decoy. No one really knows where the head of the House of Winter rests his head, or where the House keeps their safe houses.

The head of the House of Winter is the known as the Nameless One. This Lord is a master of Winter and sits at the heart of a web of mystery and is only seen in person in the presence of the Doge if he is called upon. Otherwise the Nameless One is exactly that, and unknown. His word and orders are only heard through his Onyx Thanes, who in turn issue orders to the Iceclad Amigers, who in

turn speak to the Squires of Frost, who then use the Flowing Pages as their messengers. This web of intrigue and minions are held together by the code and seals of Winter and the Mourning Cant.

Other than these titles that are determined by the Mantle of a changeling of the House, there are more specific titles that are not specifically tied to their Mantle.

The Sun Banisher is a well known position within the Freehold, even if the changeling is not known directly. Word simply must reach the Banisher that evidence of some form must be removed and that his services are required, and then in return the Banisher sets his price. This communication then continues, facilitated by the Flowing Pages.

The Lord of Inhospitable Chamber is another title that is rumored to exist and the identity of the Winter Courtier is unknown. What is known comes from the whispers of the victims of this changeling. He is an interrogator, jailer, torturer and master of information extraction, setting up situations where the subject divulges secrets when they are unaware that such actions are being taken against him. In many cases the subject has no idea that he has been watched or that events have been orchestrated to reveal these details until they are used against him and the foot soldiers of Summer come calling.

MAGGIOR CONSIGLIO - THE GREAT COUNCIL

The Maggior Consiglio is what the Freehold of Venice would like outsiders to think of them; a group of Lost who together think of themselves as nobles and lords and ladies. They pretend that their court operates with the Doge overseeing their great balls and grand parties and that the Doge listens to the issues of the Freehold presented to him in court and that his rule is fair and just. But this is far from the truth. In recent years the Freehold has become more and more unstable as members of the House of Spring have come to resent Carnival's continuing reign which overshadows the commencement of Spring. What follows is an overview of the current political climate of the Freehold of Venice.

The current Doge of the city, unknown to their subjects, is the Air Touched Elemental Aura. This Lost, stolen as a child to blow cooling breezes for her Keeper, returned to the sea town of Chioggia, finding that for herself 7 years had passed while for her family 27 years had gone by. Blessed with the ability to sing enchanting songs, Aura made her way within the Freehold of Venice, and spent 37 years acting as a court entertainer within the House of Spring and became a well-respected manipulator of Glamour. It was 12 years ago she was given the title of Doge, the former Doge in secret bestowed the mask upon her and with that act the roles were reversed and the former Doge left the city, his memory of their time as Doge struck from his mind.

The Doge for the last 4 years has battled with a number of problems. The first has been the slow increase in sightings of hobgoblins and reports of disturbing dreams amongst the population of the city. The second has been the disappearance of a few members of the Freehold. Apparently this has been the work of those Loyalists hidden within the city limits, or worst the Gentry. It has been these issues that have led to the loss of confidence in the Court of Carnival, especially from the Spring and Summer Houses who expect more direct action.

The most prominent opponents of the Doge have been the Spring Courtier Malvolio, and the Summer Courtier Captain Tomaas Tusk. Within court Malvolio, a Flowering Fairest who holds as much respect as the Verdant Duke, is known to speak out against the Doge within the halls of the House of Spring, his words and gossip directing others to stand against the Doge and her puppets. Of course this is seen as distasteful by the Verdant Duke who only wishes for the status quo to remain due to the privilege that House has with the organization of balls and masquerades. But of course there are those who want to rise above their station and see the Court of Carnival brought down so that they are no longer lorded over by the Carnival courtiers.

The Captain Tomas Tusk, a boar-like Beast, has always been known to be something

of a troublemaker and outspoken against the moderate, festive, Court of Carnival. Of course this warmongering Summer soldier has always been under the leash of the his Admiral, the Earthbones Elemental, Capricornus. Of course this does not stop the Captain from voicing his concerns as the Admiral becomes increasingly seen as blundering and obsessed with orders and red tape. In comparison the second Captain, the Cinder Bella, a Fireheart Elemental, accepts her commander's habits and tries to take up the slack instead of trying to bring down the regime. Of course this means the soldiers of the House are caught between their own opinions and following orders.

The Silent Skull, the Duke of Autumn, is the least vocal on issues pertaining to the rule of Carnival. Some suggest that Autumn fears the Court, since only they would truly respect the climate of fear that the Doge has created. In truth the Duke of Autumn is more aware of the intrigue rife within the Freehold but does not divulge all the details to the Doge. Instead what little bits of information are revealed are said at times when they would have the most impact on the Court, to create the most amount of fear so that the Court is driven to achieving greater things. The real problem for the Doge and the Silent Skull comes from the inevitable shadow war between their respective spies and the ever heightening atmosphere of paranoia within the Freehold. Both know that if these fears are not conquered, then they will drive the Lost of the Freehold to committing terrible actions. But worst is that within this quagmire of rumors and secrets the real truth will be overlooked. It would be easy for this to be solved by removing the Court of Carnival from power, but the Silent Skull is more aware than any other that Carnival is integral to the Freehold and the city, and that on the horizon the city will have pay its dues to Carnival. Within the House of Autumn there are those who see too many secrets, and these individuals now pass secrets to other Houses as they seek to reinstate the cycle of Seasons, but they must work quietly and discreetly as it has been known for traitorous Autumn courtiers to

vanish without trace. Then there are those who just feast on the fear within the Freehold and just seek to see this blossom into terror and harvest it.

If the Autumn House is a court of ash, where those in power are unseen, then the House of Winter is just as well hidden. The Nameless One is even more quiet on matters concerning the cycle of Seasons. There are those who can only see the coming sorrow that will fall upon the Freehold, and those that see the ensuing chaos as the perfect theatre within which to hide from the Gentry. And so the Nameless One allows the Freehold to continue as it does. But then that is because Winter wishes to remain unseen so that those traitors can be caught in the act. The Nameless One is fully aware that there are traitors within the Houses of Spring and Summer. But it is also the rule of the Icelaw to not interfere with the practices of the Houses. Thus the Nameless One is biding his time, letting his messengers bring him all the information he needs so that when the time comes Winter will be able to wait out the storm and not be harmed by the Pact of Carnival.

It is then clear that the Freehold is torn between secrecy and revelry, magic and muscles, survival and sacrifice, and there are those not ready or willing to make a choice.

The main focus of Freehold life is the unending Carnival. At least once or twice a week a masquerade party of some form is held in the name of Carnival. The location is marked on the doors by the symbol of the Pact of Carnival, the lions of St Mark and the book. Within this marked location, the Pact of Carnival weaves the Glamour to form the masks upon the faces of all changelings within the building, while dispelling the mien of the changelings. The effect is identical to that which occurs in the court of the Doge. The difference is that this power is an extension of the Doge's, invoked by his officers only who, simply masked, draw the symbol in gold or red paint.

These parties are the perfect opportunity for the Lost of the city to indulge in Carnival and to socialize without the worry of people using their actions and words against

them. However, these parties have the added problem of paranoia as people hear rumors involving themselves but don't know who has said what. It is for this reason that these parties often remain focused on more trivial matters and enjoyment. Those Lost who can perform take the opportunity to do so, otherwise entertainment can be provided using ensorcelled mortals.

The larger gatherings of the Freehold take place once a month on a Saturday night. These gatherings begin as more somber affairs where Freehold issues are brought up and decrees are made. News such as upcoming tribunals and other Seasonal House events are announced, along with the formal announcement of titles being bestowed. After the more serious business is over, the real party can begin. These larger gatherings are often held in the Hollow maintained by the Columbino for the Doge. This Ducal Palace is a building shaped by the Wyrd and stands in the Hedge where the Rialto would be. Access is only granted by the two Carnival changelings, and those with the appropriate tokens must simply pass under the arch facing south on the Rialto bridge. The Ducal Palace, known as the Rialto Palazzo, stands on a bridge that spans the river like the tail of the Lion's Tail. The palazzo is a gleaming construction of white marble and gold, Doric columns and pink stone.

Other meetings do take place within the Freehold. Once a month the House of Autumn holds its *commedia delle'arte*, while the House of Spring holds more decadent parties at its Hollow, on a bi-monthly basis. The House of Summer holds monthly tournaments, while the House of Winter remains indifferent and tends to stay quiet and only engage in more open meetings during the Winter months when they hold their markets.

MASCHERARI - THE MOTLEYS OF VENICE

The term *Mascherari* was the name used by the mask-making guilds of Venice. In modern times this term is now used by the Lost when referring to the motleys of the city. However this term has also been adopted by

the groups of the Bound that haunt the city.

THE HUNDRED MASKS

The Hundred Masks is a group of Spring courtiers. They are devoted to the task of organizing the decadent balls that the Lost attend. The success of the balls is a sign of their own prestige and dominance within the politics of the Freehold. Their parties are extravagant affairs and a chance to upstage all the other Houses and the Court of Carnival. For this reason they are often at odds with the Columbine and Columbina.

In order to hold their parties, the Hundred Masks have a hold over club and bar owners (though there are not many clubs in Venice itself) and the owners of some of the palaces in Venice. The Hundred Masks also have contacts with drug dealers, buying mundane drugs and selling their Glamour-infused, mystic, narcotics.

Malvolio

Quote: "May I have this dance my lady?", "These decorations are all *WRONG!*", "I don't think they were invited? Could you see to them please?"

Background: Malvolio is from Milan and grew up during the 60's and was heavily involved in the social revolution that was taking place. His family were suit and shirt makers, but he had no desire to go into the family trade. Instead Malvolio hung out with his friends from school, riding his motorcycle and taking drugs.

It was while out riding his motorcycle that he pulled off the main road and stopped to smoke a joint. It was while there that he walked through an unseen gateway into the Hedge. The Hedge reacted to Malvolio's intoxicated state of mind, and the Hedge blossomed with flowers in impossible colors, and fireflies darted about in the thorns. Malvolio was soon good and lost.

Lost in the Hedge, Malvolio was discovered by Mandrake. Mandrake, a strange figure dressed in a white suit but with a mesh face mask, almost like a beekeeper, lunged at

Malvolio and gassed him.

Malvolio awoke in a glorified greenhouse that was hot and humid, that stretched on for miles. There were others there, but they stood motionless, their arms up stretched to the sky as flowers sprouted from their fingertips, eyes and mouth. Every plant, vegetable, fungus and shrub was a person. And he was now slowly succumbing to the heat.

Years passed and Malvolio awoke, startled by something. The greenhouse had been untended for some time and become overgrown, and with great effort Malvolio was able to shake himself free. He noted that vines and flower petals fell from him. The petals were a dark purple and from his lips fell sickly, white berries. He picked his way through the overgrown garden and out of the greenhouse, into the cool air of the barren landscape that was the realm of his keeper.

Malvolio returned to mortal world after almost 20 years had gone by, while he was only 6 years older. He arrived back in Milan, but not where he had left his motorcycle all those years ago. Instead he returned through a door in an alleyway in downtown Milan. Malvolio discovered that he had been deemed dead by the authorities, and his family had since moved from the city.

Malvolio was picked up by the local Freehold, but after some problems in Milan he moved on to Venice where he joined the House of Spring, fitting in perfectly with the House and their ideals and aspirations.

Once in Venice Malvolio gained a reputation for being a bit of a player and nihilistic. His parties were some of the most decadent, his balls the most grand. His links with the drug trade made him influential in the harvesting of Glamour for the House of Spring. His investment in narcotics has brought him into conflict with the Silk Road Pirates as he attempts to provide even stronger potions that have been harvested from the Hedge, with little regard for the effect that such drugs have on the mental state of the mortal population. He is also in competition with Count Cernelian and Silver Heart, the Columbine and Columbina respectively. Both see Malvolio as having overstepped his status

and putting the security of the Freehold as risk.

Description: Malvolio is a handsome man, with dark messy hair and a well trimmed goatee. He dresses in designer suits and wears a flower depending upon the emotions he wishes to broadcast. His Mien shows that his eyes are violet, with pale, ivory skin and purple hair. His ears are pointed and his lips are as inviting as a flower. His Mantle is heavy with the smell of flowers, almost sickly. Flowers near him bloom and give off a nauseating fragrance.

Storytelling Hints: Malvolio is a womanizer and is lecherous. He indulges his vices readily and will publicly destroy the reputation of others, with little regard for their own feelings. No form of indulgence is too depraved for him. He hates the rule of the Court of Carnival and actively seeks to see its downfall with the Vernal Duke. He also hates the fear-mongering of the House of Autumn and has a vendetta against the Fool of First Frost.

Apparent Age: Early 30s

Court: Spring

Seeming: Fairest

Kith: Flowering

Keeper: Mandrake

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Occult (Hedge Fruit) 2, Politics (Freehold) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Drive (Motorcycles) 2, Larceny 3, Stealth 1, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Empathy (Emotions, Lies) 2, Intimidation (Veiled Threats) 2, Persuasion (Seduction) 3, Socialize (Dress Balls, Bars) 3, Streetwise (Drug Dealers) 2, Subterfuge (Lying, Misdirection) 2

Merits: Allies (Drug Dealer), Contacts (Night Club Owners, Drug Dealers, Bent Police Officer) 3, Harvest (Emotions) 3, New Identity 4, Mantle (Spring) 3, Resources 3, Toxin Resistance 2, Retainers 2, Token 3.

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Gluttony

Health: 8

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 10

Wyrd: 4 (Glamour 13/4, 10 Goblin Fruits, 7 Pledges)

Contracts: Elements (Plants) 3, Fleeting Spring 3, Eternal Spring 3, Mirror 2, Dream 2, Vain Glory 3

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Persuasion), Oath of the Rose and Thorn (Retainers)

Token: Hedge Spun Raiment 2, Ace in the Hole 1

Tybalt

Quote: *"The cat shall have his cream."*, *"You dear are a whore, and worse, a syphilitic one!"*

Background: Tybalt was born in Venice in 1746. The Venetian Empire was now nothing but a rotting city where princes and nobles of Europe came to gamble and go whoring. Here Tybalt was a young boy of 7, running through the streets. An urchin, thief and a troublemaker. It was one night, when the moon was high in the sky over the city that Tybalt was once more fleeing the night watchmen, his pockets filled with ducats. He rounded the corner and did not realize a coin fell to the pavement, rolling through an archway marked with the sign of two crossed keys. Looking for an escape, Tybalt fled down this path.

Tybalt was lost and the Hedge grew tall and enveloping over the young boy's head, growing darker and darker. Behind him keys rustled and jangled and before him was the Zookeeper. The strange figure was thin and his face was like that of a magpie. Those dark beady eyes regarded the young man, and he produced a whip, made of a long piece of rawhide. He lashed out at the boy and directed him deeper into the Hedge.

Tybalt worked for many years in the menagerie of the Zookeeper, cleaning the cages of the strange creatures that the Keeper maintained. Tybalt and others like him were in turn kept caged together, like the animals that they looked after for the Zookeeper.

But one day Tybalt, now more feline than man, and some of his fellow captives made a break for it, the Keeper chasing them with whip and nets. But Tybalt was free at last, his feline speed and agility lending him the skills needed to escape the Hedge and the pursuit of his Keeper.

Tybalt arrived in Venice 1994. For him only 10 years had passed, and Venice was now a modern tourist city. He survived on the streets, suffering from future shock, making money as a street performer and from employing his skills as a thief.

Tybalt was picked up by the Freehold, and the Vernal Duke gave him a home, teaching him how to live in these modern times. Over the years Tybalt became less like the scared young boy he once was, and is now a confident trickster, aloof and alluring. He is considered one of the best thieves in the city and one of the best performers of simple magic tricks.

Description: Tybalt is lithe, with a small nose and with scruffy hair. He has almond-shaped eyes and a streak of grey through his mousy brown hair. He tends to wear a frock coat and ruffled shirts, the pockets of which are slightly torn. He has the look of a gypsy to him. His Mien shows his cat-like form. His ears are pointed, his eyes almond-shaped and double-lidded. He has a tail, and fur sprouts out from under his clothes. His teeth are more pointed and he has a moustache of fine whiskers. The Mantle of Spring manifests as a cool, fresh, breeze, the smell after the rain and the blue light of the skies above Venice.

Storytelling Hints: Tybalt is a trickster, a rebel, a thief and untrustworthy. He is aloof, and theft to him is a game. He mocks those who are foolish enough not to watch their possessions and mocks those who fall into his traps. He enjoys the spoils of life and sneers at those who are constantly at work.

Apparent Age: Mid 20s

Court: Spring

Seeming: Beasts

Kith: Hunterheart

Keeper: The Zookeeper

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts (Forgery) 2, Investigation 2, Occult 2, Politics 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 3 (Run, Climb), Brawl (Dirty Fighting) 3, Larceny 3, Stealth (Move Quietly) 3, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Ambidextrous 3, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Contacts (Fence, Antiques Dealer) 2, Harvest (Pledge) 2, Mantle (Spring) 2, Resources 2, Token 2.

Willpower: 4

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Greed

Health: 7

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Speed: 12 (14)

Wyrd: 3 (Glamour 12/3, 7 Goblin Fruits, 6 Pledges)

Contracts: Fang and Talon (Cats) 3, Fleeting Spring 2, Mirror 1, Smoke 3, Dream 2, Goblin Contracts: Fair Entrance 2

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Persuasion), Oath of the Rose and Thorn (Retainers)

Token: Trifles: 3 Bilefruit, 3 Thimbleblack

Blue Monday

Quote: “*What delights can I perform for you tonight?*”, “*Delicious!*”

Background: Blue Monday was born in Russia in the 1980s. She was born to a family of gangsters, and her father treated her like a princess. She was protected by his men and at the age of 16 was sought after by the young men in the gang. However none were good enough for her. At least that is what her father said.

Her life was a lonely existence, kept from the family business, treated to whatever she wanted, driven about in expensive cars and dressed in high fashion. Her mother was the perfect example of vanity, and her father an example of wrath. However, through those young men in the business, she gained an idea

of what the family business was, and after leaving school she began to take more of an active role, acting as her father’s PA and advisor.

It was at the age of 19 she killed her first person. She was at home when an assassin from a rival mob broke into the family home. By sheer fortune she came upon the trespasser, and with the assailant confused, she was able to take the shot. The assassin fell back, bleeding from the chest, and in his death throes he smeared a bloody hand print on a painting of a winter scene. That following January Blue was on a night out and met a handsome man, he called himself Jakob. In fact he was one of the Gentry, Jack Frost. By some means Blue had broken a pledge of some form or caused a key to be turned. Either way she was stolen away by this Fae, and a fetch, made from ice and snow, was left to lead her life.

Blue suffered a duration of servitude. Raped and forced to look after the kitchens of Jack Frost, her heart became just as hard and cold as the domain she had been taken to.

Her escape, back to Moscow, was enabled by tricking the Fae to drink a warming elixir. With her master paralyzed, she was able to escape. She returned to the mortal realm and found 10 years had gone by. Her other self, her fetch, was now head of the household, having killed her parents. Worse her fetch noticed her return and chased her from Moscow, but not before Blue had stolen back some of her inheritance.

Blue journeyed to Venice, having passed through the Balkans looking for a permanent home. Arriving in Venice, she established herself with the local mob and the Spring Court. Her contacts and influence with the Russian and Eastern European Mafia was of use to the House of Spring and the Freehold, and so Blue Monday, as she came to be known, grew in influence over the years until she was bestowed the position of Sage Escort. She had established a strong foothold in the sex trade in Venice and Mestre and through it was able to indulge the needs of the House of Spring.

Blue Monday joined Malvolio’s motley

out of having a similar outlook on life and similar goals. However Blue Monday is not as politically motivated, and she is focused on simply maintaining her position within the city and the power it gives her. She is unaware of Malvolio's real goal of bringing down the Court of Carnival.

Description: Blue Monday is 5' 4'', and obviously Eastern European, with wide hips and is voluptuous. She is apparently emotionless, or at least does not display her emotions. She is always well dressed in the Milan designs. Her Mien shows her skin as being tinged blue, her hair even darker, her eyes completely white, and her nails like icicles. Her mantle of spring manifests as melt water, a touch of frost, bluebells and the smell of vineyard blossom, and takes the appearance of this blossom.

Storytelling Hints: Blue Monday is focused almost entirely on her role as Sage Escort and actively seeks to bring the desires of the House and the Freehold to the fore. For this reason she is fun-loving and is something of a matchmaker and swinger, enjoying numerous sexual partners. She does not like being labeled a slut or whore, and competes against the Columbine and Columbina, and the rival motleys to the Hundred Masks, and she hopes to hold the most extravagant orgies.

Apparent Age: Mid 30s

Court: Spring

Seeming: Elemental

Kith: Snowskin

Keeper: Jack Frost

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Crafts (Glass Blowing) 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 3, Occult (Hedge, Hedge Fruits) 3, Science 3

Physical Skills: Brawl 2, Drive (Boats) 1, Larceny 3, Stealth 2

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Persuasion (Fast-Talking) 3, Socialize (Bars) 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Barfly 1, Contacts (Bartender, Market Stall Spice Seller) 2, Court Goodwill (Autumn) 1, Harvest (Hedge Bounty) 3, Hollow: Size 2,

Amenities 2, Doors 1, Iron Stomach 2, Language (Italian) 1, Mantle (Spring) 2, Resources 2.

Willpower: 4

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Wrath

Health: 8

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Wyrd: 3 (Glamour 12/3, 7 Goblin Fruits, 6 Pledges)

Contracts: Artifice 3, Eternal Spring 3, Dream 3

Pledges: Good Neighbors Pact (Jager), Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Survival), Commendation (Vernal Duke), Commendation (Doge)

Other members of the Hundred Masks are Mercutio and Paulo Vino Vino.

Mercutio, a member of the House of Spring and a Fairest Dancer, is also the House of Spring Joyeux. He dances for the pleasure of the Freehold as well as bestowing small favors on those in need of a little cheering up. He is kind-hearted but not a pushover. He dislikes those who moan far too much. Some consider him to be nosey, boisterous and simply annoying.

Paulo Vino Vino is also of the House of Spring and an Ogre Farwalker. He acts as the muscle and security for the motley. His size is massive, and he is a furry beast of the mountains. He is a drunkard and brutish, though some just say he is enjoying himself. However, in his drunken rage, he exhibits his sexist views and enjoyment of just smashing things up.

THE HARLEQUINS OF CARNELIAN

The Hundred Masks is not the only motley devoted to pleasure. There are others, and in the Court of Carnival they are collectively known as 'Stocking Groups', after the term used for those groups of men that would compete in the organization of the festivities for Carnival.

The Harlequins of Carnelian is led by the self-titled Count Carnelian, the city Columbine, and one of those officially tasked

with organizing the balls and parties of the Freehold. His motley are equally devoted to the task and take the role seriously and do not appreciate interference by those of the House of Spring who have not been appointed to the task by the Doge.

Where the parties of the Hundred Masks are decadent affairs, those of Carnelian are more formal and follow the etiquette of the Venetian courts of old.

Count Carnelian

Quote: *“We would be honored by your appearance in Court”, “When one is in Venice, one must feel it in their blood”*

Background: Carnelian would have some think he is from Spain or Naples or even London. He pretends to be a lord, an earl or some duke. In reality Carnelian’s history is more mundane.

Carnelian was born to a poor family in the slums of Rome during the end of the 19th century. While his family slaved away as bakers and maids, he was unique. He could sing. And for this he gained the education and freedom his family always wanted for their children. He joined the local church choir, took lessons and by the age of 12 was a local celebrity as people would come to hear him and the choir sing to the heavens.

His singing would be a gift and a curse. It raised his family out of poverty, but also gained him the unwanted attentions one of the Gentry, Vzaldizak, Boyar of the 31 Crystal Mountains. Stolen away by the Fae, chased down by the Boyar, who rode upon a stallion made of onyx, Carnelian was taken away to one of the crystal castles. The realms of the Boyar sparkled with such intensity, a mind-fracturing spectrum. But the Boyar needed something to fill one of his castles with sound, with music, and Carnelian was fashioned into a canary, with wings of yellow ruby shards. For over 300 years Carnelian sang endlessly for the Boyar and his guests. He sang the Boyar to sleep. He sang for their grand balls. He sang and sang and sang. His lungs bled and still he sang. But that was his gift. And with it his means of escape, as he sang the Boyar to

sleep, other changelings helped Carnelian escape.

Carnelian took flight, free from the cage of malachite that the Boyar kept him in, his song keeping the Boyar asleep long enough for him to leave the confines of the castle.

Escaping to the Hedge, and through it back to the real world, Carnelian found himself in Venice. His song had been heard by the Doge, and he had drawn Carnelian to the Lion’s Tail trod and to the Fairy City.

Carnelian returned to the mortal realm in 1963. He had only aged a few years during his captivity, and so he needed help getting to know the current age. One thing that did capture his interest was modern media, and with the help of a new identity, Carnelian has become a locally known singer and radio host, most well known for his opera performances.

Carnelian, due to influence in mortal affairs and his love of performance and the Carnival, was bestowed the position of Columbine, and has held the position for over 30 years. Along with the Columbina, he organizes many of the balls and court events for the Doge, his primary concern being the well-being of the guests, the choice of location, and the entertainment. For this reason he often performs at court, choosing to sing songs that are most relevant to the concerns of the court.

Carnelian, even at his late age, is still a notorious womanizer, though he is considered dashing and gentlemanly.

Carnelian, though easy-going and welcoming, dislikes those who break with court etiquette. For this reason he cannot stand the interference of Malvolio in court business, or worse, Malvolio acting above his station. Though Carnelian and Malvolio are both of the House of Spring, Carnelian is seen as the superior and the true representative of Spring interests with the Court of Carnival.

Carnelian’s motley, predominantly drawn from the House of Spring, were chosen for their ability to perform. Carnelian chooses not to make his home at the House of Spring, instead renting an apartment just above a music school where he may listen to new talent.

Description: Count Carnelian is an anachronism. He dresses like a dandy of the 19th century, wearing fine brocade coats, his hair a mop of curls. He adorns his cravat with fancy gem-encrusted pins, and he wears many rings. Of course the most predominant color in his attire is the canary yellow.

His Mien shows his skin to be a sallow grey, with his hair a blazing yellow, and his eyes framed by glowing feathers. His fingers are tipped with fine talon-like nails.

His Mantle manifests as birdsong and the smell of freshly cut grass, with a shimmering of golden light.

Storytelling Hints: Carnelian is a gentleman, following etiquette and attending to the needs of his guests. He is discerning in his choice of food, wine and clothes, and the decorations for the parties he hosts. He is considered something of a food lover and will often eat all courses presented to him during a meal while others would have finished eating or skipped courses during the same meal. Carnelian is not known for loud outbursts, but he has clever and witty discussions and put-downs.

Carnelian hopes one day to be elevated to the position of Doge, knowing that with it will come total freedom from his Keeper. He fears that each night he performs his Keeper is in the audience, but Carnelian knows that he must sing, for if he didn't then his Keeper will have stolen more than his life, but his song as well.

Carnelian is also actively researching the mysteries surrounding the Red Priest, Vivaldi, hoping that within the music of Vivaldi there are more clues to Venice and the nature of the Gentry.

Apparent Age: Early 30s

Court: Spring

Seeming: Beasts

Kith: Windwing

Keeper: The Boyar

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 5, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Investigation 2, Occult (Pledges) 3, Politics (Freehold) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics (Leaping) 3, Brawl 2, Larceny 1, Stealth 1, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression (Singing) 4, Persuasion (Seduction, Fast talk) 3, Socialize (Dress Balls, Bars) 4, Subterfuge (Lying, Misdirection) 2

Merits: Allies (Radio Station chief), Contacts (Theatre owner, Bar owner) 2, Harvest (Emotions) 4, Hollow (size 3, amenities 4, doors 2, wards 3) New Identity 4, Mantle (Spring) 3, Mantle (Carnival) 3, Resources 3, Retainers 2, Token 4, Fame 2.

Willpower: 7

Clarity: 6

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Pride

Health: 8

Initiative: 7

Defense: 4

Speed: 12

Wyrd: 5 (Glamour 14/5, 15 Goblin Fruits, 8 Pledges)

Contracts: Mirror 4, Dream 3, Fang and Talon (Birds) 4, Fleeting Spring 3, Eternal Spring 3, Vain Glory 2, Carnival 3

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Expression), Commendation (The Doge), The Knight's Oath (The Doge)

Lady Murano

Quote: "7 years bad luck is the least of your worries!", "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.", "I only show what your soul reflects.", "My art is just a reflection of the truth that is all about us. I just make it clearer for you to see."

Background: Lady Murano is one of the oldest of the Lost of Venice and also comes from one of the oldest time periods of history. She remembers little of her true life, such is the effect of future shock, but what is known is that she was from medieval Italy and was the daughter of a priest who angered one of the Fae known as Queen Bathory, The Drinker of 99 Hearts. Lady Murano was to be tormented by acting as a mirror for the Queen. Every act she committed, Murano would

reflect and repeat as entertainment for the Bloody Queen.

Murano's escape came when she was able to show Bathory her weakness, her own stain of humanity. Disgusted in what she saw Bathory threw the mirror, and thus Murano, from her tower in Arcadia, smashing the object and freeing Murano. The young woman, now with skin of reflective gossamer, fled, before the Queen changed her mind.

Returning to the mortal world, Lady Murano was picked up by a group of privateers in the Hedge before being rescued by a motley. She was taken back to the Freehold of Florence, and it was here that she was taken in by the Spring Court. She could see into the hearts of those about her. She could see their pain, and she now wanted to bring out their dreams.

Fleeing Florence after a war between the Courts of Summer and Autumn, Lady Murano, taking the name only on her arrival, came to Venice hearing much about the Court of Decadence, the Court of Carnival. She brought her reputation as a form of psychopomp.

As her reputation increased, and so her ability to guide others in their pursuit of their desires, Murano, an important informant and director for parties that revolved around particular individuals. She became adept at working out who to invite and who not to invite to balls and gatherings. She also always knew what gifts to give to guests and what music would entertain them. For all these skills Carnelian invited Murano to join his motley, and she has been a member for 15 years now.

Murano's main rival is the Sage Escort, Blue Monday, and the two often try to out-do each other with gifts for a particular member of the Freehold. Murano is also in competition with members of the House of Autumn, for amongst the House of Spring she is one of the most knowledgeable in occult lore.

Lady Murano works in one of the many shops that sells glass objects made in Murano.

Description: Lady Murano is tall, blond, and has plain features. For this reason

she tends to wear a lot of makeup and extravagant clothes. She of course wears a lot of gems, with the color choice depending on her mood. Her mien shows her as being made of shimmering glass, her facial features now gone and just formed from the reflections about her. Her mantle manifests as droplets of dew on her mirror skin, and the light shining through her in shades of blues and yellows.

Storytelling Hints: Lady Murano is charismatic, helpful and attentive. She is a good listener and is observant. However, she is also superstitious and quick to chastise those who would foolishly commit acts that would bring the ire of the Gentry or other beings.

Apparent Age: Mid 40s

Court: Spring

Seeming: Elemental

Kith: Manikin

Keeper: The Bloody Queen Bathory

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Crafts (Glass, Jewelry) 3, Investigation 3, Occult 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Larceny 3, Stealth (Hide in crowd) 2, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Empathy 4, Expression (Violin) 3, Persuasion 3, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Contacts (Art dealer, Book collector) 2, Harvest (Pledge) 2, Mantle (Spring) 3, Resources 3, Striking Looks 2, Token 2.

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Greed

Health: 7

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Speed: 11

Wyrd: 4 (Glamour 13/4, 5 Goblin Fruits, 7 Pledges)

Contracts: Mirror 4, Fleeting Spring 4, Artifice 4, Vain Glory 3, Elements (Glass) 3, Carnival 1

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Expression), Commendation (The Doge)

Other members of the Harlequins of

Carnelian are Aurora, a Fairest Shining One, another courtier and who is the eyes of Carnelian, no matter how obvious she may be. Amaretto is a Winter Courtier, and Carnelian's most trusted spy. Another Elemental, a Woodblood, Amaretto is suspicious and speaks and writes in riddles.

THE KEEPERS OF THE IMAGINARIUM

The Imaginarium, as they are known, are a fellow Stocking gang of the Harlequins. They have a friendly rivalry and follow the laws of Carnival closely. The Imaginarium, led by the Columbina, Silver Heart, are devoted to their art of entertainment, and claim one of the smaller theaters as their territory. However, they are also known for traveling to other Freeholds in the region to spread the word of Carnival.

The majority of their entertainment takes the form of morality plays, designed to let the audience realize their own fears and desires, and embrace their lost humanity.

The Imaginarium takes their work seriously and takes great offence to those that plagiarize their work or use their shows as opportunities for other actions that the Imaginarium has no interest in.

Silver Heart

Quote: *"We are tonight's entertainment!"*, *"I have a story to tell you all."*

Background: Silver Heart was born in Paris in the 1980s. She was raised in a family of musicians and taught to sing and dance. However, she did not adhere to the rules of the theatre where she trained and gained the attention of the fiend, the Creeping Silence. This foul creature was jealous of the beauty it saw and desired the words that were sung.

Silver Heart was stolen away and taken to a realm of darkness and pain. She was forced to dance to entertain the entity of darkness. In the caves of the Silence's realm, she danced in the deep underground hall where little light shone. She danced until her feet

bled, and her legs caved in to tiredness. And when she could dance no more, the Silence would take her to his bed to enjoy her body, indulging in the weak flesh.

Her escape from the realm of tunnels and darkness was by chance, as other pets of the Silence, filthy goblins and Lost of the darkness, made their escape having finally mapped the tunnels. And though she had trouble navigating the pitch black caves, her grace was what allowed her to escape, for the Silence was blind.

Her escape back to Paris showed that 10 years had gone by. Her life had been taken by a fetch, made from discarded ticket stubs and crushed glass. Her fetch had fallen out of ballet and now was living a shadow of her life, married in a loveless marriage, her family disappointed in her abandoning her future in dance. Disgusted with what had become of her life, Silver Heart found work at the theatre while learning the ways of the Lost in the local Freehold. She would find joy once more in her life, in her life's passion, and in turn make her fetch's life a living hell.

For the next two years she followed her fetch's every move, seeing the creature indulge in an affair and steal from her parents. She finally struck when her fetch was alone, waiting along the river bank near Notre Dame. She moved like the wind and dragged the mockery of her life into the waters, drowning the thing and making it nothing more than the scraps that it had been fashioned from.

Knowing that her family were distraught with the loss of their daughter and the prodigy that she once was, Silver Heart invited them to the theatre where she once more performed. She appeared to them as if she was a ghost, one lasting memory of what they knew and loved her for.

Following the death of her fetch, Silver Heart traveled from Paris to Vienna and then onto Venice where she performed for the lords and ladies of the modern nights, forming her own motley of performers, knowing now that her calling in life was to remind mortals and Lost alike that life is to be enjoyed, and that through her art she can do this.

Silver Heart as Columbina is in charge

of organizing balls, parties and court with the Columbine, Count Carnelian. She is even rumored to be romantically involved with the Autumn Courtier, the Fool of the First Frost.

Description: Silver Heart has fine austier features. Her eyes are deep in shadow and her hair is an ash blond. Her legs are long and slender and her feet are equally small and pointed. She tends to wear loose gowns allowing for the greatest amount of freedom of movement.

Her Mien shows her true elven features. Her eyes are completely black and almond-shaped, and her figure is even more slender and sensuous. Her hair is more like fine spider webs.

Her Mantle manifests as light music, violins and harps, layered with hushed, sensuous moans of pleasure.

Storytelling Hints: Silver Heart is a performer and so is the centre of attention, not because of her words but because of her grace. She is polite and eloquent. However, on stage her calm grace become fiery, passionate, striking movements and gestures, commanding the attention of her audience.

Her main goal is to empower the Lost of the Freehold with passion so that they may strive against the hardships present to them. She aims to inspire hope and resolution of the challenges facing the Freehold.

Apparent Age: Early 30s

Court: Spring

Seeming: Fairest

Kith: Dancer

Keeper: The Creeping Silence

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Crafts 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 3, Occult (Illusions) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics (Dance) 5, Brawl 3, Larceny 1, Stealth 2

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression (Dance) 3, Intimidation (Alien) 2, Persuasion (Seduction) 4, Socialize 2, Subterfuge (Lying) 3

Merits: Ambidextrous, Contacts (Dance Instructor, Choreographer) 2, Fleet of Foot 3, Harvest (Emotions) 2, New Identity 4, Mantle (Spring) 3,

Mantle (Carnival) 3, Resources 2, Hollow (size 3, amenities 2, wards 2, doors 2)

Willpower: 8

Clarity: 7

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Envy

Health: 8

Initiative: 9

Defense: 3

Speed: 12

Wyrd: 4 (Glamour 13/4, 10 Goblin Fruits, 7 Pledges)

Contracts: Dream 3, Mirror 4, Vainglory 3, Fleeting Spring 3, Carnival 3

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Athletics)

Oriel Paris

Quote: *Not a sound as he pretends to be trapped in a box.*

Background: Oriel Paris was born in Verona and was a quiet young man. He kept to himself, cared for his studies at school, and was generally considered a quiet but stern individual. What was not known was that he was abused at home by his stepfather. Everyday saw another beating and more scars on his back from the cane that cracked his back.

This all changed when he looked at the ancient Roman statues that still stand in some places in the city and wished to not feel pain like these everlasting figures.

His wish that night was granted and the Fae lord, Rosariosso of the Red Lion on the Seas, came to him and offered him what he desired most. All he wanted in return for his gift was that Oriel would never speak a word. Oriel accepted, and Rosariosso fashioned from a lump of clay Oriel's fetch.

Oriel and Rosariosso made their way to Arcadia and to the manor kept by Rosariosso. It was here that Oriel was given his gift, and he was transformed into a statue to adorn the landscaped gardens kept by the Fae lord.

Oriel stood there for centuries, watching the Fae lord dine with guests, attended to by Fairest changeling servants, hunting his Beast creatures, and having his

Wizened slaves work on the expansive palace.

But Oriel did escape, remembering his lost life and finding the will to remember that his body can move and is alive.

Returning to Verona, Oriel discovered that he was a wanted man. His fetch had murdered his stepfather and gone on the run, leaving his mother alone and brutally scarred from the ordeal.

Knowing that he could not stay in Verona, Oriel fled to Venice, taking the name of Oriel Paris, and joining the House of Spring after initially being protected by the House of Summer.

Oriel used his memories as means to find work, becoming a mime artist. Before he was taken by the Fae, he had wanted to become a physicist, but now that would never be possible.

Oriel now tries to express himself as much as possible, since it was his very expressions that were denied him for centuries in Arcadia. He also has a dislike for those who try to deny their own emotions, and so looks down on all members of the House of Winter.

Description: Oriel Paris is a tall, atheletic young man, with a physique like a Roman gladiator, reflecting that he once was in fact a living statue. His eyes are cold and grey, and his features are classical.

His Mien betrays his true form. His skin is as white as alabaster, his eyes are nothing but white stone.

His Mantle manifests as small vines that grow across his body.

Storytelling Hints: Oriel Paris, though a mime, is not a quiet person, and will indulge in drink and food. He hates those that do not express themselves properly, and is known for his abrupt insults.

Apparent Age: Mid 40s

Court: Spring

Seeming: Elemental

Kith: Earthbones

Keeper: Rossariosso the Red Lion

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Computer 2, Crafts (Art) 2, Investigation 3, Occult 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 5 (Weights, Dance), Brawl (Boxing) 3, Stealth (Move Quietly) 2

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression (Mime) 3, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Fighting Fitness: Boxing 3, Iron Stamina 2, Harvest (Pledge) 2, Mantle (Spring) 2, Resources 2, Strong Back, Token 2.

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 8

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Wrath

Health: 9

Initiative: 6

Defense: 2

Speed: 10

Wyrd: 3 (Glamour 12/3, 7 Goblin Fruits, 6 Pledges)

Contracts: Elements (Earth) 4, Stone 3, Eternal Spring 3, Mirror 2, Carnival 1

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Athletics)

Other members of the Keepers of the Imaginarium are San Serif, Samson Greyback and Madam Canvas.

San Serif is a Antiquarian Darkling of the House of Spring. He is well read and snobbish about literature. He also acts as the narrator for the many plays and shows that the motley performs.

Samson is a House of Summer Beast of the Broadback Seeming. He is a large gorilla of a man and is the motley's strongman and bouncer. He is good humored, boastful and also serves as a Crimson Knight for the House of Spring, meaning in times of conflict he leads the motley rather than Silver Heart.

Madam Canvas is another of the House of Spring and is an Artist of the Wizened Seeming. She is in charge of designing and painting the backgrounds for their plays. She is also skilled in painting and drawing. She is diligent and dislikes loud noises, something that is related to her durance with the Fae.

THE LORDS OF LOVE

The Lords of Love are without doubt the most decadent of the entire House of Spring. They expect to be properly respected

by those of other Seemings and Houses, and they simply wish to indulge their senses and desires. The entire motley is made of changelings from the Fairest Seeming.

The Lords of Love present themselves as being the most influential in the desires and emotions of the mortals of Venice, and they go from party to party as if they are celebrities. They even have an entourage of mortals who hope that being in their presence will allow some of their magic to rub off on them. They dress in fine clothes, eat at expensive restaurants and associate with the celebrities and entrepreneurs who come to make money in the city.

The Lords of Love are not that well loved in the Freehold. They are seen as prejudiced, aloof and patronizing. They see those of other Seemings as nothing but pathetic creatures and ugly.

Led by the charismatic Madam Rose Blood, the motley operates from rooms rented in a hotel on the Lido, where they may wine and dine guests. They are also known to have at least one large yacht where they host parties.

Because of their prominence within the Freehold, and within mortal society, they have a number of mortal retainers. They are also well known for keeping contacts with the Vampires of Mestre and the so called Prince of the Veneto.

Madam Rose Blood

Quote: “Show some respect you filthy dog!”, “So I was talking with Angelina... yes as in Bragelina...”

Background: Rose Blood, or simply Rosaline when she was mortal, was taken when she was 23. She was out on the lush green hillsides of California when she was taken by the Fae, leaving behind her friends who accepted the fetch that was left behind.

Rosaline was taken by Mandrake who planted her and let her grow into a beautiful flower. His scissors would cut her flesh and prune her stems to make her the most beautiful flower possible. And for all the pain she experienced in the endless greenhouse of

Mandrake, she could not scream or cry as she became one of the docile flowers.

Her escape came as she remembered what it was like to run on the green hills of Orange County. With the memories came the strength of her legs, and she was able to shake free from the soil and find her escape from the greenhouse.

Returning to the mortal world she found that for her family little time had passed. Her fetch had given up on all hope of a modeling career while her boyfriend was now mentally abused by the charlatan.

Rosaline wept. She could not deal with her life having been stolen from her, and so she fled East. It was her new gifts that gained her popularity in New York, and from there she continued to Europe, having already gained contacts and allies within the film and media business. Her need to go to Europe was prompted by her fetch, who had been snapped up by a TV show and now was filming in New York. People would comment on their similarity which frustrated Rose Blood.

In Venice, which Rose chose as it allowed her to maintain her links to the media, she started up a small promotional company that also acted as an agency for those who wished to film in the city. She also began to form a small motley of changelings who were also similarly involved with the media and public. Her past experiences with the Freehold of New York led to her picking only Fairest changelings, and even then those of the House of Spring. In New York she had suffered from being betrayed and used by Lost of other Seemings and Courts. This was something she was not keen to have repeated. It also did not help that she viewed all other Seemings as less than human, something she now desires to be more than ever since her abduction.

Description: Madam Rose Blood is very tall and slender with a perfect figure. She has the palest of skin and her eyes are a shade of violet. She tends to wear quite fashionable clothing, usually the latest trends from Milan.

Her Mien shows that her lips and nails are a vibrant red and thorny vines creep from her clothing to wrap about her arms and legs. She has the heady scent of roses and jasmine.

Her Mantle is expressed as a further enhancement of her mien, leading to all those about her feeling overwhelmed by the scents and colors.

Storytelling Hints: Madam Rose Blood is aloof, patronizing, prejudiced and spiteful. She desperately wants to maintain her beauty and return to being fully mortal like the very celebrities she works with. She hates being reminded of her Arcadian nature by the more inhuman Lost of the city.

Madam Rose is not beyond using seduction and blackmail to get what she desires. She is also knowledgeable in the occult and the nature of Vampires, or Kindred as they prefer to call themselves. She secretly has a Vampire lover whom enjoys her Glamour-infused blood.

Apparent Age: Early 30s

Court: Spring

Seeming: Fairest

Kith: Flowering

Keeper: Mandrake

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Computer 3, Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Politics (Freehold, Spring Court) 3

Physical Skills: Brawl 1, Larceny 3, Stealth 2, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Empathy (Lies) 4, Intimidation (Public Humiliation) 3, Persuasion (Seduction) 4, Socialize (Dress Balls, Bars, Celebrities) 3, Streetwise (Drug Dealers, Prostitutes) 4, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Allies (Pimps) 2, Contacts (Hotel Owner, Paparazzi) 2, Harvest (Emotions) 4, New Identity 4, Mantle (Spring) 3, Resources 5, Toxin Resistance 2, Retainers 2, Striking Looks 4

Willpower: 5

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Envy

Health: 7

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 10

Wyrd: 4 (Glamour 13/4, 10 Goblin Fruits, 7 Pledges)

Contracts: Elements (Plants) 3, Fleeting Spring 4, Mirror 2, Vain Glory 3

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Persuasion), Oath of the Rose and Thorn (Retainers), Commendation (Verdant Duke), Commendation (Doge)

Derangements: Narcissism

Ao Run

Quote: "A wise man once said..."

Background: Ao Run was born in the heartland of China. He was brought up amongst the peasants, but this betrayed his true history, that his bloodline was in fact the last remnants of the Qing dynasty.

He was brought up to help on the farm, and when his chores were finished he would practice kung fu, hoping that he would be accepted into the local school.

It was this desire to rise up out of poverty, his natural skill as a fighter, and his noble blood that led to him being taken by one of the Gentry, The Emperor of the 12 Kingdoms of Fire.

In the palace ground of the dragon-like Fae, Ao Run trained with over a hundred other students in the ways of dragon kung fu. The training was strict and painful. He had his hands thrust into flaming cauldrons of sand, backs lacerated by whips, and forced to eat almost rock-like food and drink blood.

Years of training continued until Ao Run was ready to be taken outside of the palace, to act as a guard for his master as they traveled the Hedge. It was during a conflict between his Keeper and his Keeper's rival, the two meeting along a trod in the Hedge, that Ao Run took his chance to escape, fleeing through the Hedge, pursued by the Chinese Hounds kept by his Keeper.

But Ao Run never made it back to China and instead found himself in Venice, emerging from a door near Marco Polo's house.

It took some time for Ao Run to get

used to living in Venice. He still struggles with the language and so chooses to speak in English. Ao Run originally fell in with the House of Summer. His martial arts skills were spotted, and so he was used as a minor soldier for the House. However, he fell out of love with the House. He was tired of fighting and instead wanted to focus on just enjoying life. For too long he had been in training, hardening his body. So Ao Run left the House of Summer, and through temptation put in place by Madam Rose, joined the Lords of Love. Ao Run represented to Madam Rose the beauty of the human figure through diligent training, and Madam Rose brought out Ao Run's own love of his body and the pleasure it could bring.

Ao Run now acts as a master of arms for the House of Spring, but is primarily a practitioner of martial arts and other arts that give health and pleasure benefits. He is skilled in tai chi, yoga, tantric sex methods and more. To promote this he works at a spa hotel on the Lido. Celebrities and the rich come to his lessons and Ao Run uses it as an opportunity to indulge himself, having one night stands with those women and men that desire his body.

Description: Ao Run has the perfect physic. His body is athletic and taut with muscles. He has short, cropped, black hair and an olive complexion. He face is fierce and his eyes are a vivid green.

Ao Run's Mien displays his skin to be the same color, but covered in scales. His nails are dark claws and his eyes are more reptilian.

His Mantle manifests as the smell of incense, opium and strong tea.

Storytelling Hints: Ao Run is focused, both on perfection and physical pleasure. He feels the needs to maintain Ying and Yang balance. However, that is not to say that he is always calm, and he can explode into passionate rages. He has a rivalry with Cold Rosaline of the House of Summer.

Apparent Age: Mid 20s

Court: Spring

Seeming: Fairest

Kith: Draconic

Keeper: The Emperor of the 12 Kingdoms of Fire

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 3, Occult 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3 (Yoga), Brawl (Kung Fu) 4, Stealth 2, Weaponry (Staff) 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 2, Socialize 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Ambidextrous 3, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Contacts (Celebrity therapist) 2, Mantle (Spring) 2, Resources 3, New Identity 4, Fighting Fitness: Martial Arts 3.

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Wrath

Health: 9

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Speed: 12

Wyrd: 2 (Glamour 11/2, 5 Goblin Fruits, 5 Pledges)

Contracts: Stone 3, Fleeting Spring 2, Mirror 1, Smoke 3, Elements (Fire) 2

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Persuasion), Commendation (Verdant Duke)

Other members of the Lords of Love are Aurora, a Bright One Fairest and escort, Lily Black, another Flowering Fairest, Madam Rose Blood's protégé and a radio news reporter, and Balthazar, a Dancer Fairest and performer at one of the theatres.

THE EMERALD HORN

The Emerald Horn is the name of the motley that the Vernal Duke is a member of, and is in fact the leader of.

The Emerald Horn, like the other stocking gangs, are committed to pushing the aims of the House of Spring. They represent the entire season in the Court of Carnival and try to ensure that the rulings of the Doge do not impact upon the members of the House of Spring.

The Emerald Horn is made of the

closest allies of the Vernal Duke, and they act as his council, protection and officers with regard to the action and laws of the House of Spring.

In order to maintain their position, the Emerald Horn do not rule with an iron fist and are instead involved in a sort of ongoing PR action where they try to appease all members of the House of Spring.

The primary concern of the House of Spring is the harvesting and nurturing of the emotion of desire and using this to safeguard the House against the other seasons and the Gentry. It is only through forgetting the past and rediscovering the pleasure of the life they were denied, that the Lost can be free, and this freedom is the goal of the Vernal Duke and his Emerald Horn.

In order to perform their task the Emerald Horn cares for the Ca' da Mosto, the home of the House of Spring, and it is also here that the House of Spring and the Emerald Horn hold a number of parties for the rich and famous, harvesting Glamour from the revelers. The House provides its courtiers with the tools to pursue their desires.

The Vernal Duke, Ayther

Quote: *"It is my desire to make your desires real.", "Carnival may rule but this is the season of Spring, and so I will let passions run true regardless of what the Doge dictates."*

Background: The Vernal Duke, Ayther, was an extreme sportsman. He grew up amongst the mountains of Austria, and it was here that by the age of 25 he was already an accomplished skydiver, base-jumper and flight suit diver. He had a young girlfriend, and they already had a daughter who was just a few months old.

It was while scaling the cliff face, ready for another jump, Ayther was taken. From out of the mountain came the Fae lord, Kaligostro. Kaligostro rode upon a great lizard of bronze, and appeared much like a Roman god. He chased Ayther over the mountainside, his beast grabbing Ayther in its jaws and taking him back within the mountain.

In Arcadia Ayther was fashioned into the wind. Kaligostro was a raging warrior. His realm was reminiscent of ancient Roman cities, and Ayther was set the task to watch over the city, looking out for those invading Gentry.

Ayther soon forgot himself, becoming nothing more than a thunderous storm. However, it was as Ayther watched Kaligostro throw from his tower another of his used-up lovers, that Ayther remembered what it was like to glide from the mountainside. Ayther's humanity awoke, and the winds gathered and took shape, reforming his lost body.

Ayther fled from Arcadia and found his way back to mountainside in time to witness his fetch gliding down the mountain. Ayther couldn't understand what had happened.

Upon returning home and watching his doppelganger, Ayther realized that his life had been stolen and an entire year had passed by. His fetch had assumed his life, but clearly at the expense of the wellbeing of his family.

Ayther was distraught and fled. He lived on the street before being picked up by a motley. Ayther joined the Autumn Court, seeking to find out all he could about the Fae and how to take his revenge upon them and reclaim his life.

Ayther eventually took revenge upon the fetch, but it was savage as he murdered the creature before his family. Disgusted with himself, he fled from Austria and made his way to the Veneto. He joined the Freehold of Venice and the House of Autumn. He hoped to find some way of turning back time and undoing all that had happened. But his research was thwarted at each turn. Vengeance became depression, and Ayther lost himself to drugs and alcohol until he was guided back by members of the House of Spring. Ayther realized that even now his life was still being affected by his time in Arcadia, and that he had to embrace the one thing he had denied himself, his own happiness.

Ayther came out of his depression and learned to enjoy the things that he pursues in life, and once more he took up his old hobby of extreme sports. Ayther sought out ever more extreme, physical activities, ranging

from death defying sports to sadomasochistic acts. Ayther forced the pain from his heart, but still he could not forget how Arcadia had stolen his soul.

Over time Ayther grew in prominence amongst the House of Spring. He helped others deal with their pain and their fetters. He guided others to their desires through various forms of meditation and dreams. After 8 years in Venice, Ayther had become so popular amongst the House of Spring that he assumed the position of Vernal Duke, the previous Duke stepping down for the younger changeling.

As Vernal Duke, Ayther has strived to ensure that the desires of his courtiers and those of other Houses are met. He watches from afar the House of Autumn and Winter, pitying their attempts to understand and hide from the Fae. Ayther knows that this can never happen, that the Fae are truly too strange to comprehend. This has led to bitter arguments between Ayther and those of the Houses of Winter and Autumn.

Ayther maintains good ties with the House of Summer and tries to ensure that he can at least reward this house of warriors with pleasure. However, Ayther will not just let the House of Summer take charge of situations unchecked and blow situations out of proportion.

With regard to the Court of Carnival and the Doge, Ayther enjoys the balls and masquerades held in honor of Carnival. He attempts to work with the Court and its officers, many of whom are members of his House. This closeness allows Ayther to promote his own House's agenda, but he is careful to ensure that this appears to be beneficial to the Court of Carnival. For this reason Ayther is keen to ensure the status quo with the Doge be maintained, and that his House may grow in prominence. His main enemy within the Court is the House of Winter.

Description: Ayther has an athletic build, with blond windswept hair. His features are grizzled, and he has stubble. He tends to wear billowing coats and loose shirts that show off his figure.

His Mien shows that his hair is composed of a storm of clouds, his eyes are misty and skin is like gossamer.

His Mantle manifests the sound of spring rain, light breezes and the odd blossom petal blown on the wind.

As Vernal Duke his Mantle manifests the Mask of the Green King. During the Court of Carnival gatheringz the Vernal Duke wears a full face mask that is in the form of the Horned God, Cernunnos, with large antlers sprouting from the forehead.

Storytelling Hints: Ayther is a pleasant man, who greets all his guests and attempts to see to their every need. Some think that Ayther is not that wise, nor aware of the politics that are taking place within his House. The fact is Ayther plays dumb, using this view others have of him to his advantage. Ayther is like a thundercloud with regard to his temper. He likes to be relaxed and calm, but he is prone to sudden outbursts and thunderous rants.

Apparent Age: Early 30s

Court: Spring

Seeming: Elemental

Kith: Airtouched

Keeper: Kaligostro

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Investigation 2, Occult (Hedge, Pledges, Venice) 4, Politics (Freehold, Spring) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics (Base Jumping) 4, Brawl 2, Stealth 3, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Empathy (Body Language) 2, Intimidation 3, Persuasion (Reassuring) 3, Socialize (Dress Balls, Bars) 4, Subterfuge (Poker Face) 2

Merits: Allies (Power Boat drivers), Contacts (Tour Guides, Club DJ) 2, Harvest (Pledges) 4, New Identity 2, Mantle (Spring) 5, Resources 3, Hollow (size 4, amenities 3, doors 4, wards 3)

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Sloth

Health: 8

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Wyrd: 6 (Glamour 15/6, 25 Goblin Fruits, 9 Pledges)

Contracts: Dream 3, Elements (Air) 4, Fleeting Spring 5, Eternal Spring 4, Mirror 2, Eternal Summer 1

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Socialize), Commendation (The Doge)

Frailty: Minor Taboo - Cannot cross a line of mercury.

Derangements: Wanderlust, Depression

Johnny Vermeil

Quote: *"I really don't think you were invited."*

Background: Johnny Vermeil grew up in New York during the height of the 80s. He was into the club scene, and took plenty of drugs while parting into the late night. He was meant to be studying law at university, but the partying lifestyle had pulled him away from his studies.

In a LSD induced haze, Johnny opened a gateway into the Hedge. He tapped five times on a spray-painted four leaf clover. On the fifth tap the wall fell away, and he stumbled into the Hedge.

Johnny awoke to find himself curled up in the dark of the Hedge. Looking about he made his way deep into a cave where he was taken away by a mob of goblins. Johnny was taken deep into the caves of Arcadia and brought to the Well of Tears. Here he met the Old Man, his eyes staring deep into his soul. Rather than be used as a simple miner or keeper of the Old Man's treasure, Johnny was gifted with the skin of mirrors and sent to find a way past the Old Man's enemies within the twisting caves.

Johnny's escape came when he found another tunnel back out into the Hedge.

Johnny returned to the world finding many years had passed. He had returned via the Hall of Mirrors in the Palazzo Zenobio.

His return to the mortal world was fraught with fear and paranoia. He desperately did not want to be taken, and so he

disappeared into the population of Venice, assuming the life of a simple beggar, but one with many faces. He was initially picked up by the House of Winter, and he was trained to hide from the Fae who he saw stalk the Fairy City. He eventually was assigned the title of Archer, one of the Archers of the Lonely March, the scouts of the House of Winter. However, the structure of the House and the atmosphere was too much for Johnny, who missed his life before he was taken, and so he left the House of Winter and joined the ranks of Spring.

As a member of the House of Spring, Johnny was able to express his old desires and passions, however, his abilities and training with the House of Winter made Johnny a perfect Claviger, a bodyguard.

Description: Johnny is tall and slender, his face no longer the young youthful man he once knew. Instead he looks tired and simply grey. He tends to wear clothes that look like a mass of colorful rags, giving him the appearance of a gypsy.

His Mien betrays his formless features, his skin nothing but flowing glass.

His Mantle is the light of a Spring dawn refracting through his glass skin.

Storytelling Hints: Johnny is mercurial, his moods shifting with each day. He takes pleasure in the Byzantine politics of the Court of Carnival, and he uses his abilities to gain leverage on his enemies while also using them to preempt any attempts on the Vernal Duke's life.

Apparent Age: Mid 40s

Court: Spring

Seeming: Darkling

Kith: Mirrorskin

Keeper: The Old Man

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Crafts (Forgery) 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Dirty Fighting) 3, Firearms 3, Larceny (Stolen Goods) 3, Stealth (Move Quietly) 3, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Intimidation 3, Persuasion (Bribe) 2, Socialize 3, Streetwise (Drug Dealers) 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Contacts (Fence, Weapons Dealer) 2, Harvest (Emotions) 4, Mantle (Spring) 3, Resources 2, Iron Stomach 2, Toxin Resistance 2

Willpower: 8

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Gluttony

Health: 9

Initiative: 8

Defense: 4

Speed: 12

Wyr: 4 (Glamour 13/4, 10 Goblin Fruits, 7 Pledges)

Contracts: Darkness 4, Fleeting Spring 4, Mirror 3, Smoke 3

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Socialize), Commendation (The Doge)

Other members of the Emerald Horn are the Spring Courtiers. The Draconic Fairest, Sulphurous Sofia, and the Gristlegrinder Ogre, Luca Limbchew are the more martial members of the motley. The Darkling Antiquarian, Quillian, acts as Ayther's Searce, picking and choosing those of the House of Spring who are in need of recognition.

THE TRIUMPHAL QUADRICA

The Triumphal Quadriga are a motley of four Changelings, named after the four horses on the roof of St Mark's Basilica these four form one of the newest motleys of Venice. Led by the Crimson Knight, Etiene Epee, the Triumphal Quadriga are foot soldiers of the House of Summer.

Etiene trains his men at the House of Summer, the Arsenale. In the belly of the unrestored sections, Etiene works his men tirelessly, practicing swordsmanship each day, and keeping watch over the city and those that attempt to harm the Lost of the city. When called upon by the Admiral to fight, the motley is often the first to fight, seeking whatever honor they can in order to find a promotion within the House of Summer.

Etiene Epee

Quote: "Wrong! Again. Thrust, thrust, parry, parry, riposte!", "Men, to arms! For the House of the Sun!"

Background: Etiene Epee was taken at the age of 32 from his life in France, long before the revolution. He was born in the countryside and joined the army when he could, before returning to Paris and becoming a Musketeer, one of the King of France's own guards. His swordsmanship was excellent, though not the best in the court, and he was favored by many noblewomen, despite the scar that extended across his left eye.

His abduction by the Fae occurred when he was introduced to the beautiful and alluring Lady Astrid of Aumont. That night they made love together, and in the morning he awoke to find himself in another bed, far from Paris, in the heart of Arcadia. His lady was the Princess of the Court of Sapphire Fires. She was beautiful and terrible, indulging in lust, punishing her slaves, hunting her menagerie of humans and admiring those she kept as pieces of art.

Etiene lived amongst her court, one of her own guards and infrequent lovers. She admired him for his prowess with the sword, his fine figure and skill in bed, but she would quickly turn on him. One day she would kiss him, the other kick him and whip him. He was expected to keep her safe from her rivals amongst the Gentry.

Etiene hated his lady for turning him into a lapdog, and so he sought to escape. Taking the advantage, he fought through the halls of the palace, his sword cutting through those who knew no better, and he made his escape. He fled through the burning fields of blue, and then through the Hedge, hacking his way through until he return to the mortal realm.

Etiene exited from the Hedge via a secret street in Venice. He was still clad in the tattered rags of his livery and his sword was now just a simple stick. He did know where he was, but the House of Summer would explain all as that night their patrol picked him up.

Etiene has now been in Venice for almost 5 years and already gained the title of

Captain of the Crimson Knights. Amongst the warriors of the House of Summer Etiene is one of the most skilled in the sword, but is also considered naïve when it comes to matters concerning the modern world and women. Etiene has a number of friends within the House of Spring, in particular Count Carnelian.

Description: Etiene has a grim dark face. A scar runs from his left eyebrow to his nose. He dresses well in functional clothing, and has long locks of brown hair and a well-kept moustache.

His Mien shows his true form, his blue scales, his rasping forked tongue and his whipping tale.

His Mantle manifests as the fires of the sun, a scorching heat that pulses from him and his eyes, smoke whispering up from his nostrils.

Storytelling Hints: Etiene is relaxed unless training. He is confident in his skills and is boastful about his exploits. In combat he unleashes his fury, and he is quick and deadly, striking like a cobra. During training he hates any form of interruption from his students.

Apparent Age: Early 30s

Court: Summer

Seeming: Fairest

Kith: Draconic

Keeper: The Princess of the Court of Sapphire Fires

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Crafts 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Firearms 2, Larceny 3, Stealth 2, Weaponry (Fencing) 4

Social Skills: Intimidation (Physical Threats) 3, Persuasion 1, Socialize 2, Streetwise (Weapon Dealers) 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Contacts (Police Officer, Police Detective) 2, Harvest (Pledge) 2, Mantle (Summer) 3, Resources 2, Fighting Finesse: Two Weapons 3

Willpower: 5

Clarity: 6

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Wrath

Health: 8

Initiative: 7

Defense: 4

Speed: 13

Wyrd: 3 (Glamour 12/3, 7 Goblin Fruits, 6 Pledges)

Contracts: Elements (Fire) 2, Fleeting Summer 2, Eternal Summer 3, Vain Glory 3

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Weaponry), Knight's Oath (Summer Duke)

Fuligin

Quote: “When I strike you won’t even feel a thing.”

Background: Fuligin was born in Mestre. Her family were poor and worked at the local chemical factory, and as a result were heavily involved with the local unions and in turn the mob. Fuligin, or Lia, was admired by most of the young workers in the town. And while she knew she would simply follow in her mother’s footsteps, she longed for something more. She looked out from the shore to the city of Venice, and it was there that she wished to be. And she wished hard, on one moonlit night, promising her soul to the dark. She turned about once, twice, and then a third time, confused by her feelings. And then there before her walking across the surface of the water, was a being made of spiderwebs. It strode forward, yellow eyes peering from beneath a hood, and it beckoned her forward. It spoke, rasping, promising her the pleasures she sought. Lia was captivated by this dark being, and part of her wanted to embrace the dark being since anything would be better than her life of mediocrity.

Lia was taken beneath the waters into the Hedge and onwards to a shadowy realm. The moon always hung in the air, and ghosts moaned in the groves of vines. The being, simply known as Aracna, took Lia through the gothic graves and into the dilapidated church. It was there that it turned on her and caged her, retorting that it had promised her nothing but to take her away from her home, exactly as she asked.

Lia was caged for years on end, kept with others, and together they were twisted by their master. Fed raw meat, dirty water or cold

blood, the captives were changed, and Lia came to live just upon the blood that was brought to her. At times they would be released from the cages, used as servants, guards or explorers. They would be rewarded for returning with the herbs and goblin fruit that Aracna desired. Other times they would be asked to go and hunt for mortals who had stumbled into the Hedge.

Lia's hunger for blood grew as she tasted the fresh blood of a mortal. But it was in that one taste that Lia remembered her lost mortality and humanity of her life that she once had in Mestre. She had been so twisted by the blood, she had become more flexible, better to hunt her prey, and she wriggled free of her cage and fled from the church and the graveyard.

Fuligin returned to Venice, through the gateway in St Mark's Square, and into the throng of gathered tourists. Her tattered clothes marked her out as some gypsy or beggar, and they shunned her. Fuligin's hunger was barely in check, and so she ran and hid in the fish market. There she fed on the bloody casts-offs of fish that had been brought to Venice.

That night, she stalked the streets and canals of Venice, looking for prey. As she struck from the shadows at some poor, hapless woman, she was stopped from feeding by the intervention of the night watchmen of the House of Summer. They pinned her down, and in the water of the canal Fuligin noticed her true face, her Mien, and that her Keeper had made her a monster. Where once she was a fairly good-looking young woman, now she was gaunt and pallid, her mouth a set of mantis-like mandibles, and her eyes dark and insect-like. She wept and asked to be killed. But the head of the watchmen did not. He saw that she was a changeling, and the House of Summer took her in.

Over the following year, Fuligin learned of the ways of the House of Summer, and she felt a new strength that sated her hunger, namely the desire for revenge on all Fae. Her nature as a Darkling, and a Leechfinger, made her an expert assassin, and she was often used against both the Fae

enemies of the Freehold and mortal threats.

Over the years Fuligin has become a renowned hunter, and as a result has acquired the title of Constable of Calefaction. Her skills as an assassin have now been turned to the task of keeping the peace and acting as an investigator, tracking down lawbreakers and threats to the Freehold of Venice.

As Calefactor, Fuligin is keen to ensure that the House of Summer follows the laws laid out by their commander and those of the Doge. She must work with the Volto, the Doge's own peacekeeper, and so the two must work together, with the Volto ensuring that Fuligin does not overstep her position, policing the House of Summer.

Description: Fuligin has pale skin and could be considered an alien beauty. Her eyes seem set too far apart, and her hair is thin and dark and limp. She moves with an inhuman grace and dresses like a beggar.

Her Mien shows her spider-like nature, with the set of six dark orbs that look out onto the world, and the spider-leg-like spindle fingers that she has. Her mouth is a foul set of mandibles.

Her Mantle is the heat of the sticky summer at night, and the warmth retained by the streets.

Storytelling Hints: Compared to other Summer courtiers, Fuligin prefers not to voice her opinions and show her aggression. Instead she prefers to let her anger simmer, and usually unleashed it upon her target when they least expect it. She is not beyond brutally beating a person in an alleyway after stalking them. With regard to her everyday life, Fuligin keeps to herself, not liking attention. She thinks those who do not seek out revenge are cowards, while she hates what she has been turned into.

Apparent Age: Mid 20s

Court: Summer

Seeming: Darkling

Kith: Leechfinger

Keeper: Aracna

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts (Forgery) 2, Investigation 3, Medicine 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3 (Climb), Brawl 3, Larceny 3, Stealth (Move Quietly, Move in Shadows) 3, Survival 2, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Ambidextrous 3, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Contacts (Police Officer, Beggar) 2, Harvest (Emotions) 2, Mantle (Summer) 2, Resources 1, Token 2.

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Wrath

Health: 5

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Speed: 12

Wyrd: 3 (Glamour 12/3, 7 Goblin Fruits, 6 Pledges)

Contracts: Fang and Talon (Spiders) 3, Fleeting Summer 3, Mirror 1, Smoke 3, Dream 3, Goblin Contracts: Fair Entrance 2

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Weaponry), Knight's Oath (Summer Duke)

Token: Lantern of Ill Omen 3

Other members of the Triumphal Quadriga are Canon, a brutish Ogre Stonebones who rushes headlong into combat and has no love for the other Courts, Squall, a Levenquick Elemental who is loud, brash and crafty, and finally Kurt Grimtongue, a Spring courtier, Wizend Soldier, and Claviger to the Vernal Duke who is bitter and seeks to take great delight in every victory he can find.

THE WATCHMEN

The Watchmen take it upon themselves to shine when it is darkest, keeping watch over Venice even while it sleeps. They are skilled not just in hunting the creatures of the Fae, but also the other creatures that stalk the night, be they Vampires, ghosts, strange spirits and shambling bodies.

The Watchmen are a long-lasting motley that has had a high turnover of members due to death, injury or burnout. They

are currently led by Cinder Bella, an Elemental of Smoke, and a renowned warrior and a Captain of the Crimson Knights. Where Etiene and his motley struggle to follow orders to the letter, Cinder expects creativity and more than just physical prowess. Her motley is not just comprised of Summer courtiers, but claims a number of Winter courtiers as members since she values their skills in stealth, and also a member of the House of Autumn who she turns to when more specialized knowledge of the occult is required.

The Watchmen claim a small church tower as their home from which they are able to better survey the city. From here they have a number of doors into the Hedge that lead to places about the city so that they can more quickly move in times of urgency.

Cinder Bella

Quote: *"Trust me, once I am done with them there will be nothing left but ash!"*

Background: Cinder Bella was born in the South of Italy, on the outskirts of Rome. She was considered something of a tomboy, desired by the young men who sought to tame her. She was well known in the town for her passion, something that not even her father could stop. It would be this passion that would be her undoing, as one night, again out past curfew, she was enticed and abducted by one of the Gentry. She was carried away by her Keeper, the monstrous and gargantuan Trusssock Stoneskin. This brute of a Fae took Cinder back to his realm and to his hunting lodge. There he bound her to warm his home, to cook his food and to bring light at night. There were other Changelings there also. Some had been bound to bring fresh water. Others acted as his hunting dogs, while others tended to his weapons and clothes.

Cinder spent an untold number of years in the service of the Fae master. But she did learn of her means of escape. There were some times when she would be taken on the hunt, providing light for her master, and she would notice how small embers from her skin would be left behind. She discovered that she could use these embers to move about her master's

realm. This would be her escape, and as she did, she burnt her way through the Hedge and back to her home on edges of Rome.

Returning to the family restaurant she discovered, to her horror, that 5 years had passed by, and that another who looked and acted like her had taken up her life and had married a man she had hated as a child. This fetch had no fire in her heart and worked a dreary life in the local factory.

Filled with hatred for what had become of her life, Cinder killed her fetch and her fetch's husband, setting a blaze the home that they lived in.

Cinder fled North, first to Florence, where she joined the ranks of the Summer Court, before moving further North to the city of Venice. By the time she had reached Venice, Cinder was already a capable fighter and hunter, known for her talent in hunting the creatures of the Hedge and also the Vampires that would occasionally interfere with the Courts.

Cinder has risen through the ranks of the House of Summer and is a renowned hunter and tracker. She has gained the rank of Captain amongst the Crimson Knights. However, even unknown to her motley and those of the House of Summer, she is also the Doge's Volto. As Volto she is the official peacekeeper of the city, allocating to changelings the tasks of patrolling the city, seeking out Loyalists and other dangerous changelings, and enforcing the laws of the Doge. This means that only occasionally does her role as Volto and that of a Crimson Knight come into conflict. But there are some amongst the House of Summer that are wary of her desire to follow the commands of the Doge.

Description: Cinder Bella is voluptuous and athletic. She is pretty, but more like a farm maiden rather than a lady. She wears loose-fitting, functional clothing, that allows for her to move easily across the rooftops of Venice, while also concealing her knives and handgun. Her hair is cropped short and is a deep red-brown, and her skin is olive and warm.

Her Mien shows that she burns from

within, flames escaping her eyes and mouth, waves of heat distorting the air around her. Her hair is more alive, and whips about, energized by the inner fire within her.

Her Mantle manifests as the sweltering heat of the South of Italy. There is the buzzing of thunderflies, the smell of melting tar and the crackle of burning coals.

Storytelling Hints: Cinder is a focused individual. She is entirely devoted to protecting others from the Gentry, and when faced with the horrors of Arcadia, she will allow her anger to be channeled into her martial skill and not lose her head to the bloodlust, unlike some others of her House. She is secretive when she goes hunting on her own, and this often a cover for her meetings with the Doge, and so she is careful to cover her tracks to ensure that no one can suspect her.

Her only weakness is that at times she can burnout from her constant fighting and hunting at night, and can go into week-long periods of seclusion.

Apparent Age: Early 30s

Court: Summer

Seeming: Elemental

Kith: Fireheart

Keeper: Trusssock Stoneskin

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation 3, Medicine 2, Occult (Venice) 3, Politics (Freehold) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Firearms 2, Larceny 1, Stealth 3, Survival (Tracking) 2, Weaponry (Spear) 4

Social Skills: Empathy (Lies) 2, Intimidation (Interrogation) 2, Socialize 1, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge (Lying) 2

Merits: Contacts (Gang thugs) 2, Harvest (Emotions) 3, Hollow (size 2, wards 4, doors 3, amenities 2), New Identity 4, Mantle (Spring) 3, Mantle (Carnival) 3, Resources 2, Weaponry Dodge 1.

Willpower: 5

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Sloth

Health: 8

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Speed: 12

Wyrd: 4 (Glamour 13/4, 10 Goblin Fruits, 7 Pledges)

Contracts: Elements (Fire) 4, Fleeting Sumer 3, Eternal Summer 3, Mirror 3, Carnival 3, Dream 3

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Weaponry), Knight's Oath (Duke of Summer), Knight's Oath (The Doge)

Guido Webb

Quote: "Don't try to hide for none can hide where my web extends little fly."

Background: Guido was born in Milan but raised in Verona, the son of tailor. It was his lot in life to follow this path, and he did. By his 40s Guido had a wife, two children and had taken over the family business. He was well known locally for his skill in fashioning fine suits for his clients.

One day he was offered a challenge, that if he could make a suit in 2 days, he would be paid 10 times over for it. However, as he began to craft the suit for the customer, at each turn he found that the suit did not fit. At one moment the customer was suddenly too small, then too large, then too tall. In the end he failed to make the suit, and he was then taken away. The Gentry left behind a fetch, fashioned from the cloth off cuts.

The Fae lord, Julis Luminor, was a vain and cruel creature, and set Guido to work immediately. He was tasked with making clothes for every day, to reclothe the Gentry's royal guard, and to make dresses for his numerous whores.

Over time Guido, locked away with his spinning wheel in the basement of the castle, became more spider-like, all the better to weave and stitch.

Then it was Guido's turn to trick his master. He offered the same challenge again. But this time it was not just any form of suit he fashioned, but a suit of gold, but also a straight jacket. Noting the Fae lord had shrunk again on purpose, Guido tightened the jacket again, then again, and once more. Luminor was

trapped and Guido made his escape.

Returning to the mortal world, Guido found his life had been taken by his fetch, and his children now in the care of the soulless being. Instead of taking back his life and killing his fetch, Guido found others of his kind and relocated to Venice, seeking to forget his life and not draw the attentions of the Fae to his wife or children.

Guido joined the Watchmen, part of his role as a watcher amongst the Squires of Frost, and his position amongst the Watchmen facilitates this role, using his knowledge to direct the actions of the motley so that threats are eliminated before they surface.

Description: Guido is tall and gaunt. His eyes are deeply set into his skull, with dark shadows about them. His lips are thin and his skin is pallid. He has thin, scruffy dark hair that is cut short, and long fingers. However, his attire is almost immaculate, consisting of well-fitting suits in pinstripe.

His Mien displays his spider nature. Bristles protrude from the backs of his hands. His fingers end in thin needle-like nails. His eyes are more like dark orbs, and now, has 4 more smaller ones set into his forehead.

Guido's Mantle manifests as a cold, damp breeze, shadows stretching and twitching, and the smell of slowly decomposing corpses.

Storytelling Hints: Guido is a spider, and so tries to sit where he can survey his web of lies and truths. He watches changelings go about their business, and looks into their possessions and dangerous items and potential threats to the city, so that the House of Winter can hide while the other Houses mobilize against the threat.

To others Guido can seem distant, aloof and heartless. However, Guido still misses his family but knows he can never, and must never, see them again.

Apparent Age: Mid 20s

Court: Winter

Seeming: Beasts

Kith: Skitterskulk.

Keeper: Luminor

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts (Fabric) 3, Investigation (Enigmas) 4, Occult 2, Politics 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 3 (Climb), Brawl (Dirty Fighting) 3, Larceny 3, Stealth (Move Quietly) 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Spiders) 2, Empathy 2, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Ambidextrous 3, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Contacts (Fence) 1, Harvest (Pledge) 2, Mantle (Winter) 1, Resources 1

Willpower: 4

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Greed

Health: 7

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Speed: 11

Wyrd: 3 (Glamour 12/3, 7 Goblin Fruits, 6 Pledges)

Contracts: Fang and Talon (Spiders) 3, Fleeting Winter 2, Mirror 2, Smoke 2, Dream 1

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Weaponry), Commendation (Duke of Winter)

Derangements: Fixation

Other members of the Watchmen are the bellowing and destructive Gargantuan Ogre, Benjamin Watchtower, the dutiful Soldier Wizeden, Tommy Gun, and the whistling and rusting mechanical warrior, the Manikin Elemental, Sister Metropolis.

THE SWORDS OF THE LION

The Swords of the Lion are a collection of hunters. Composed of changelings of the Beast seeming, they are furious warriors, and dislike many of the other motleys, especially those rivals within the House of Summer and those of House of Winter.

Led by Tomas Tusk, the Swords engage in any battle they can find, even going as far as to test their might against those things in the Hedge, Vampires and even Werewolves on the mainland.

Tomas Tusk trains his men in a private location on one of the outlying islands where

they can better maintain their arsenal of weapons. His troupe contains many appointed Mud grunts, with Tomas being another Captain of the Crimson Knights. A number of his motley are wanted criminals and have not been taken in as evidence against them is slim and ever decreasing due to the actions of the Freehold against the mortal police force.

Tomas Tusk

Quote: *"This is your end, goblin!"*
<dull sound of flesh beaten to a pulp>

Background: Tomas Tusk was construction contractor in California. He had a new wife and was also now the proud owner of a new house that he had built for himself. However, his current job on a site brought the ire of his Keeper to be. One evening the Earl of Glorious Bones came knocking. He wanted an answer for why his fairy circle had been damaged. It went against the terms of his pledge with the owner of the land. Without an answer for the Earl, Thomas was snatched away and brought to heel. He was dragged back through the Hedge, while a fetch assumed his life.

In the kingdom maintained by the Earl, Thomas was tasked with pulling carts filled with stones for the Earl's castle. Over time, pulling these large loads and being caged away at night, fed on offal and left-overs, Thomas changed. Thomas became more and more like a boar. His skin bristled with tough hair. His feet became like hooves and his nose more piggish.

Almost 200 years passed by like this. And over time his clothes were nothing but tatters, and so was his human form. He could only communicate with grunts and growls.

Escape came by chance, as in his cage, under the hay and dirt, Tomas found a reminder of his old life. It was a photo of himself and his wife. Overcome with memories thought lost, Tomas broke free from his cage and ran back through the Hedge. With each step he found more of his humanity and his human form.

Tomas eventually found his way onto the Lion's Tail trod, and it was here he was picked up by traveling goblins, who took him

in on the chance they could sell him at the market. But it was by the actions of a motley of changelings that he was saved this fate and brought back to Venice.

Tomas realized that only 2 years had gone by, and that his wife was already remarried and his fetch now was in prison back in the USA. Tomas knew he could not return and this pain and anger brought him to the doors of the House of Summer.

Since his return to the mortal world, Tomas has taken it upon himself to take the battle to the Fae. He will lead his motley into fights against Hedge monsters, Hobgoblins, Gentry and rival motleys whenever he could. His motley is viewed with suspicion and hate by other Houses, in particular those of Autumn and Winter.

Tomas has obtained the position of Captain of the Crimson Knights, with many of his motley being Crimson Knights and Mud Grunts. He commands them with no interest for their safety, sending his men into battle for the 'glory' they can obtain.

Description: Tomas is large, heavy-set and ugly. His teeth are disordered and his clothes are ragged and stained. His beard is thick and dark. Some may think he is fat, but in fact that is all muscle.

His mien shows that he has a snout and protruding tusks, with drool dripping from his mouth.

His mantle manifests as the smell of a sweating and the heat of the Summer sun.

Storytelling Hints: Tomas is out for blood and glory. Any chance to act out his hate for the Fae he will take, and bystanders be damned. The Admiral accepts that Tomas is a valuable fighter, but also a dangerous loose cannon.

Tomas is also a glutton. He is prideful and spiteful to those more beautiful Changelings.

Apparent Age: Early 30s

Court: Summer

Seeming: Beasts

Kith: Broadback

Keeper: The Earl of Glorious Bones

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts 3, Computer 3, Investigation 3, Medicine 3, Occult (Werewolves, Vampires, Hedge Creatures) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 3, Drive 2, Firearms 3, Larceny 3, Stealth 3, Survival Tracking) 2, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Intimidation (Physical Threats) 2, Persuasion (Bribe) 3, Socialize 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Allies (Fisherman) 1, Contacts (PI, Mortal Hunter) 2, Harvest (Emotions) 2, Mantle (Summer) 2, Iron Stomach 2, Fighting Style: Boxing 3, Toxin Resistance 2, Hollow (size 2, wards 4, amenities 1, doors 3)

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Pride

Health: 10

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Speed: 12

Wyrd: 5 (Glamour 14/5, 15 Goblin Fruits, 8 Pledges)

Contracts: Fang and Talon (Boars) 3, Fleeting Summer 3, Eternal Summer 2, Mirror 2, Dream 2, Stone 3

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Brawl), Knight's Oath (Summer Duke)

Cold Rosaline

Quote: "Sssshhh. I will ssstop the poisssson if you tell me where the otherssss are"

Background: Rosaline was born in Sicily, the daughter of a wealthy family of bankers. She was married off to a young CEO of a pharmaceutical company. She was a vain and jealous person, who had everything she needed in life.

Her abduction by the Fae was during a gala dinner, where her husband received an award. She was met by one of the Gentry, the sly trickster, Dario Scales. She did not note his reptilian tendencies; the way of his tongue

flicking out, his eyes never blinking, the coldness of his skin. He tricked her with the promise of jewels and love. But the catch was that she had to go back to his room. The question was where the room was.

In Arcadia, in the labyrinthine temple, Rosa, as she was known back as a mortal, acted as one of many consorts to Dario. Over time she took on more snake-like aspects, the better to tend to his sexual desires.

Her escape from these never-ending orgies and abuse was not of her own devising. She was instead left in the Hedge, discarded by her master who had grown tired of using her.

Rosa found her way back to the mortal world and discovered that her life had been taken over by a soulless bitch of a fetch. She watched her sleep with her husband, using his money and committing adultery. She was sickened by the creature, and seeing reflected the life she once led.

One night Rosa set upon her fetch. Within her home she murdered the creature, ripping her throat out and slaking her thirst on its Glamour. But from a distance she could hear her Keeper's laughter. Sickened that she had committed the act which her old master wanted to have happen, she fled and sought out somewhere to start her life once more.

In Venice Rosa has taken her anger and need for vengeance and become a hateful person who will dispatch all creatures of the Fae. She is Tomas' second in command, valued for her agility and capability as an assassin. But they are also on-off lovers. Their anger boils and becomes uncontrolled lust.

Description: Rosaline has an animalistic beauty, with piercing eyes, slender features, and long blond hair. Her lips are thin and her teeth are fine. She tends to wear slinky dresses that can attract the attention of others.

Her mien displays her skin to be a pale green with fine scales. Her eyes are viper-like, and her hair is more like a cobra's hood.

Rosa's mantle manifests as a scorching desert heat, and the smell of hot sand.

Storytelling Hints: Rosaline is alluring and venomous. She will fight on and off the field of battle. She will poison the

waters in the social domain, often as a prelude to attacking the person physically.

She is alluring and has a constant temper that simmers below the surface and is prone to snapping.

Apparent Age: Mid 20s

Court: Winter

Seeming: Beasts

Kith: Venombite

Keeper: Dario Scales

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Crafts 1, Politics 1, Science 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Larceny 3, Stealth 3, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Snakes) 2, Empathy 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion (Seduction) 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Ambidextrous 3, Fast Reflexes 2, Contacts (Pimp, Banker) 2, Harvest (Emotions) 2, Mantle (Summer) 1, Resources 2

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Envy

Health: 7

Initiative: 7

Defense: 4

Speed: 12

Wyrd: 3 (Glamour 12/3, 7 Goblin Fruits, 6 Pledges)

Contracts: Fang and Talon (Snakes) 4, Mirror 2, Smoke 1, Dream 2

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Brawl)

Other members of the Swords of the Lion are the menacing, eagle-like Windwing, Hawk Eye; the self-assured and dare-devil, Cheetah Runnerswift, Swiftpaw Sara; the noble brute, the bull-like Broadback, Mikael Minos; and the feral dog Hunterheart, Andros Anubis.

THE ARMOURY

The Armory consists of a group of changelings that can be considered weapon masters. They are led by the Wizeden Smith,

Blackhand. He is a diligent worker, capable swordsman, and trained in the forging of swords and other blades. He acts as another of the Captains of the Crimson Knights and is also in charge of ensuring the House of Summer is properly equipped. His motley consists of some of the best equipped Crimson Knights and Mud Grunts.

Blackhand

Quote: <banging of a hammer on steel> “Yes, this blade will be perfect... just like the rest”

Background: Blackhand was once a young boy in Germany near the woods of the Rhine. He and his father were out on a camping trip when he was taken. The Fae lord took Blackhand and caged him within his dark and imposing fortress. He endured years of torture. Scorching brands were used to sear his flesh off. His body was cut and scarred.

However, Blackhand was eventually released and put to work having endured the pain of heat. He was given the task of making items from metal for his master. He made new armor that glowed in the sun, baroque chandeliers, and chains for the other prisoners of the castle.

His escape was by his own making, as he fashioned a mace capable of shattering stone and carving a way through the Hedge.

His return to the dark woods of the Rhineland led to Blackhand finding his family had moved on since his disappearance. Blackhand could see that his parents had since had a daughter and forgotten about him.

Blackhand traveled about Europe before settling in Venice. This was a consequence of Blackhand being commissioned by the Doge to fashion a new suit of armor. Since then Blackhand has been an important part of the House of Summer, maintaining the weapons cache and tokens of the House.

Description: Blackhand is squat, bald and has coal-stained nails and clothes. His skin is tanned from the heat of the forges. He is heavily set and his arms are well muscled.

His Mien shows that he has grayish skin, pointed ears and beady black eyes. His

beard is grey and gold like straw.

His Mantle manifests as the burning heat of a forge and the smell of burning coal and steam.

Storytelling Hints: Blackhand is single-minded in his work. He dislikes distractions and works tirelessly to make the next new weapon against the Fae. He hates what was done to him and has no issue with inflicting harm to others just for the sake of it.

Apparent Age: Early 30s

Court: Summer

Seeming: Wizedened

Kith: Smith

Keeper: The Emperor of Darkened Stars

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Crafts (Smith) 5, Investigation 2, Occult (Artifacts) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (Lifting) 4, Brawl 3, Drive (Boat) 2, Weaponry (Hammers) 3

Social Skills: Intimidation (Threats) 3, Persuasion (Bribe) 1, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1

Merits: Allies (Scrap Metal Dealer) 1, Contacts (Antiques Dealer, Merchant) 2, Harvest (Pledges) 3, Mantle (Summer) 3, Resources 3, Iron Stamina 3, Strong Back 1, Token 5

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Greed

Health: 10

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Speed: 12

Wyrd: 6 (Glamour 15/6, 25 Goblin Fruits, 9 Pledges)

Contracts: Elements (Fire) 4, Eternal Summer 4, Artifice 4, Mirror 1, Dream 2, Hearth 3

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Crafts), Commendation (Duke of Summer)

Token: Hedge Spun Weapon 2, Trifles: A selection

Bane: He must fix broken shoes

Gabriel Ichmael Joe

Quote: *"I am like a well-oiled rifle"*

<winks>

Background: Gabriel was born in Tuscany. He grew up in the countryside working on the vineyards kept by his grandfather, and he too was to work there and eventually inherit the land. However Gabriel wanted more than a life in the country. He raced about the countryside on his Vespa, eager to have a life in the city of Rome.

It was while out driving one night that his bike stalled and from the shadows came an old woman dressed in rags. Her teeth gleamed in the starlight as she asked the young man if he needed help. In return she asked that she could have a kiss. Gabriel allowed for the woman to fix his bike, but backed out of the deal when it was his turn to give her a kiss. She revealed herself to be the terrible, furious, Duchess of the Waning Hours.

She took Gabriel off to Arcadia and his family assumed that he had died at the hands of some thief.

In Arcadia Gabriel was victimized. The Duchess watched as her goblins beat and bludgeoned Gabriel. She only had them stop when Gabriel finally mustered the last of his courage to fight back. After that the beatings ended, and he was drafted into her endless army and its endless war. He fought against the troops of her enemy. Dying over and over again, only to rise at dawn to fight once more.

Escape came from playing dead on the field of battle and fleeing before the Duchess' men could drag his corpse away once more.

Returning to Tuscany, Gabriel found that everything had changed. 40 years had passed and now his father had sold on the vineyards. Now it was a rundown farm and his family were gone.

For some time Gabriel was nomadic, looking for his family, while acting as a mercenary. But Venice gave him a cause to stay, with the promise of finding his family in return for his service.

Description: Gabriel is thin and his body is taut and athletic. He is almost like an old Shaolin monk, and so is deceptively strong. He tends to wear clothes that allow him to blend into the crowds of Venice. His hair is

pale like straw, closely cropped and scruffy.

Her Mien displays his skin to be scarred with cuts and bullet wounds. He is pale but with bruising about the edges of these wounds.

His Mantle is the smell of gunpowder, the staccato of gunfire, and the light of muzzle flashes.

Storytelling Hints: Gabriel has seen much war and is a grim, lonely figure. He still wishes to find his family, but equally wants to bring the Fae to a war of his creation, following his rules.

He hates others touching him, and if others ask him too many questions of his past life, he will snap into a rage.

Apparent Age: Mid 20s

Court: Summer

Seeming: Wizedened

Kith: Soldier

Keeper: The Duchess of the Waning Hours

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Crafts (Smith) 3, Investigation 2, Medicine 3, Occult 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Weaponry (Spear) 3

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 2, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Weaponry Dodge 1, Harvest (Pledge) 2, Mantle (Summer) 2, Resources 2

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Sloth

Health: 8

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Speed: 12

Wyrd: 3 (Glamour 12/3, 7 Goblin Fruits, 6 Pledges)

Contracts: Artifice 3, Fleeting Summer 2, Eternal Summer 3, Dream 2

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Crafts)

Other members of the Armory are Infernus, a Fairest Draconic who is an expert in explosives, and Titania, an Elemental

Manikin made of an amalgam of metals.

THE HELM OF ARES

The Helm of Ares is a motley led by the Admiral of the House of Summer. The motley acts as the Admiral's own personal bodyguard and consists of Crimson Knights, Mud Grunts and the Jager. The Jager is the Admiral's assassin and hunter and expert on all matters of the Hedge.

The Helm, when not led by the Admiral, is instead directly commanded by the Jager, who leaves behind those who shall guard the Admiral while the Jager and the others go about their business.

The Helm operates out of the Arsenale, under the guise of workers involved in the restoration of the old shipyards.

Because of the Helm's role in House affairs, members of their group are often assigned to other motleys as advisors or commanders. Of course this does not sit well with those motleys with members from other Houses.

Admiral Capricornus

Quote: *"We have our heading. Let us sink this Fae Lord for good and cast them to the bottom of the Adriatic!", "Hold it, hold it... Fire!"*

Background: The Admiral, known as Vittorio before his durance, was a part of the Italian army during WWII. He fought against the Russian and the British armies. He was young and a trained boxer. But he had no family of his own except his mother after his father had died during the previous war. It was during the war in Egypt against British forces that Vittorio was taken in the night. He awoke in the lands of the Vizier of the City of Brass. All about the gleaming palace were endless deserts, and it was here the Vizier buried Vittorio in the sands.

He awoke choking, having spent days beneath the scorching earth. His skin was now like flaking stone, baked and sandy. His mouth tasted of nothing but iron and dust. And as he clawed his way out of the sand, he collapsed back into it.

As time passed he took out his spite

and malice on those who trespassed on his sands. But freedom did come. He watched as another man stumbled through his desert, dressed in the fatigues of the Italian army. Remembering his lost life he reformed his body and marched back to the mortal realm through the Hedge.

Returning to Egypt, Vittorio found that 11 years had passed and that the war was over. His comrades had died in battle and now he was far from home and out of synch with time. In Italy things were no better as he found that his mother had passed away and no one remembered who he was.

Vittorio could not hold in his anger and turned upon all those who helped the Fae. He would smother them in sand, clogging their lungs, or simply pound them into paste. He was an unstoppable soldier and feared among the local Freehold.

His move to Venice was prompted by a search for a weapon that would be able to end the existence of the Vizier, but instead of finding the weapon, he joined the Freehold. In time he rose through the ranks, leading the Crimson Knights against the goblins and crew of Commadore Fathom.

Vittorio, at this time known as Amun, eventually obtained the rank of Jager before becoming the Admiral of the House of Summer, following the descent into madness of the previous Admiral.

As Admiral, Capricornus has led a constant war against the force of the Fae lord Commodore Fathom and has been a firm ally of the Doge. There have been times where the Doge and Admiral have clashed over issues, where the Doge has favored the option of keeping to the shadows and hiding from the threats to the Freehold.

The Admiral maintains an active war room within the House of Summer, calling upon his Captains and Jager to keep him informed of the movements of the Fae and Hobgoblins, along with the location of the Goblin Markets, openings of verges, and the actions of the other Houses. He has ordered preemptive strikes against other members of the Fae, regardless of the evidence.

Description: The Admiral has a wide

jaw and a prominent brow. His hair is straw blond and his body is heavily tanned. He wears clothing that is suggestive of his time in the military.

His mien shows that he has skin like sandstone, lined with strata and dusty.

His mantle manifests as the shining sun at its zenith. There is the stain of blood and the smell of cooking flesh on the heat of the sand.

Storytelling Hints: The Admiral is stoic and calm on the exterior. However he is physical in expressing his rage and desire for revenge on the Fae. He will fling tables and smash down walls.

He is a capable strategist but tends for the most direct and bloody solution, having become jaded over time with following the law of the Court of Carnival.

Apparent Age: Early 30s

Court: Summer

Seeming: Elemental

Kith: Earthbones

Keeper: The Vizier

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 6

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Investigation 3, Medicine 2, Occult (True Fae, Weapons) 5, Politics (Freehold) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl (Boxing) 6, Firearms 4, Larceny 1, Stealth 1, Weaponry (Swords) 6

Social Skills: Expression (Oration) 3, Intimidation (Stare downs, Threats) 4, Socialize (Formal Meetings) 3

Merits: Contacts (Police Officer, Police Detective, Weapons Dealer) 3, Harvest (Pledge) 5, New Identity 4, Mantle (Summer) 5, Resources 3, Retainers 3

Willpower: 10

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Wrath

Health: 10

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 13

Wyrd: 7 (Glamour 16/7, 50 Goblin Fruits, 10 Pledges)

Contracts: Elements (Earth) 5, Elements (Fire) 3, Fleeting Summer 3, Eternal Summer 5, Mirror 3, Dream 4, Stone 3, Carnival 1

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Weaponry)

Frailty: Minor Bane - Pain by the sight of a raven. Minor Taboo - Must clean a dirty sword immediately.

The Maw

Quote: *“I will hunt you down and chew your guts and slurp out your marrow from your bones.”*

Background: The changeling known as the Maw is a terrible creature, just barely human. During his life he was a respected soldier in the armies of Napoleon. As the French forces waged war in the North of Italy, the Maw, then known as Jean-Sebastian, was a portly soldier. He was a dead shot with the musket and had survived encounters with the other armies of Europe. However, this was not enough for him to prevent his abduction by the Fae.

The Maw, a name he acquired from the amount he ate, fought in the gladiatorial arenas of his Keeper. He fought endlessly. He was fed the flesh of his victims. He was stitched back together after his battles. And on he fought.

One night with his other cell mates, he hatched a plan to escape. They fought past the guards and slaughtered the vile goblins that had taken pleasure in watching the games. Together they fled through the Hedge. But one by one they were picked off by the Keeper and her minions.

The Maw returned to Paris and found that almost a hundred years had passed and that Paris was now a thriving and modern city, following the ideals of the Revolution. However, he was sickened by the decadence that the French had fallen into. This was something that was a stark reminder of his time in Fairy.

He traveled East and to Venice, having

heard word of a city that was out of step with time, and here he found many changelings who were also suffering from future shock. The Maw joined the House of Summer and became one of the motley of Capricornus before he became the Admiral.

The Maw, upon the promotion of Capricornus to Admiral, was made his Jager, the Hunter of the Longest Day. In this role the Maw became the Admiral's personal tracker, hunter and assassin, a role that has brought the Maw into conflict with many of the changelings in the Freehold who have similar roles.

Description: The Maw is stocky and not very tall. He looks fat to some, but that just disguises his own strength. He looks brutish, with a heavy brow, wide jaw, and equally wide nose. His clothes tend to be functional, and he would not look out of place as a dock worker.

His Mien displays his skin to be almost red and covered in cuts. His teeth protrude and drip saliva, and his belly is even more engorged and distended.

His Mantle is the smell of rotting flesh, port, the heat of coals and the glint of light of a sword.

Storytelling Hints: The Maw is terrifying to behold, a glutton and single-minded. He is a capable tracker, though some say that is because he is able to sniff out food from a mile away.

The Maw hates the Fae, and he will descend into cannibalistic rages when facing the Loyalists and the Privateers.

Apparent Age: Mid 40s

Court: Summer

Seeming: Ogre

Kith: Gristlegrinder

Keeper: Tekrof, Eater of the Hearts of Children

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 6

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Crafts 3, Investigation 3, Medicine 3, Occult 2, Politics 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Firearms (Rifle) 3, Larceny 2, Survival 3, Weaponry 4

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Intimidation (Ugly) 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Gunslinger 3, Iron Stomach 2, Contacts (Butcher, Brewer) 2, Harvest (Goblin Fruit) 4, Mantle (Summer) 4, Resources 2, Token 2.

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Greed

Health: 11

Initiative: 7

Defense: 4

Speed: 13

Wyrd: 6 (Glamour 15/6, 25 Goblin Fruits, 9 Pledges)

Contracts: Smoke 3, Artifice 4, Stone 4, Dream 4 Fleeting Summer 3, Eternal Summer 3

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Weaponry), Commendation (Duke of Summer)

Token: Ribbon of Nevermiss 2

Other members of the Helm of Ares are the bodyguards of the Admiral. They are the Gargantuan Ogre, Fort, the Gravewight Darkling, Pox, and Steepsrambler Beast, Gormaul.

THE LIBRARY OF THE LION

The Library of the Lion is a group of Autumn courtiers who make it their business to collate, decipher and understand the secrets of the city and of Fairy. It is of no surprise that they are mainly changelings with an affinity to magic and the discovery of secrets.

Led by Codexial, the motley maintains that library kept in the Teatro Fenice, within the Hedge. They are the gatekeepers of this knowledge, and they are the ones who many changelings will turn to when they are in need of elusive information on matters of the occult and the workings of the Wyrd.

Codexial

Quote: "Now this is a particular version of Sanskrit. One not seen for thousands of years.", "Touch that book without my permission and you will know how painful a quill pen can be!"

Background: Codexial was always a bookish young woman. She grew up in London and would read anything she could get her hands on. Her mother frowned upon it, wishing she would mature and find a husband, while her father would just give her another interesting book he would find on his business trips.

Codexial's abduction to Arcadia was an ill-thought wish, as she read about the history of fairies. She wished that she could be spirited away to a distant land and have all the books she could ever desire to read. Her Keeper, a lazy prince called the Count of Divine Lust, used her to keep a track of all of his affairs in the mortal realm. He had no desire to bother himself with all this knowledge, and so used her to manage his library. It was a dull task, but one that had to be done.

Years of neglect and abuse led to her becoming more and more wretched. She treasured the library, not because it was of worth, but because it was the only thing she knew. Her escape came from the most unlikely of places. A book. This book was one she had not yet placed upon the shelves, and within it she found the story of her life. Remembering this she followed the story in the book, and behind one of the shelves found her way out of the dark library to the Hedge.

Her return to the mortal realm brought her to Venice. She was struck by the amount of knowledge locked in the city, gathered here over the ages. She discovered that for her only a year had passed while 17 had gone by.

In Venice Codexial joined the Autumn court. She hated how her Keeper had tricked her into becoming his slave and sought to understand the workings of the Wyrd and through it have her revenge on the Fae.

Description: Codexial is small and thin. She wears concealing clothes, and her hair is tied back revealing her taut face. She is pretty, but she makes no advantage of it. Her age seems wise beyond their years.

Her Mien shows that she has skin like parchment, and she is dusty and shrinks away from others.

Her Mantle manifests as the rustle of

books pages and the musty smell of an old library. She appears as if illuminated by shrinking candles.

Storytelling Hints: Codexial is quiet, keeps to herself, and will sit for hours poring over books and scrolls. Her motley is much the same, and she only turns to them to work as a team when researching a specific issue. She misses her life as a mortal and is not beyond using some of the magic she has learned to improve things for herself.

Apparent Age: Late 50s

Court: Autumn

Seeming: Darkling

Kith: Antiquarian

Keeper: The Count of Divine Lust

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics (History, Venice) 4, Crafts 2, Investigation (Enigmas) 3, Occult (Fae) 5, Politics (Freehold) 3

Physical Skills: Larceny 2, Stealth 3

Social Skills: Expression (Oration) 3, Intimidation 2, Socialize (Lectures) 2, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Contacts (Museum Curator, Antique Book Dealer) 2, Harvest (Pledge) 3, Mantle (Autumn) 2, Resources 3

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Sloth

Health: 8

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Speed: 10

Wyrd: 3 (Glamour 12/3, 7 Goblin Fruits, 6 Pledges)

Contracts: Artifice 3, Smoke 2, Dreams 2, Hearth 2, Fleeting Autumn 3, Eternal Autumn 2, Carnival 1

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Occult), Commendation (Duke of Autumn), Commendation (The Doge)

Tristan Titian

Quote: "Sit still. Just another hour and this painting will be done!"

Background: Tristan was born in Mestre and had a typical and fairly uneventful childhood. His father worked at the airport while his mother worked in Venice as a tour guide. He was expected to do better, and he hoped to work in the banking sector and move to Rome or Milan.

One night, while out with his friends, Tristan saw strange lights in the sky. They came close, and he bathed in the eerie Fae light and was taken from the streets to Arcadia.

His Keepers, a collection of imps, maintained a perverted form of school. In the citadel hundreds of changelings were whipped and abused, forced to create every piece of art imaginable. The imps were looking for something, something only humans could create, but with each piece of art came the pain of torture and the threats of worse if the next piece was not better than the last.

Tristan spent hundreds of hours painting everything he could imagine. Sleep blurred with painting, and his bones ached from the beatings he took. He poured out his soul and in time became as small and powerless as his other wretched captive fellows.

Escape was not a real escape. Instead he was discarded. Tristan was burnt out. He had created every piece of art that he could ever imagine and more. Enough work for ten lifetimes. Returning to his parents, Tristan found that only one night had past, and he could no longer understand his family.

In Venice, Tristan discovered the Freehold and those changelings who directed him to the Autumn court. Knowledge rested in the works he had created, and through this he could command the very power his Fae Keepers had been trying to find.

Description: Tristan is a young man with long dark hair and dark eyes. His hands are long and nimble, and he wears fashionable clothes like any other student of the city. To some he is considered handsome, if a little weird.

His Mien displays his skin to be pale and splashed with bits of paint. His eyes are murky like water from washing brushes, and

his hair is equally stained. His back is covered in bruises from his durance.

His Mantle is the diffraction of light from a looking glass and the feathers of a crow.

Storytelling Hints: Tristan is a little mad, seeking to recreate the work he had made in Arcadia. His artwork is abstract, and to some he seems to suffer from autism. He loves looking at the work of other artists, hoping to discover something that he may have painted in Arcadia.

Apparent Age: Mid 20s

Court: Autumn

Seeming: Wizeden

Kith: Artist

Keeper: The Three of Three

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics (Art) 3, Crafts (Forgery, Painting) 4, Investigation 2, Occult 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 1, Larceny (Pick Pocket) 3, Stealth (Move Quietly) 2, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Ambidextrous 3, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Contacts (Fence, Antiques Dealer) 2, Harvest (Pledge) 2, Mantle (Spring) 2, Resources 2

Willpower: 5

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Envy

Health: 7

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Speed: 11 (13)

Wyrd: 3 (Glamour 12/3, 7 Goblin Fruits, 6 Pledges)

Contracts: Artifice 3, Vainglory 3, Smoke 2, Hearth 2, Dream 2, Fleeting Autumn 3

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Occult), Commendation (Duke of Autumn), Commendation (The Doge)

Other members of the Library of the Lion are the owl-like Windwing Beast called Athena, and the well read and poetic Cyclopean Ogre, Byron.

THE SILK ROAD PIRATES

The Silk Road Pirates are less pirates and more like explorers. The Hedge is indeed strange and difficult to navigate, but is even more confusing when the Hedge is accessed when upon water. The clear and crisp waters of the Venetian Lagoon give way to the stinking marshes and bogs of the Hedge. It is a twisting, winding maze of waterways and sodden islands where strange beasts lurk in the shadows amongst the thorny undergrowth. This landscape can be constantly shifting, but some trods exist having been cut through the water to form canals that have walls of cruel vines.

The Silk Road Pirates make it their job to map these watery parts of the Hedge, to discover the lost islands of Venice that have been consumed by Faerie, and to uncover treasure that has been lost within the misty networks of canals and shallows.

This task is not easy and requires changelings of great Clarity so that they are capable of perceiving the boundaries between our world and the Hedge and to spot the signs of Hobgoblins, Gentry and potential Hollows and trods.

Polo

Quote: *“Look lively scallywags!”, “Finocchio! (fag!)”, “Tua mamma bocchinara! (Your’s mother’s a fluffer!)”*

Background: Polo originally was from a coastal town on in Sicily, stolen from his family in the early fifties when he was just 15. Polo, then just Guido, worked with his father and brothers as a fisherman. It was happy life and he, like his brothers, grew up strong, though considered simple by his school friends.

It was on a stormy night, when Guido was sent out by his father to check that the boats had been tied up properly, that Guido was stolen away by the Hobgoblin pirates of Commodore Fathom. There on the deck of Leviathan, the twisted ship made from the carcass of a blue whale, Guido was whipped into shape, forced to work on board the ship amongst the other Lost who had been taken from around the world. The Leviathan was a

hard place to live as strange Hobgoblins barked orders, and the Leviathan engaged in tremendous battles against other ships in the rolling waters of Arcadia.

13 years passed on the Leviathan while in the real world 24 had gone by. Guido, taking a knife, broke free from the bonds that held him to the ship, and he grabbed a barrel and leapt overboard, and soon found himself on the shores of the Lido in Venice.

Polo spent his early time in Venice amongst the House of Autumn. He discovered that his fetch, a vile duplicate of himself, had left the family home, and in doing so had abandoned his father and mother. His brothers also had trouble understanding how their brother Guido had apparently changed.

Within the Autumn court Polo tried to learn more about his Keeper and where these creatures come from. He was angry, but like his father, he wanted to understand the Fae just as he understood the seas. He began to venture into the Hedge more frequently so that he could map the trods and help those escapees. Overtime he improved this skill of navigating the Hedge, and also the other supernatural realms that bleed into the Venetian lagoon.

To the other Houses Polo is something of a madman, venturing into danger on a whim. But he also is a troublemaker. On behalf of the House of Autumn, Polo has taken it upon himself to confiscate items that present a danger to the Freehold. To the other Houses he is a literal pirate, stealing what is not his for the House of Autumn. That is not to say that he doesn't abuse his position as a form of customs and excise officer, but in general the items that are taken have been a real concern to the Freehold and the Doge. In order to perform this duty better, Polo has gathered together a motley.

Due to his experience with traversing the Hedge, Polo has been given the title of Briar Ranger within the House of Autumn, however, this title is known only to those within the House.

Description: Polo is well-built and tanned Italian, with a broad brow and dark curly hair that has grown into dreadlocks. He is almost six and a half feet tall and muscled,

with the hands of a man who works tirelessly with rope and at sea. His beard is thick and matted and he is almost always smoking a cigarette he has just rolled. As an Ogre of the Water-Dweller kith, Polo has scaly skin like that of a turtle, while his neck is lined with gills and his body is covered with coral and shellfish in places. His mantle manifests as the twinkling of light on the seas, the sea life on his body moving ever so slowly, and a chill sea wind.

Storytelling Hints: Polo, though an Ogre, is still very quick-witted. Though he would rather others didn't know, he does have the best in mind for his crew and the Freehold, but he often plays up to expectations of either being a rebel or a pirate. But then this better serves the needs of the House of Autumn to cause fear in those who travel the Hedge.

Apparent Age: Mid 40s

Court: Autumn

Seeming: Ogre

Kith: Water-Dweller

Keeper: Commodore Fathom

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Crafts (wood working) 3, Investigation 2, Occult (Hedge) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Drive (Boats) 3, Larceny 2, Stealth 2, Survival (Sea) 2, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Intimidation (Physical) 3, Persuasion 2, Socialize (Barfly) 1

Merits: Contacts (Fishermen, Divers) 2, Direction Sense 1, Fighting Style (Boxing) 4, Harvest (Hedge Bounty) 2, Mantle (Autumn) 3, Resources 2, Strong Back 1, Token 3.

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Greed

Health: 8

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 12

Wyrd: 4 (Glamour 14/3, 10 Goblin Fruits, 7 Pledges)

Contracts: Elements (Water 2), Fleeting Autumn 2, Stone 3, Dream 4, Carnival 1

Pledges: Good Neighbors Pact (Jager), Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Survival), Commendation (The Silent Skull), Commendation (Doge)

Token: The Hungry Arrow (3, Rites of Spring page 148)

Barbosa

Quote: "Worse things stalk these waters. ME!"

Background: Barbosa originates from the longest surviving principalities still in existence, San Marino. He, like his father, was very much into any form of racing, and it was hoped that he might make his way into professional motor sports. He spent much of the warm summers either driving one of his father's sports cars (his family being well off and so owned numerous car showrooms) or powering about the bay on a jet ski. Barbosa was something of a hot head, often getting into ludicrous bets with his friends, and became something of a womanizer by the age of 17.

Everything changed on the night of his 18th birthday when fate caught up with his family. A storm rolled in from the sea and the bay with a thrashing nightmare. Lightning split the sky and thunder boomed. Boats and ships were all tied up and everyone stayed in the dry safety of their homes. All except his father who stood on the edge of the dock, weeping and screaming. "Don't take him! My only son. Please don't take him!" Barbosa (back then just Tomas) went searching for him and found him at the dock, looking on as the hulking form of the Leviathan approached, its twisted captain, the crustacean-like Commodore Fathom, stood at the prow with a satisfied grin on his face. Hobgoblins jumped to shore and made ready for their captain. Fathom stomped to shore and approached the weeping man. "You truly are a wretched man. No use amongst my crew. But your son has grown to be a fine boy. Our deal still stands. Your

freedom must be repaid by your bloodline spending 100 years on the Fathom.”

Barbosa's father wept and begged the captain to not take his son, but Fathom had no sense of compassion. “You pathetic dog. This is the price for the life you have enjoyed at my expense. I demand his soul!” With that the Hobgoblin crew dragged Barbosa away, onto to the Leviathan.

Barbosa spent just 11 years in service to Fathom and the Leviathan. He learned the ways of the ship, naval warfare and the pain of failure. His back was often turned into ragged flesh by a whip. But Barbosa was no fool and was slowly coming up with a way to escape the watery gloom of the Leviathan. He found a loop hole. The term 'bloodline' could be meant literally. He drew his blood on the deck of the Leviathan and found he was no longer bound to the service of Fathom, the ship or the vast oceanic hell-realm that Fathom ruled.

Returning to San Marino Barbosa had not aged one day, while his family had carried on without him. He looked on and watched his father play with his new son, a small boy of 5. It stung Barbosa how easily it seemed his father and family had forgotten about him, and he did eventually face his father to demand why any of this had happened in the first place.

Since his return Barbosa has made his peace with his family but has chosen to stay away so that they may be safe from any form of retribution by Fathom. He journeyed to Venice, hearing of the great court that existed there, and it did not take long for Barbosa to meet Polo and his motley of pirate changelings. Polo and Barbosa shared a common history, that they had both served on the Leviathan and so both shared a bitter hatred of the Commodore.

Amongst Polo's crew Barbosa has gained a reputation as a mean-spirited, tough and hardy man, not adverse to using force to get his way and finish a job. For this reason he also has the honor of being one of the Crimson Knights of the city, acting as an elite soldier when called upon by the Summer Duke. However, the orders of both his peers amongst the Knights, and the Duke, have brought him

into disrepute within the Court of Carnival and he is watched to ensure he doesn't start causing chaos and leading a personal vendetta against one of the Gentry. Amongst Polo's crew his role of Crimson Knight is just the leverage the Captain needs in order to pursue their role of explorers and customs and excise. Dangerous items identified by the Captain have often been difficult to acquire by civil means. With Barbosa's might these items have been ruthlessly removed.

Description: Barbosa is a towering man of muscle, his head clean-shaven and his face round and crossed with a wide grin. He is certainly a match for his Captain, but where his captain lacks grace, Barbosa hides an agility behind his brutish exterior. Being of the Beast Seeming, and a Swimmerskin, Barbosa's Seeming gives him the appearance of a shark. His mouth is lined with rows upon rows of razor sharp teeth, his eyes a beady and black, and his nose is a pointed snout. His mantle, being of summer, gives the appearance of warm, tropical seas.

Storytelling Hints: Barbosa is not the most calm of people, and quickly reacts violently. That is not to say that he is not smart, as he plans out attacks with the mind of a cold-hearted killer. He has no worries that others in the Freehold regard him with dread, a reputation that has gotten him far in the House of Summer. He will often challenge the rule of the city and will come to blows with the agents of the Volto or other Houses, but pays respect to both his Duke and his Captain.

Apparent Age: Mid 20s

Court: Summer

Seeming: Beasts

Kith: Swimmerskin

Keeper: Commodore Fathom

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 1

Mental Skills: Crafts (Wood Working) 2, Occult (Hedge) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3 (Swim), Brawl 3 (4), Drive (Boats) 2, Larceny 1, Stealth 1, Survival (Sea) 2, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Intimidation (Physical) 4, Streetwise 2

Merits: Contacts (Smuggler) 1, Court Goodwill (Autumn) 1, Fighting Style (Boxing) 2, Giant 4, Harvest (Hedge Bounty) 2, Mantle (Summer) 2, Resources 1, Strong Lungs 3, Token 1.

Willpower: 4

Clarity: 6

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Wrath

Health: 9

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 14

Wyrd: 2 (Glamour 11/2, 5 Goblin Fruits, 5 Pledges)

Contracts: Fang and Talon (Sharks) 3 (Cephalopods) 1, Fleeting Summer 2, Dream 3

Pledges: Good Neighbors Pact (Jager), Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Survival), The Knight's Oath (Admiral Galleon), Commendation (Doge)

Token: Ace in the Hole (1)

Mosto

Quote: *"More wine? No? How about a Campari? Rum maybe... hey where has all the rum gone?"*

Background: Mosto was originally from France. It was just after WWII, and he and his family were struggling through the reconstruction of the country. It was while he was out in the ruins of his hometown that he saw strange flickering lights in the night sky. While his fetch returned to his wife and child, he was being experimented on. His body was mutilated, his blood replaced with various alchemical fluids. Altered, Mosto was tasked with aiding his Keeper in the creation of more mystical fluids in their machine realm. What the Keeper didn't count on was Mosto learning enough to create a fluid that would be able to cut through the walls of his cell and allow him to escape.

Mosto returned, through the Hedge, to France, to find that while he had only aged a few years, 50 years had passed. His child had grown old and had a family of their own. His wife had passed away, and his fetch now was rotting away in a jail for the murder of two men. Mosto's life had been taken from him

and twisted. He had no life there anymore, and so instead he traveled south, into the French wilderness where for many years he worked at a vineyard, preparing wine and helping in the maintenance of vines. It was here that he perfected his art.

Though the French countryside was thinly populated, Mosto did come into contact with other changelings who were passing through. Some had just escaped Arcadia while others were moving from one city Freehold to another. But it was one group of visitors that changed Mosto's life of seclusion. Loyalists. Mosto was chased through the fields and vineyards by this band of fiends. On his heels he could hear the growls of his Keeper's hounds, and all Mosto could do was keep running. Hiding in a town, his pursuers became bored, and he heard the screams of a young girl as she was taken away back to Arcadia. Mosto was distraught. His fear of his Keeper had led to another being dragged away into hellish realm of the Gentry.

Mosto was now driven by a new goal, to never live in the fear, True Fae. It was time to live the life he had denied himself for so many years. Mosto eventually reached the south coast of France and from there travelled to Italy, and onwards to Venice.

Mosto's arrival in Venice was not the most welcome, as he was picked up by a band of Summer Courtiers, eager to find some sort of sport or potential Loyalist to beat up. Mosto was lucky as Polo and his motley of Silk Road Pirates waded into the fight. They rescued the Brewer and returned to their yacht.

Since his arrival in Venice, Mosto has joined the House of Spring, and is a well respected Brewer, his skills often being sought out before a party or gathering is held. But Mosto has maintained his friendship with the Silk Road Pirates. Within their number Mosto has become their surgeon, cook and brewer. Though he may not be strong, or the best of fighters, he is certainly capable of tending to the injuries of his fellow pirates.

Mosto is typically a jolly fellow, though he is careful to never become too intoxicated for fear that his indulgence would put him at the mercy of the Gentry.

Description: Mosto is around 5' 11" but so thin he appears almost anorexic. He has a clean-shaven look, pronounced cheekbones and pale skin. His hands are equally long and slender, and his voice is a hushed whisper, punctuated by his cackling. He tends to wear functional clothes, the sleeves rolled up and an apron over the top to prevent the spillage of liquids from staining his clothes.

His Mien shows that his skin is more green, his eyes are black almonds, his ears are not even present.

His Mantle of spring manifests as the smell of vineyard blossom, and takes the appearance of this blossom.

Storytelling Hints: Mosto is jovial, regardless what task he is given. He takes great delight in seeing the reaction that others have to his latest concoction, and he is known to make an impressive cocktail. At a party Mosto is usually the last to be drunk, but will encourage others to drink.

Apparent Age: Mid 40s

Court: Spring

Seeming: Wizenod

Kith: Brewer

Keeper: The Sleepless Hundred

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts (Glass Blowing) 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 3, Occult (Hedge, Hedge Fruits) 3, Science 3

Physical Skills: Brawl 2, Drive (Boats) 1, Larceny 3, Stealth 2

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Persuasion (Fast-Talking) 3, Socialize (Bars) 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Barfly 1, Contacts (Bartender, Market Stall Spice Seller) 2, Court Goodwill (Autumn) 1, Harvest (Hedge Bounty) 3, Hollow: Size 2, Amenities 2, Doors 1, Iron Stomach 2, Language (Italian) 1, Mantle (Spring) 2, Resources 2.

Willpower: 4

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Wrath

Health: 8

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Wyrd: 3 (Glamour 12/3, 7 Goblin Fruits, 6 Pledges)

Contracts: Artifice 3, Eternal Spring 3, Dream 3

Pledges: Good Neighbors Pact (Jager), Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Survival), Commendation (Vernal Duke), Commendation (Doge)

Drake

Quote: *"I spy on the horizon, profit! Captain I hope I cut a good cut this time? Bloody Italians"*

Background: Drake was born in England, just outside of city of Bristol. He had a fairly normal life in the suburbs. His parents argued, his sister got married and divorced in the space of 3 years, and when he was 18 he stayed in the city and trained in graphic design at the college. He had a skill for the fine arts, but his obsession with his work made him something of a recluse. He would sit in his room in the flat he shared, smoking weed and drinking gin while he worked on his latest piece. When he did work up the energy to go out socially, he would go to the local metal night, and sit in the corner smoking and drinking. He enjoyed the company of a number of women but nothing became permanent.

It was one night on the way back from a club in the cold winter, he was approached by a woman dressed in red, her hair had an almost wet sheen to it. She spoke with a husky voice, asking Drake, "What is it you wish for most in life". His answer was everything the Fae needed. "I want to be free of this world. You know, like a bird. Free from people just as an eagle is free of the earth," he replied.

With that the Fae, Mistress of the Twelve Pelts of Fenris, led Drake down the street. She spoke sweet nothings into his ear about how he is better than these other people in the city, that his sight is his gift, and that others are jealous of him. The streets of Bristol gave way to the Hedge. For Drake the skies

seemed to become clear, the Hedge shrinking away as he found himself lost in his ability to fly. He could fly! But at a price; his foot was bound to the Mistress. He had been seduced and slowly forgot his previous life.

Years past, and Drake served his mistress as a bird of prey, scouring her domain for their quarry. But it was after the last hunt where they chased a poor human child, that Drake remembered his past life. Seeing his chance to escape from his cage, Drake flew high and fast, his feathers and beak receding as he pushed back through the Hedge.

Drake found himself on the Lion's Tail Trod, the wide expanse in the Hedge with putrid water flowing through it. Spotting others on the banks of the trod, Drake fled from them, fearing they were his Keeper's agents. Looking for an escape route Drake fell through the Hedge and back into Venice.

Here in Venice, Drake was taken into the care of the local Freehold, and he soon found a place amongst the House of Autumn, as Drake, having a good eye for items, became their man for finding relics and tokens. It was this skill in appraising goods that caught Polo's attention, and Drake was invited to join his crew, needing a good lookout and someone with the gift of the gab.

Amongst the Freehold Drake is something of a haughty womanizer. He often gets into verbal fights, exchanging witty remarks and socially wrecking other changelings' reputations. He is also considered a show off and pretentious, and amongst Polo's crew he is the best dressed and also the one who gets the crew into the most fights.

As far as his family is concerned, he is now a failed designer living in London, his fetch living a mundane and heartless life, something that Drake has no desire to return to.

Description: Drake is around 5' 8'' and thin. His hair is wild and shoulder length. He has a pointed nose and yellow eyes. He is slender and well dressed. A sort of fop. He has well-manicured hands and nail vanish.

His Mien shows that his hair is filled with black and green feathers, his nails are fine talons, and from beneath the cuffs and collars

of his jacket more feathers protrude.

His Mantle manifests as the twinkling of light off his feathers, the dying sounds of a kestrel's screech, the smell of apples.

Storytelling Hints: Drake is a trickster and a fop. He is a pretentious womanizer and has a curious collection of tokens, trifles, artifacts and pieces of art. He is discerning and dislikes people who have no sense of magic or mystery.

Apparent Age: Mid 20s

Court: Autumn

Seeming: Beasts

Kith: Windwing

Keeper: Mistress of the Twelve Pelts of Ferris

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Crafts (Drawing) 2, Investigation 2, Occult (Tokens) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Drive (Boats) 1, Larceny 3, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Weaponry (Rapier) 2

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Persuasion (Fast-Talking) 3, Socialize (Bars) 3, Streetwise (Black Market) 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Barfly 1, Contacts (Black Market Dealer) 2, Harvest (Emotions) 2, Hollow: Size 2, Amenities 4, Doors 1, Language (Italian) 1, Mantle (Autumn) 1, Resources 3, Token 3

Willpower: 4

Clarity: 6

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Envy

Health: 7

Initiative: 8

Defense: 4

Speed: 11

Wyrd: 2 (Glamour 11/2, 5 Goblin Fruits, 5 Pledges)

Contracts: Fang and Talon (Birds) 3, Fleeting Autumn 2, Mirror 2, Dream 2

Pledges: Good Neighbors Pact (Jager), Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Survival)

Tokens: Hedgespun Raiment 2, Trifles: 2 Sweetblood, 1 Glimmerbraid

There are a few other members of Polo's crew. Gondalino is an Autumn

Courtier, a Wizeded Woodworker who is in charge of maintaining the boats they use. He's an irritable carpenter but a diligent designer. Maria Cutlass is a young ship hand, and a member of the House of Spring. A Draconic Fairest, she is hot-tempered but free-spirited, enjoying the company of her crew-mates and a good fight.

THE SKULLS OF ARLECCHINO

The Skulls are one of the motleys that run the House of Autumn's *commedia dell'arte*. They perform improvised plays which focus on morality, humility and mystery. Through these plays, and their involvement in the Teatro Fenice, the Skulls and their fellow motleys can influence the rich and the intellectuals that come to see the plays. Furthermore, the Skulls and the House of Autumn use these plays to teach mortals and Changelings alike to fear the unknown. The majority of these plays will show the ways to notice the Fae, the dangers of interacting with them, and how to fend them off. But also, amongst these tales, the House of Autumn will warn humans about Vampires, Mages and other strange beings that lurk in the night.

The Skulls major focus is the depiction of horror, tragedy and cultivating fear in the audience. The Skulls are lead by Eric Red Mask, a self-styled 'phantom of the opera'. He is considered an expert on the subject of the Grand Guignol, and enjoys the use of illusion and stage magic for his bloody plays.

Eric Red

Quote: <Quoting 'The Phantom of the Opera'> "Why so silent, good monsieurs? Did you think that I had left you for good? Have you missed me, good monsieurs? I have written you an opera!", "Welcome Ladies and Gentlemen. You shall witness untold horrors, hear tales of maddening mystery, and feel fear pulse through your veins!"

Background: Eric was born in Spain, in Barcelona, and was a promising student of the sciences. He was not into sports and was considered a weakling by his fellow students at high school. He suffered from bullying for

years, and it was when out on a school excursion that he fled from his bullies and into a cave. While the rest of his class was on the beach for the field trip, he went further into the cave, and deeper, losing sense of where he was. When he looked back, he saw that the real world had faded away and the cave entrance was gone and instead there was the darkness of the Hedge.

Stumbling through the Hedge Eric came upon the Circus of the Black Flame. The Ringmaster of 7 Smiles captured the trespasser and so Eric was slung into a cage with other poor changelings who were kept by the Fae for his shows.

Over time Eric performed for his master, trained to perform tricks and to look out for other Fae who might steal from the Ringmaster's collection. But Eric was brutally beaten and shaped to the whims of the Ring Master, and his mortal self was flayed away to leave the ghastly amorphous face of clay. Eric was a Mirrorskin.

His escape came as the cage was opened one night by others who had escaped their prisons. The Ringmaster pursued his escaping pets, riding atop a twisted, gargantuan elephant-like creature. But Eric was clever, and shaped his face to that of one of the goblins that had attended the Circus.

Returning to the mortal realm Eric found himself emerging from the Venetian canal. Shivering from the cold, he was taken in by the Freehold and eventually he joined the House of Autumn. Initially he was a member of the House of Winter, but he could not console himself to a life without a connection to others. However, he was interested in the magic that had shaped him. No longer did he want to fear his life being taken away, so instead he sought to find the means to protect himself from the Fae.

Since joining the House of Autumn, Eric has worked with many motleys, before creating his own. He has become a master of illusion and slight of hand, and has taken it upon himself to ensure that others do not suffer as he has. So his aim is to educate with fear, and so to others he comes across as a dark, gothic, individual with a grim sense of

humour. Within the Teatro Fenice, his motley has one main rival within the House of Autumn, and also conflicts with the Lords of Love, The Hundred Masks and the Keepers of the Imaginarium. Often the conflict comes from Eric causing disruption by sowing the seeds of distrust and fear. In particular he is hated by Silver Heart and Malvolio.

Unknown to his motley, and known only to the lord of the House of Autumn, Eric is the Ashen Notary, using his control over his form and the darkness to watch other changelings in order to discern the nature of the pledges they have committed to. It is also for this role that he is the Bauta to the Court of Carnival, as the role requires the same sort of skills.

Description: Eric is dressed like a gentleman of the 19th century, in a tailcoat and top hat. However, his face is now almost forgettable and his skin is unnaturally smooth, like melted wax.

His mien shows that his face is like wax, constantly shifting and dripping onto his clothes.

His mantle manifests as the sound of violins playing, dust falling away from his clothes, the smell of burning candles, the stain of red berries where he walks.

Storytelling Hints: Eric is a showman, a womanizer and a creep. He cannot help but take opportunities to be the centre of attention and to spook others. He plays at being the brooding poet, when in fact he is twisted and decadent. He is not above victimizing others to make a point.

Apparent Age: Early 30s

Court: Autumn

Seeming: Darkling

Kith: Mirrorskin

Keeper: The Ringmaster

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Crafts 3, Investigation 4, Occult (Magic) 4, Politics (Freehold) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Larceny 3, Stealth (Disguise) 4, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Empathy (Emotions, Lies) 2, Expression (Acting, Opera) 5, Intimidation (Veiled Threats) 2, Persuasion (Seduction) 3, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Allies (Theatre, Hotel Owner) 2, Contacts (Conductor, Music Composer) 2, Harvest (Emotions) 3, Mantle (Autumn) 4, Mantle (Carnival) 4, Resources 4, Retainers 2

Willpower: 7

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Gluttony

Health: 8

Initiative: 7

Defense: 4

Speed: 12

Wyrd: 6 (Glamour 15/6, 25 Goblin Fruits, 9 Pledges)

Contracts: Dream 4, Mirror 4, Darkness 3, Fleeting Autumn 4, Eternal Autumn 3, Carnival 4

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Expression), Commendation (Duke of Autumn), Knight's Oath (The Doge)

Frailty: Minor Bane - Pain by touch of Mercury.

Derangements: Anxiety

Sidney Cygnus

Quote: "You are born with beauty and grace, or it is torn out from within you."

Background: Sidney was a renowned dancer in New York, performing in musicals and ballet, with world class production teams. She led a strict lifestyle and punished her body which meant she had no time for others.

It was this dedication to her art that led to her making a bargain with an old woman. The woman, who she met on the streets of SoHo, promised that Sidney would have endless grace, like that of a swan, if she would dance for her. Sidney, bemused, performed a little for the old crone. But when she stopped the deal went sour, and Sidney realized the error she had made. The woman did not state that she could stop dancing, and so by the rules of the pledge Sidney was taken back to the old crone's castle in Arcadia. Sidney was caged and hung from the rafters and made to dance all day, until her feet bled.

After some time Sidney forgot herself and knew only the dance. She had become the Swan, and her prison had twisted her into the embodiment of the Black Swan, the sensual and dark personification of dance.

The crone eventually became tired of the creature she had captured and set Sidney free, releasing her back into the real world, and to Venice.

In Venice, Sidney found herself initially with the House of Spring. She would dance for them and act as entertainment. However, she became tired of the shallow nature of those of the House and sought to discover how to find her humanity once more, just like the princess of Swan Lake, and so joined the House of Autumn, using her skills to teach others the dangers of the Fae and what you wish for.

Description: Sidney is in her mid-twenties, thin and light, with taut and angular features. She moves with grace and wears either flowing clothes or gym clothes when training. Her hair is tied back into a bun.

Her mien displays her eyes to be black and beady, with feathers lining her eyes. She has white skin and black feathers sprouting from her hair and hands.

Her mantle is long shadows, the sound of violins and the sickly smell of cooked apples.

Storytelling Hints: Sidney is aloof, graceful, but filled with spite. She is set upon learning how to undo what has been done to her by the Fae. She is not above using her knowledge of the Fae against other changelings to obtain what she needs.

She follows Eric and his goals for the motley, and finds his attacks on the House of Spring amusing, for she finds that the Spring courtiers are all style over substance.

Apparent Age: Mid 20s

Court: Autumn

Seeming: Beasts

Kith: Windwing

Keeper: The Crone of the Citadel of Fingers

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Investigation 2, Occult 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 4 (Gymnastics), Brawl 3, Stealth (Move Quietly) 3, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Empathy 2, Expression (Dance) 5, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 4, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Ambidextrous 3, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Contacts (Dance Teacher, Harpist, Café Owner) 3, Harvest (Pledge) 4, Mantle (Autumn) 3, Resources 2

Willpower: 7

Clarity: 6

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Envy

Health: 9

Initiative: 8

Defense: 3

Speed: 12 (14)

Wyrd: 4 (Glamour 13/4, 10 Goblin Fruits, 7 Pledges)

Contracts: Fang and Talon (Birds) 3, Mirror 3, Vainglory 3, Fleeting Spring 2, Eternal Spring 3, Carnival 1

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Expression), Commendation (Duke of Autumn)

Scaramuccia

Quote: *“I see the dance of the Carnival. I see through the eyes of the mask of fate. And I can see that the Wyrd has something in store for you.”*, *“Three crows circle, and the clocks strikes 10. The child cries out and the lion will roar!”*

Background: Scaramuccia was a young girl growing up in the city of Padua. Her mother was a successful doctor and her father an engineer. She had all the toys she needed, but it would be greed that would be her undoing when she stole a doll from an antique shop. That night, the Fae lord, Her Smile of Moon Beams and Opals, came into her room and dragged her into the Hedge through the wardrobe.

Scaramuccia was made to perform the most mundane of jobs. She was hit and beaten as she scurried about after her master, picking

up books, trinkets and clothes. But it was out of curiosity that Scaramuccia looked into the crystal ball of her master, and her mind was overwhelmed. She could see how she was to escape, and escape she did, able to pick her way back to the mortal realm, and to Venice.

As a seer Scaramuccia is bombarded with visions, and her dreams of the future are vivid. Troubled by these visions, she was taken in by the House of Autumn, and by Eric, who helped her channel this power. Considered mad by many, she is an important seer in the Freehold and is Eric's mad jester, and thus she is the House of Autumn's Fool of the First Frost. With her insight she is able to lend important points of view on political issues within the Freehold. In addition, her madness and vision are the perfect distraction, allowing Eric and others of the House of Autumn to take action unopposed.

To the general population Scaramuccia is a streetside fortuneteller and street artist. She often will cause children fright so that she can protect them from the Fae, and in some rare instances even stalks a family just to prevent another child from being taken by the Fae and so stops the vision she has seen.

Description: Scaramuccia is a messy young woman. She looks like a gypsy, with her hair tied up into many small knots, and her eyes daubed with lots of eye shadow. Some passerby's may think she was a goth or simply homeless.

Her Mien shows that her skin is deathly pale, and she is small and thin. Her eyes are pupil-less and a deep blue.

Her Mantle is composed of the smell of fermenting grain, a chill breeze and the smell of opium.

Storytelling Hints: Scaramuccia is delusional and has moments where her grip on reality fades away. She has little memory of her time before her durance in Faerie, and lives as one of the homeless in Venice.

She is polite to those her give her charity, but curses those that do not heed her warnings. Amongst the Fae this is no different.

Apparent Age: Mid 20s

Court: Autumn

Seeming: Wizened

Kith: Oracle

Keeper: Her Smile of Moon Beams and Opals

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics (Venice), Crafts (Carving) 2, Investigation (Enigmas) 3, Occult (Astrology, Fae, Pyromancy) 4

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

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Meditative Mind 1, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Contacts (Beggars) 2, Harvest (Pledge) 5, Mantle (Autumn) 4

Willpower: 8

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Greed

Health: 7

Initiative: 6

Defense: 2

Speed: 9 (11)

Wyrd: 4 (Glamour 13/4, 10 Goblin Fruits, 7 Pledges)

Contracts: Artifice 3, Dream 4, Hearth 4, Eternal Autumn 4, Smoke 3, Goblin Contracts: Diviner's Madness 2

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Expression), Commendation (Duke of Autumn)

Derangements: Schizophrenia

Other members of the Skulls are the Darkling Gravewight mime, Master White, and the Fairest Muse narrator, Melpomene.

THE GREEN CAPS

The Green Caps are a motley devoted to growing plants, keeping animals and harvesting items and curiosities from the Hedge. The motley masquerades as a collection of local fish farmers and live on the island of Burano in the North of the lagoon.

Much like the Silk Road Pirates, the Green Caps are skilled navigators of the Hedge and know the local Goblin Market well.

But their real skill comes in the creation of hedgespun items.

Captain Saor

Quote: *“Just a little bit more seasoning and this soup will perk you right up.”*

Background: Saor grew up on the coastline of the Adriatic, in Montenegro. He worked for his father, a grocer. It was when out with friends at the beach that Saor was taken. He was swimming, having dived off a cliff face, and after swimming for sometime found that he could no longer find his way back. In fact the only bits of land he could find were small outcrops that were covered in thickets and thorny brambles.

Standing there on the shore, with a blanket of mist rolling in off the water, Saor watched as a ship approached. Strange fishermen lurked on deck, and the Leviathan stopped before the small island. Saor was dragged on board and brought before Commodore Fathom.

Saor was made to work below deck for decades. He was lashed a number of times, and the time spent at sea shaped Saor into an embodiment of the sea. His body was covered in barnacles and seaweed, and he worked tirelessly on deck.

Saor eventually escaped, finding a chance to escape when the Leviathan docked to once more allow its crew to go ashore to capture more people. Saor dove into the water and slipped away, his body now in tune with the element of water.

Arriving in Venice, Saor initially joined Polo's Silk Road Pirates, before forming his own motley. During his time on the Leviathan, Saor had become a capable fisher and now, like Polo and his crew, navigates the local Hedge, mapping trods and harvesting the strange bounty of the Hedge.

Saor is a capable sailor and is equally skilled in navigation of the Hedge, but is a better alchemist. He knows all the right places to find goblin fruits, where to catch the whispering fish and the slime crabs.

Description: Saor is large and bulky. His hair is slick and lank, and he has a large

beard. He looks like he has been at sea for years. He looks like a typical fisherman of the islands, dressed in waterproof clothing and warm woolen jumpers.

His Mien shows that he has blue-tinged skin and is covered in barnacles and seaweed. His eyes are black and his beard is filled with sea creatures.

His Mantle manifests as a cold breeze and the light from a lighthouse blinking.

Storytelling Hints: Saor is grim and hardworking. He enjoys his food and drink and preparing meals for others. He expects his crew to work just as hard.

Apparent Age: Early 30s

Court: Autumn

Seeming: Elemental

Kith: Waterborn

Keeper: Commodore Fathom

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics (Horticulture) 3, Crafts 2, Investigation 3, Medicine 3, Occult (Hedge Fruit, Alchemy) 4, Science 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (Swim) 3, Brawl 3, Drive (Boat) 2, Larceny 1, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Intimidation 2, Persuasion 1, Socialize 2, Streetwise (Fishermen, Black Market) 2, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Allies (Fisherman, Herbalist) 2, Contacts (Fisherman, Bar Owner) 2, Harvest (Hedge Fruit) 4, Mantle (Autumn) 3, Resources 2

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 6

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Gluttony

Health: 8

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Wyrd: 4 (Glamour 13/4, 10 Goblin Fruits, 7 Pledges)

Contracts: Elements (Water) 3, Elements (Plants) 3, Elements (Wind) 3, Eternal Autumn 4, Dream 4

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Occult)

Dr Morphine

Quote: *“Take this twice a day. Yes it is made of leeches.”, “Now which arm do you prefer?”*

Background: Dr Morphine was a respected doctor of medicine in San Francisco when he was taken. It was while walking back one night that he was chased through the streets by a strange creeping figure, made of shifting flesh and metal. He ran, watching it effortlessly throwing obstacles out of the way and tearing down chain link fences.

Morphine passed out and awoke in a cage filled with straw that smelt of excrement and blood. Outside he watched as the twisted creature auctioned him off to a large, thuggish-looking creature. The man, if it was one, was so large that it stood almost 20 feet tall and had a mouth of tusks.

Morphine was taken back to the beast’s mountain home, nothing more than a large cave filled with the bones of its prey. Other changelings scuttled about. They were hulking monsters having feasted off the leftovers of their master. Morphine was thrown in with this group and made to gather food for his new master.

Over time, and with constant punishment and feeding on raw flesh and bone marrow, Morphine evolved into an equally lumbering creature. His flesh was thick and his teeth were now strong and sharp.

Morphine’s escape came as he remembered his life as a mortal, and he concocted for his master a potion to make him sleep. The giant did sleep, and so the ogre slaves made their escape.

Morphine made his way back through the Hedge and found his way to Venice. He was picked up on the Lion’s Tail trod and taken back to the city. He was initially given over to the House of Summer, however, Morphine, being a doctor, wanted to understand more about what he had become and how he may reclaim his life. And so he joined the House of Autumn. His knowledge of medicine, coupled with his growing knowledge of the Fae which has made him a skilled doctor for the Lost of the city, and so he holds the title of Medico della Pesta, having to deal with the Vampires of the city. His large

bulk is an impressive deterrent to those Vampires that would try and attack him.

Description: Morphine is large and bloated. He wears a suit that barely conceals his large belly. He has ruddy cheeks and jowls, with a double chin. He appears sweaty and has chubby hands.

His mien displays that he is somewhat larger, and his mouth is filled with terrible teeth. He has filth from his food down his front, and his stomach is even larger and distended.

His mantle is the smell of various cooked meats, pumpkin and the smell of sickly fruit.

Storytelling Hints: Dr Morphine is sadistic and a glutton. He has no time for wimps when he knows that the best cures are often the most painful, scarring, or simply taste bad.

Morphine hates the Fae with a passion, and actively tries to experiment on others to find a way to be mortal once again.

Apparent Age: Mid 50s

Court: Autumn

Seeming: Ogre

Kith: Gristlegrinder

Keeper: The King of Blood and Fat

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Investigation 3, Medicine (Operation) 4, Occult 3, Science 3

Physical Skills: Brawl (Biting) 3, Larceny 3, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Iron Stomach 2, Natural Immunity 1, Contacts (Doctor, Gangster) 2, Harvest (Pledge) 2, Mantle (Autumn) 2, Resources 2

Willpower: 5

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Gluttony

Health: 10

Initiative: 4

Defense: 2

Speed: 10

Wyrd: 3 (Glamour 12/3, 7 Goblin Fruits, 6 Pledges)

Contracts: Stone 4, Mirror 4, Eternal Autumn 4, Dream 3

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness – Occult)

Other members of the Green Caps are the Fairest Flowering gardener, Horatio Hawthorn, and the fox-like Hunterheart Beast, Montgomery Redcoat.

THE WORDLESS

The Wordless are a motley involved in crime. Many mortals think they are the Mafia, or drug dealers, or immigrant criminals. There is some truth in this, as they make use of their contacts in these circles to promote fear. However, they cultivate this fear, and their links with these nefarious groups and organizations, so that they may get better access to tools and allies that they can use against the Fae and their servants.

More importantly the Wordless motley is in fact the motley who claims the Silent Skull as a member, something which is not known to any of the Freehold or the House, such is the secrecy the Silent Skull maintains. Instead, using the Wordless, and other trusted motleys, the Silent Skull can promote their goals and commands without ever having to appear before their subjects. Fear is the tool of power, paranoia drives all motleys to perform their best, and terror is the tool they wish to claim from the Silent Skull so they may strike at their enemies.

Mad Dog

Quote: <GROWLS> “Hey punk! What you looking at?!”, “You better have the money or tomorrow I am going break your legs and set my dog on you!”

Background: Mad Dog grew up in Florence and was a grade A student. His family were typical small town folk, while he had won a scholarship to attend university at Florence. He studied the arts and history, and he built up a number of friends and even had a girlfriend. He had a straight run to a PhD, but fate had other things in store for him.

It was one evening in the library, and he was pouring over a book of Renaissance art. He was busy working on his thesis and so he went looking for another book he required. In the depths of the library, in the quiet of the late hours, Dog found a book on fairytales. He briefly looked at the book and then simply placed the book haphazardly on the shelf. As the book fell to the floor the pages flipped opened and from the pages emerged the Hunter of the Endless Woods of Screaming Tears. He was tall and elven like. At his side dire wolves snarled, and they stalked through the library looking for Dog. Dog ran for his life, his mind racing as he tried to make sense of what was happening. Every door he got to denied him entrance, and he ran from the being that chased after him. His blood went cold as he heard it blow its horn once more, and backed into a dead end in the university. The wolves were upon him and the Hunter dragged him off into Arcadia.

In the Hunter’s realm Dog was treated as such. He had to eat from a bowl. He was kicked and beaten and expected to protect the Hunter’s tower. Over time Dog thought of himself as nothing more than a dog and slept in the remains of his clothes, curled up on the stone floor. His reawakening to his human self came as he witnessed his Keeper looking at the tattered remains of a painting by Monet. Dog recognized it and remembered his life before the tower. With this small spark of humanity he fled from the tower, working his way back to his home.

Returning to Florence he found 30 years had gone by, his girlfriend was married with children, and his life had been taken over by something that looked like him but had become spiteful and full of hate. Dog chose to watch this imposter and learn what he could from it. He began to understand the manner in which these fetches operated, that they were devoid of that spark of humanity that he himself had also lost when he became a beast. With this understanding, he joined the local Freehold and the House of Autumn, before journeying north to Venice where he might learn even more from the far older Freehold of Carnival.

In Venice Mad Dog, as he came to be known, had a fearsome reputation, but this was more a cover for his aptitude in the occult. He became both a physical and magical tool of fear, and over time his motley grew and adopted his approach, that to fight the Fae you must embody fear wholly.

Mad Dog has since become a fearsome rival to the motleys of the House of Summer, and his motley is respected for its command of many strange tokens and contracts. However, the motley is also considered to be too far gone to the cause of fear. Mad Dog and his gang are feared gangsters in and around Venice, and dabble in drug trafficking, prostitution rackets, and worse.

Unknown to most of the motley, Mad Dog is in fact the Silent Skull of the House of Autumn. Through a network of drop boxes and secret meetings, Mad Dog issues his orders to the House. These orders are instructions on the acquisition of magical artifacts, tomes, missions into the Hedge to scout out areas, delving into the dreams of mortals, and the research of new contracts. Other orders are more militant, focusing on the cultivation of fear in mortal society so that areas of the city are designated off limits in order to prevent mortals getting involved with the Fae or their lackeys.

Description: Mad Dog is tall and has a strong physique. He wears clothes that enhance his gangster appearance and lend him an air of superiority and danger. His hair is slicked back and his is always chomping on a cigar.

His Mien shows that he has yellow eyes, pointed ears and dark skin. To others he looks like a Doberman, with his teeth visible at all times.

His Mantle manifests as the growth of cobwebs, the smell of candle wax and long shadows.

Storytelling Hints: Mad Dog is not above playing the fool. He is a good actor and allows others to make assumptions of him. In fact, behind closed doors, he is calculating and cold, issuing orders to cause harm and distress to others so that a lesson is learned.

However, Dog does have time for

those that are willing to learn, and if they can withstand his bullying then they gain his respect.

Apparent Age: Early 50s

Court: Autumn

Seeming: Beasts

Kith: Hunterheart

Keeper: Hunter of the Endless Woods

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Investigation (Enigmas) 4, Medicine 2, Occult (The Fae, Tokens) 5, Politics (Freehold) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Drive 2, Larceny 3, Stealth 3, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Dogs) 4, Empathy (Lies, Fear) 2, Intimidation (Terror, Physical Threats) 3, Persuasion 1, Socialize 2, Streetwise (Gangs, Corrupt Police) 3, Subterfuge (Lying, Misdirection) 2

Merits: Allies (Gangs, Vice Police) 2, Contacts (Gangster, Fence, Black Market) 3, Harvest (Emotions) 3, New Identity 4, Mantle (Autumn) 5, Resources 4, Retainers 2, Token 5+, Hollow: Size 3, Wards 3, Doors 2, Amenities 3

Willpower: 7

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Pride

Health: 8

Initiative: 7

Defense: 4

Speed: 12

Wyrd: 7 (Glamour 16/7, 50 Goblin Fruits, 10 Pledges)

Contracts: Fang and Talon (Dogs) 5, Mirror 3, Fleeting Autumn 5, Eternal Autumn 5, Artifice 5, Thorn 4 Dream 4, Hearth 3, Goblin Contract: Diviners Madness

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Occult), Knight's Oath (The Doge)

Frailty: Minor Taboo - Must count the grains of salt that have been spilt. Minor Taboo - Can't enter a room that is entirely red.

Little John

Quote: *"I hates all this being nice. Can we not make them scared and run away like the little girls, boss?"*

Background: Little John was always bullied at school. He was shorter and not as strong as the others, and so he kept to himself, reading his books. He loved the fantasy novels of Tolkein and spooky stories he found by other writers. John, in his own time at home would read up on magic, and hoped that he would learn how to curse his tormentors or leave this world altogether.

One night, the Doctor of Misty Eyes came to John's home and snatched the young man away. He took him back through the Hedge to work in the dark and labyrinthine hospital of the Doctor. The wards wailed with the pain of his patients, and John was kicked about and ordered to come and go, fetching blades, and vials, and salves. Over time, all this running about made John a little diminutive worker. Goblin-like he scuttled about.

His escape came one day, when he was cleaning out one of the many morgues in the Doctor's realm, John came upon a small chute. It was covered in filth and blood and gore, but with a little squeeze John was soon crawling down it and to his freedom.

John escaped back to the mortal realm and arrived in Venice, picked up by Polo and his crew on the edges of the Lion's Tail trod. John was brought into the fold of the House of Autumn, with Dog eventually asking the little man to join him. Dog could see that such a small goblin would be an asset to his motley. He was small and capable of stealing things that Dog wanted.

John's time in Venice has made him an expert on the secret waterways of Venice, those small tunnels that wind their way under the streets. He has also taken an interest in the dead, and is now a respected authority on the ghosts of Venice, and is the Doge's Larva, official ghost hunter of the city. This role has brought the goblin into contact with some of the stranger creatures that lurk in Venice, such as Vampires, Sin-Eaters, Mages and stranger things still.

Description: Little John is exactly that. He stands only 5' 2" and is bald and scrawny. His clothes are not much better and to most others he appears as a mad homeless man who speaks to people that are not there.

His Mien displays that he is small, with toady skin, white eyes, and elongated limbs. His teeth are yellow and foul, and he walks with a stoop.

His Mantle is the smell of salt, the flicker of candles, the smell of soot, and the faint sound of ghostly whispers.

Storytelling Hints: Little John is a spiteful little man who takes pleasure in causing frights for others. He prefers to talk with the dead and other Darklings and hates the Fairest with a passion.

Apparent Age: Unknown

Court: Autumn

Seeming: Darkling

Kith: Tunnelgrub

Keeper: The Doctor of Misty Eyes

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts 2, Investigation 2, Occult (Ghosts, Vampires, True Fae) 4, Politics 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 3 (Run), Brawl (Dirty Fighting) 3, Larceny 4, Stealth (Move Quietly) 3

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Intimidation (Creepy) 3, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Ambidextrous 3, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Contacts (Beggars) 2, Harvest (Dreams) 2, Mantle (Autumn) 3, Mantle (Carnival) 3, Hollow: Size 1, Doors 2, Wards 4

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Envy

Health: 7

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Speed: 11 (13)

Wyrd: 4 (Glamour 13/4, 10 Goblin Fruits, 7 Pledges)

Contracts: Darkness 4, Fleeting Autumn 4, Mirror 4, Smoke 3, Dream 3, Carnival 3, Goblin Contracts: Fair Entrance

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Occult), Oath of the Rose and Thorn (Beggars), Knight's Oath (Duke of Autumn)

Derangements: Paranoia

Other members of the Wordless are Fairest Draconic, Vesuvian, and the bat-like Beast Windwing, Chira.

THE CLEANERS

The Cleaners are exactly that. They are the motley that is turned to when information, or more importantly criminal information, needs to be found and destroyed. You have a body on your hands? The Cleaners are called in. Not only do they clean up scenes, but they also try and make places clean of any magic or signs of changelings. Led by the Sun Banisher of the House of Winter, Dr Z, the Cleaners will mop up blood, make fake IDs, sort out alibis, and even balance your checkbooks for you.

Dr Z

Quote: *"Oh, it looks like redecorating went out of control. An arterial spray. My, my, what did they do here?"*

Background: Dr Z was a student in criminal investigations at the University of Rome when she was taken. She was working a case for her thesis when she got involved too deeply. The killer turned out to be a changeling, and worse, the entire string of murders was a setup just to trap her. The changeling, a Loyalist, had planned it all out so that its master could have a new play thing.

In Arcadia Dr Z was subjected to string of vile and painful experiments. Each day a new test. First her eyes were removed and replaced. Then her skin was flayed off and replaced. Then her ribs each removed and put back. But her Keeper grew tired of slicing her apart and putting her back together, and so instead made her an assistant, making her perform the operations for him.

Years went by, and Dr Z had gotten used to the regime, preferring it to the years of torture she had already endured. She had even

begun to enjoy the pain she was inflicting. It was only when she recognized the next patient as a fellow university student that she snapped awake from her madness and realized what she had become.

Dr Z escaped that night, using a cadaver as a decoy, placing it in her bunk as she pried open the door to her Keeper's citadel.

Dr Z returned to Rome, and fearing the repercussions of her escape, and the minions of her Fae Keeper that had trapped her in the first place, Dr Z went about removing every trace of her former self and tried to live off the radar. In doing so she joined the Winter Court.

Her arrival in Venice was after a Fae hunt in the city of Rome. Dr Z had heard about the magic of the Court of Carnival and so journeyed north to witness it herself.

Since coming to Venice, Dr Z has helped many other changelings operate off the radar, establishing new identities and destroying incriminating evidence. Her motley, which she was not the leader of to begin with, have become masters of this. Originally simple messengers for the House of Winter, the motley have risen above that and now command a healthy status. But with renown comes attention, and so Dr Z has taken to only being contacted through particular, carefully managed and secret methods.

Description: Dr Z is a wiry young woman dressed in a suit dress and when working, wears a lab coat and face mask. Her hair is cut short and she wears only a little makeup to help blend in.

Her mien shows that she has red eyes, greenish skin, and many scars across her body. Her hands are nimble and her mouth is lipless.

Her mantle manifests as an icy chill and a stillness in the air like after the snow has fallen.

Storytelling Hints: Dr Z is cold, clinical and methodical. She suffers no fools and will do everything that is possible to ensure her own secrecy. In extreme cases there are jobs that even she will turn down, only considering them if she is commanded by the Nameless One.

Apparent Age: Early 50s

Court: Winter
Seeming: Wizeded
Kith: Churigeon
Keeper: The Prince of Cracked Bones
Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 4
Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3
Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 2
Mental Skills: Academics 3, Investigation (Crime scene) 4, Medicine (Autopsy) 3, Occult 2, Politics 2
Physical Skills: Brawl 2, Drive 3, Larceny 3, Stealth 3, Weaponry 2
Social Skills: Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Socialize 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge (Lying, Misdirection) 3
Merits: Contacts (Forger, Police, Fire Officer) 3, Harvest (Emotions) 3, New Identity 4, Mantle (Winter) 3, Resources 4
Willpower: 6
Clarity: 5
Virtue: Justice
Vice: Greed
Health: 8
Initiative: 5
Defense: 3
Speed: 10
Wyrd: 4 (Glamour 13/4, 10 Goblin Fruits, 7 Pledges)
Contracts: Artifice 4, Mirror 3, Smoke 3, Dream 3, Fleeting Winter 3, Eternal Winter 3
Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Investigation), Commendation (Duke of Winter), Knight's Oath (Doge)

Triton

Quote: *"Time to wash all this away"*

Background: Triton was taken while his mother pushed him along in his pram near to the canal edge in Venice. The Fae, desiring a new gift for his lover, snatched the babe and replaced him with a collection of crabs and fish bones, fashioned to look like the baby. His mother was none the wiser.

Triton grew up in the underwater realm, playing with the other fish-like slaves of his Keepers. He was their way of trying to feel what it must be like to have a child. Over

time he grew to reflect his would be parents, growing fins and scales over his body.

But this magical life would not last forever, and upon the death of his real mother he felt her mortal pain through the Wyrd. He realized that the twisted beings he called mother and father were not his own. He saw their true nature, and that he too was a slave to their own game.

Triton was able to escape, finding his way back to the canal where he was taken, and he was now in his teens. He found his way home and discovered that his real mother was dead. The death was a mystery, but Triton would find out. He lived as a street urchin and became used to the modern world that he had been denied. He watched his fetch live out the hollow version of his life, and he came to realize the truth. His fetch had murdered his mother. But Triton was to be denied his revenge, as those of the House of Winter, with whom he had joined, forbade him from following this route. He knew he must stay in the shadows and that if he was to get his revenge, it must be swift and unseen.

Triton is a member of Dr Z's motley, using his affinity with water to remove traces of evidence, cleansing areas of the touch of changelings. To this day he still watches his fetch, planning his revenge.

Description: Triton is young and dressed like one of the many homeless young men that wander the streets of Venice. He looks dirty and has scruffy hair and looks malnourished.

His mien displays that he is instead composed of water. His skin is translucent and his eyes are dark pools.

His mantle is the feeling of icy water droplets on the skin, and the glow of sunlight through snow.

Storytelling Hints: Triton is young and impulsive, and needs guidance from his older friends and motley members. He is clever and quick witted, but has bouts of being emotionless when confronted with failure.

Apparent Age: late teens

Court: Winter

Seeming: Elemental

Kith: Waterborn

Keeper: The Lady of the Darktouched Water
Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2
Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2
Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 2
Mental Skills: Crafts 2, Investigation 3, Occult (The Fae) 3, Politics 1
Physical Skills: Athletics 5 (Swim), Brawl (Underwater) 4, Larceny 2, Stealth (Move Quietly) 3, Survival 4, Weaponry (Spear) 3
Social Skills: Animal Ken (Fish) 4, Empathy 2, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2
Merits: Ambidextrous 3, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Strong Lungs 3, Harvest (Pledge) 2, Mantle (Winter) 2, Resources 2
Willpower: 4
Clarity: 4
Virtue: Faith
Vice: Envy
Health: 7
Initiative: 6
Defense: 4
Speed: 12 (14)
Wyrd: 3 (Glamour 12/3, 7 Goblin Fruits, 6 Pledges)
Contracts: Elements (Water) 4, Fang and Talon (Fish) 3, Fleeting Winter 2, Eternal Winter 3, Mirror 2, Smoke 3
Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Investigation)

Other members of the Cleaners are the Darkling Mirrorskin, Mr Sand; the Elemental Airtouched Autumn courtier, Nimbus; and the rat-like Beast, Hamlin.

THE CONFESSORS OF ICE

The Confessors are masters of secrets and also the watchers of the sanity of the Freehold. They welcome those who are troubled and listen to them, helping them make sense of their lives as changelings. They promise they will not trade the secrets that they learn. However, this trust is sometimes broken when they learn of things that endanger the House of Winter and the Freehold itself.

Not simply just confessors or psychologists, the Confessors are spies,

watching those troublemakers, Loyalists, Privateers and Bridgeburners. They gather all the clues and information that is required so that allies within the House of Summer can strike, or so that the agents of the House of Winter can act quickly and quietly.

The Confessors are led by Lady Midnight, the Servetta Muta of the city. She is the Doge's confessor and so her role coincides with that of the House of Winter. Lady Midnight tries to be welcoming and honest with her guests, and has the hard task of ensuring that knowledge of the House of Winter is kept secret from the Court of Carnival. For this reason she knows that others of the House of Winter watch her intently to see if she steps out of line.

Lady Midnight

Quote: <nothing, she simply directs guests to sit and speak>

Background: Lady Midnight was a nun during the 17th century. She was involved with a man, breaking the codes of her church and her promise to God. She knew of the importance of secrets, and she kept the secrets of others. However, this would be her undoing as one of the Gentry tricked her into revealing a secret. The previous day it had told her one at confession. However, it made her make a promise. Through cunning and deception the Fae made her break this promise, and on the ground that the pledge was broken, the Fae took her away to Arcadia.

There in the Faerie realm, in a tall spire made of glass, she was used and raped. She was kept like a princess, yet she could not hide from her captor as every wall was as clear as water.

Her escape came as she discovered the secret of her prison, and she tricked her Keeper into keeping his eyes shut. She fled the tower and returned to Venice, now as a Bright One. She discovered that hundreds of years had gone by and that her world was replaced by new technology that meant no one could stay hidden.

Lady Midnight joined the House of Winter, trying to reclaim the privacy that was

denied her during her durance. She acted as a spiritual counselor to the others of her House, and gained the title of Servetta Muta after the previous holder was killed for the secrets she knew.

Description: Lady Midnight is pale and has golden hair. She is beautiful and dresses in mourning garb and a veil. People on the street dismiss her as either aloof or as a vain celebrity.

Her Mien shows that she has golden eyes, with pointed ears, fine hair, and alabaster skin.

Her Mantle manifests as the sunlight reflecting off snow, the taste of ice cold water from the mountains, and the odd snowflake.

Storytelling Hints: Lady Midnight is passionate and has many lovers so that she may hear many secrets through pillow talk. She believes that the best way to hide is to hide in the open. However, she still enjoys her privacy and keeps a clean and tidy home that can be packed up in a moment's notice and moved through the Hedge to a new safe haven.

Apparent Age: Early 30s

Court: Winter

Seeming: Fairest

Kith: Bright One

Keeper: The Count of Stolen Tears

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics (Bible) 3, Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Occult 2, Politics (Freehold) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Larceny 1, Stealth 4, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Empathy (Emotions, Lies) 4, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 3, Socialize (Dress Balls, Bars) 4, Subterfuge (Lying, Misdirection) 4

Merits: Allies (Church Priest), Contacts (PIs) 3, Harvest (Emotions) 3, New Identity 4, Mantle (Winter) 3, Mantle (Carnival) 2, Resources 3, Retainers 3

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Lust

Health: 7

Initiative: 4

Defense: 2

Speed: 9

Wyrd: 6 (Glamour 15/6, 25 Goblin Fruits, 9 Pledges)

Contracts: Dreams 4, Mirror 4, Smoke 3, Vainglory 4, Fleeting Winter 4, Eternal Winter 3, Carnival 2

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Empathy), Oath of the Rose and Thorn (Retainers), Knight's Oath (Doge)

Frailty: Minor Bane - Pain by the sight of her reflection reflected in another mirror.

Hanuman

Quote: "Up here" <he then leaps down, taking out his victim>

Background: Hanuman was always a climber, having grown up in the North of the Veneto with his family and trained in rock climbing. This was his life, scaling the sheer cliff faces with little support.

It was while scaling one of these treacherous walls of rock that he was shocked as a face of stone leered at him. He lost his grip and plummeted to his death, only to be snatched away and replaced by a fetch made of stones and goat bones.

Hanuman was taken away to the forest realm of Wukong, Lord of Trees. Here he was made to climb and scale the twisting vines and palm trees as snarling beasts roamed below. For many nights he did this, surviving on the fruit of the trees. He grew a tail that aided in his navigation of the forest, and his hands became more dextrous.

One day Wukong came to him, and sat on the branch petted his new monkey. Wukong was also ape-like, but larger and more colorful. He was a trickster and a joker, and played tricks upon Hanuman.

Years passed like this, as Hanuman was treated as pet and prey by the master of the forest. But escape did come as Hanuman found a cave. He crawled his way out and into the harsh daylight of the mountainside.

Hanuman journeyed to Venice, hearing about the Freehold and finding that he was

safer here than anywhere else. He initially joined the House of Summer, but after a failed attack on one of the Fae, he left the House, thinking that outright war with the Fae was futile. Instead he simply wished to live his life away from the magic of the Fae and the attentions of others.

The House of Winter has found a use for him, as messenger and spy. He is able to navigate from one end of the city to the other by climbing over the rooftops of Venice. This has earned him the respect of the Nameless One and gained him the friendship of Lady Midnight, who he loves.

Description: Hanuman is tall and has scruffy hair and a beard. He wears clothes that allow him to move easily, and by day acts as a messenger. Others have commented on his large eyes.

His Mien displays that he has a prehensile tail, larger eyes, long fingers and fur.

His Mantle is the feeling of snow under barefeet, the cold wind and the smell of spices.

Storytelling Hints: Hanuman is a trickster and is playful. He makes a game out of his tasks but fears he will be taken away. This is compounded by the fact that he loves Lady Midnight but knows that he cannot tell her.

Apparent Age: Mid 20s

Court: Winter

Seeming: Beasts

Kith: Steepsclimber

Keeper: The King of Blood and Fat

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts (Forgery) 2, Investigation 2, Occult 2, Politics 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 3 (Run, Climb), Brawl (Dirty Fighting) 3, Larceny 3, Stealth (Move Quietly) 3, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 3, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Ambidextrous 3, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 2, Contacts (Fence, Thief, Homeless) 3,

Harvest (Pledge) 2, Mantle (Winter) 2, Resources 2, Token 2.

Willpower: 4

Clarity: 6

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Envy

Health: 7

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Speed: 12 (14)

Wyrd: 3 (Glamour 12/3, 7 Goblin Fruits, 6 Pledges)

Contracts: Fang and Talon (Apes) 3, Fleeting Winter 3, Mirror 2, Smoke 3, Dream 2, Goblin Contracts: Fair Entrance 2

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Empathy), Oath of the Rose and Thorn (Retainers), Knight's Oath (Doge)

The other member of the Confessors is the Wizenad Chirurgeon, and psychoanalyst Morpheus.

THE ENDLESS SIGH

If the Confessors are the holders of secrets given freely, then the Lost of the Endless Sigh are those who gain information through force. Led by the terrible Mammoth, a Farwalker and a gangster, the motley watches from afar the comings and goings of the Freehold. When there is suspicion, the Endless Sigh strike, snatching those Lost they distrust and putting them under arrest. Under the care of the Sigh, so named for the Bridge of Sighs that led from the Doge's Palazzo to the Doge's prisons, the captives are interrogated and tortured, as they attempt to draw out a confession or truth.

The Sigh are careful not to overstep their position and only take action when it is clear they must or when there is no doubt in their suspicions. However, this does not stop the Sigh from pulling others off the streets at a whim. This of course means that many in the Freehold look upon the Sigh as a disgusting, if required, group of changelings. That is if they could look upon them, such is the secrecy of the Sigh.

The Sigh publish their findings through the Icelaw, allowing the information to filter

through the lines of Lores until it reaches those that the truth is destined for.

Mammoth

Quote: <Loud footsteps in the dark>
“So you were about to tell us everything you know” <The crunch of bone and the screams of the prisoner>

Background: Mammoth was a farm laborer just before WWII. He toiled on the land, lugging about sacks of grain and bales of hay. He was never the most intelligent of men, but he was no fool. He could not stand to see the abuse of others by the foremen, and once intervened before such men had their wicked way with one of the maids that worked on the farm.

His exile to Arcadia was through no fault of his own, just bad luck and a forgotten promise of many generations ago to leave out a small offering of corn for the Fae. In an act of spite the Fae lord, the Duke of Redwoods, stole Mammoth away and twisted him to slave away in his kingdom.

Thousands of harvests passed, and Mammoth labored, pulling the carts, lifting huge boulders, carrying cattle and ploughing the fields. Over time Mammoth forgot about his freedom and knew only the sting of the lash. But it was his memories of lost love that brought him back to the world and allowed him to find his mortal self again.

Mammoth found that he was once more home, in the fields of Tuscany. He feared being found once more by the King of Redwoods and fled. He spent some time in Naples and through the Winter Court he was offered safe passage north, further from the lands of his Keeper.

Mammoth joined the Winter Court in Venice in the 80s. He feared his Keeper and wanted the simple life that was stolen from him. He knew he could never return to such a life and that safety now resided in hiding. However, the sting of the whip also spurred him on, and that only through pain, emotionless, truthful pain, could the Lost be safe by finding the truth by all means possible. Mammoth moved through the ranks of the

House of Winter, using his own form of intelligence gathering, ensuring that his victims could never point to him as their captor. It is for this work that Mammoth is the Lord of the Inhospitable Chamber.

Description: Mammoth is large and heavy set. He ripples with strength and has a short buzz cut and tanned skin. His clothes, that of a dock worker, can hardly conceal his form.

His mien shows that he has a thick fur of grey and auburn all over his skin. His mouth is filled with jagged teeth and his body is even taller by another 2 feet.

His mantle manifests as the first chill wind after harvest, the smell of rotting apples and the cold rain and hail.

Storytelling Hints: Mammoth is devoted to his purpose. He has shut his heart tight, so tight that he at times cannot see past his own crusade. He is frightful to behold, but more fearsome is his complete lack of empathy.

Apparent Age: Early 30s

Court: Winter

Seeming: Ogre

Kith: Farwalker

Keeper: King of Redwoods

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Investigation 4, Medicine 2 (Truth Serum), Occult 1, Politics (Freehold) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Larceny 3, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Empathy (Lies) 3, Intimidation (Torture, Blackmail) 5, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge (Lying, Misdirection) 2

Merits: Allies (Gangsters) 2, Contacts (PI, Vampire) 2, Harvest (Emotions) 4, New Identity 4, Mantle (Winter) 4, Resources 3, Strong Back 1, Iron Stamina 3

Willpower: 7

Clarity: 3

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Pride

Health: 9

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Speed: 12

Wyrd: 5 (Glamour 14/5, 15 Goblin Fruits, 8 Pledges)

Contracts: Stone 4, Smoke 4, Mirror 4, Fleeting Winter 3, Eternal Winter 3, Carnival 1, Dream 3

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Intimidation), Commendation (Duke of Winter), Knight's Oath (Doge)

Derangements: Irrationality

Lilith

Quote: *"Just a kiss" <she begins to drain them of blood >*

Background: Lilith was born in Israel and grew up in poverty. Her father was a farm laborer and her mother had died in an attack by terrorists. Her life was difficult, living in the slums as her brother joined the local gangs.

It was while out on the hills, playing around the ruins of some old church, that she angered one of the Fae. She was throwing stones at a pillar. It was in fact the remains of an old Fairy circle. The Fae seized her and dragged her away, into a place so different from her home. It was the Dark Marshes.

There in the strange Arcadian realm she toiled away, trying to find safety from the foul creatures that stalked the swampland.

Over time her diet of grubs and vermin changed her. She had no need to eat the flesh cooked, for it brought the attention of the her Fae lord who simply found amusement in hunting her. Instead she developed the taste for blood.

Escape came as she saw her reflection in the moonlight for the first time in months. She shrieked in horror as she saw the spine-teeth maw that now was her mouth. She had lost her beauty and now had skin that was pallid and vulgar.

Her race through the swamps brought her to the swamps that made up the Hedge about the city of Venice, and it was here on the islands that she was captured by Polo and brought to the city to be reintroduced to the world. Lilith was fearful and wanted little to do with the world or with the Fae, however,

Mammoth knew that she was a capable hunter, and she also had skills that made her a capable interrogator.

Description: Lilith is voluptuous and pale with full red lips and raven black hair. She tends to wear revealing but functional clothing.

Her Mien displays she has a mouth filled with spindle-like teeth, dark eyes and her fingers are tipped with leech-like suckers. Her skin is more than pale but white and almost translucent.

Her Mantle is the feeling of cold fog and the taste of red berries.

Storytelling Hints: Lilith is self-hating, but must hide this from her enemies and those who would take advantage of it. She hates the likes of the House of Spring, and is repulsed by Malvolio.

Apparent Age: Mid 20s

Court: Winter

Seeming: Darkling

Kith: Leechfinger

Keeper: The Knight of the Black Waters

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts 3, Investigation 3, Medicine 4, Occult 2, Politics 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (Climb) 4, Brawl (Grapples) 3, Larceny 3, Stealth (Move Quietly) 3, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Empathy (Motives) 2, Intimidation 4, Persuasion (Seduction) 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Fast Reflexes 2, Contacts (Vampire, Pimp) 2, Harvest (Emotions) 3, Mantle (Winter) 2, Resources 2

Willpower: 5

Clarity: 5

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Lust

Health: 9

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Speed: 11

Wyrd: 2 (Glamour 11/2, 5 Goblin Fruits, 5 Pledges)

Contracts: Fang and Talon (Leeches) 2, Darkness 4, Fleeting Winter 2, Mirror 2, Smoke 3

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Intimidation)

Other members of the Endless Sigh are Opiuos, a Wizeded Brewer and expert in the art of narcotics and in particular truth serums, and the Spring Courtier, the dream manipulator and Muse, the Fairest, Epiales.

THE WHITE GUARD

There is always the need for those who defend those who wish to disappear. They are the White Guard. They are excellent fighters, defenders and also masters of dealing with ghosts.

The skill of the White Guard is that they guard things so that you would not realize what they are keeping safe. And so they rely on misdirection and entrapment as a method to protect things. Better to remove a problem than let it get too close.

Charon

Quote: *"Are you certain what we protect is even her? We are like ghosts, and soon you shall also be one."*

Background: Charon was born in Victorian England. He was the son of a wealthy family and he was taken at his grandfather's funeral as payment for his grandfather's long life. He was spirited away through a portal within the tombs, and taken to a strange land within Arcadia.

As part of the payment, Charon was to be the Fae lady's master of ghosts. Many passed on during their time in Arcadia, but the Fae would not let their souls pass on. She required one to manage and keep them, their bodies hanging from her trees in the orchard of tears.

Many passed into the orchard, and he hung more up within the branches. He listened to the singing of the shades that hung there, their cries to pass on to the next life. And then one day he heard one more. His sister's. He then realized how long he had been in that

orchard and he fled. Through the orchard he ran and then through dark tunnels before coming out into the light on the island of San Michele in Venice.

Upon coming to the city Charon was inducted into the House of Autumn, however, he had seen far too much of both the Underworld and Arcadia to want to learn more. He wanted to forget. But his eyes were cursed and he could now see all the shades of Venice. He had been tainted and knew that he would never be free of it.

Charon has found his place within the long lived motley called the White Guard. He has come to accept his curse and over the years has assumed the position of leader of the motley, defending the secrecy of those Lost who wish for a normal life of some form away from the threat of the Fae.

Behind it all Charon is in fact the Lord of Unbidden Mourning, the secret Duke of Winter and none know of this role.

Description: Charon dresses in a simple suit of black, almost as if it was recovered from a recently buried person. He has dark eyes and is unshaven with dark stubble. He looks tired and obviously distracted, haunted.

His Mien shows that he has thinning hair, his eyes are even more deep set and surrounded by dark rings, and that he has skeletal hands.

His Mantle manifests as the cold of a tomb and the smell of preserving ointments.

Storytelling Hints: Charon is cold, calculating and emotionless. He knows that his life is over and that all he can do is help others. He is jealous but has to shut it away.

Apparent Age: 40s

Court: Winter

Seeming: Darkling

Kith: Gravewight

Keeper: The Dead Woods

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 4 (Venice History), Investigation 3, Occult (Ghosts) 4, Politics (Freehold) 2

Physical Skills: Brawl 3, Drive (Boat) 2, Larceny 2, Stealth 3, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Empathy (Emotions) 2, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 1, Socialize 2, Subterfuge (Lying, Misdirection) 3

Merits: Allies (Historian, Priest) 2, Contacts (Historian, PI) 2, Harvest (Pledges) 4, New Identity 4, Mantle (Winter) 5, Mantle (Carnival) 2, Resources 3

Willpower: 8

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Temperance

Vice: Greed

Health: 8

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 10

Wyrd: 7 (Glamour 13/4, 10 Goblin Fruits, 7 Pledges)

Contracts: Darkness 3, Smoke 4, Fleeting Winter 4, Eternal Winter 5, Mirror 2, Dream 2

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Occult)

Frailty: Minor Bane - Pain by the touch black roses. Minor Taboo - Must try and catch a spider if spotted, and then eat it.

Mara

Quote: *"There is always an escape route"*

Background: Mara was born in the Veneto. Her family were wealthy landowners, and it was while playing that she happened upon a fairy circle. Entering she found herself in the Shrieking Woods, and here she was pursued and tortured by the Fae, The Red Witch of Ragged Prayers.

Mara eventually did escape using stolen lore from the Fae and returned to the mortal world to find only a few minutes had passed. But for her she had aged from 10 to 17. She tried to convince her parents of her identity, but there was a fetch in her place.

For a time Mara lived alone in the wilderness. But the ever constant threat of her Keeper forced her to leave for nearby Venice.

Since joining the House of Winter, Mara is now an expert spy and scout. She still

has trouble forgetting her old life and is often reminded that she must break all links with her family. But that does not stop her planning the death of her fetch.

Her primary role in the House of Winter is that of Archer of the Lonely March.

Description: Mara is short and stocky. She looks like she has had a hard life out on a farm and many just mistake her for a laborer. She has dark hair and wears functional clothing.

Her Mien displays that she is scrawny, with deep set eyes that are wide and black. Her skin is blotchy and green tinted. And in her hair twigs and leaves can be found

Her Mantle is the feeling of cold mist amongst pine trees and the silence brought by fresh snow.

Storytelling Hints: Mara is quiet and cunning. She always has an escape plan and trust no one. She will sniff the air and taste the dirt to get a better measure of where she is. She is loyal to the course and distrusts those of other Seasons.

Apparent Age: Late 40s

Court: Winter

Seeming: Wized

Kith: Woodwalker

Keeper: The Lord of the Bleeding Oaks and Screaming Willows

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts (Wood working, leather working) 4, Investigation 4, Occult (The Hedge) 4, Politics 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3 (Run, Climb), Brawl (Traps) 3, Stealth 4, Survival (Tracking, Hunting) 3, Weaponry (Spear) 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Streetwise (Homeless) 2, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Fleet of Foot 2, Contacts (Other Archers in other Freeholds, Homeless) 3, Harvest (Hedge Fruit) 3, Mantle (Winter) 3, Resources 2, Token 2.

Willpower: 5

Clarity: 4

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Pride

Health: 8

Initiative: 9

Defense: 3

Speed: 13 (15)

Wyrd: 3 (Glamour 12/3, 7 Goblin Fruits, 6 Pledges)

Contracts: Artifice 4, Fang and Talon (Owls) 3, Fleeting Winter 2, Eternal Winter 4, Mirror 2, Smoke 3, Dream 2

Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Occult), Oath of the Rose and Thorn (Retainers), Knight's Oath (Doge)

Aura

Quote: *"Secrets are carried on the chill wind of the Icelaw"*

Background: The current Doge of the city, unknown to her subjects, is the Airtouched Elemental Aura. This Lost, stolen as a child to blow cooling breezes for her Keeper, returned to the sea town of Chioggia, finding that for herself 7 years had passed while for her family 27 years had gone by. Blessed with the ability to sing enchanting songs, Aura made her way within the Freehold of Venice and after 37 years of acting as a court entertainer within the House of Spring, became a well respected manipulator of Glamour. It was 12 years ago she was given the title of Doge, the former Doge in secret bestowed the mask upon her and with that act the roles were reversed and the former Doge left the city, their memory of their time as Doge struck from their mind.

The Doge for the last 4 years has battled with a number of problems. The first has been the slow increase in sightings of hobgoblins and reports of disturbing dreams amongst the population of the city. The second has been the disappearance of a few members of the Freehold. Apparently this has been the work of those Loyalists hidden within the city limits, or worst the Gentry. It has been these issues that have led to the loss of confidence in the Court of Carnival, especially from the Spring and Summer Houses who expect more direct action.

As a member of the White Guard, Aura

is able to perform her duties in such a way that it compliments her role as Doge of the Court of Carnival. For the White Guard she acts as a spy and uses her Contracts to watch over the House of Winter and their gatherings.

Through the House of Winter, Aura is able to see her commands as Doge filter down through the House from the Duke of Winter, and also is keen to see how they also flow through the other Houses. She is keenly aware where decrees are bent, altered or simply ignored. It is with this information that Aura, as Doge is able to ensure her rule and the safety of the Freehold.

Description: Aura is small, slight, and quiet. She has blond hair and wears loose clothing. When on duty as part of the White Guard, she wears more functional clothing in grays. As the Doge her gender is obscured and she is dressed in fine golden robes and wears a mask that is off shifting expressions that completely conceals her own face.

Her Mien displays she composed or mist. She is almost translucent, and has cool white skin and hair blown by an unseen breeze.

Her Mantle shows only that of Winter, as her Mantle of Carnival is concealed. It is the feeling of cold mist amongst pine trees, and the silence brought by fresh snow.

Storytelling Hints: Aura is obviously very secretive, but maintains this secrecy as part of being a Winter courtier, and uses misdirection to hide her true identity as Doge. She is aware of much of the intrigue of the city, and tries to keep up with it. She also uses this information to learn about the threats to the Freehold. However, she is not above sacrificing members of the Freehold to save the city, even if that were to include herself. She is calculating and creates plans within plans.

To others she appears as a Winter courtier who is more concerned with herself and staying safe and hidden. However, she makes it known that she is struggling with leaving behind her family from her previous life.

Apparent Age: Late 40s

Court: Winter

Seeming: Elemental
Kith: Airtouched
Keeper: The Queen of the Blasted Desert of Bitter Tongues
Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 6, Resolve 4
Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4
Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 7, Composure 5
Mental Skills: Academics (Venice) 4, Investigation 4, Occult (Venice, Fae, Ghosts) 6, Politics (Freehold) 4
Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Stealth (Crowds, Stalking) 5, Survival 3, Weaponry 2
Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression 5, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 3, Socialize (Parties) 4, Subterfuge 3
Merits: Contacts (Mages, Politician, Police) 3, Harvest (Hedge Fruit, Pledge) 6, Mantle (Winter) 3, Mantle (Carnival) 5, Resources 3, Hollow: Size 2, Wards 5, Doors 3, Amenities 5
Willpower: 9
Clarity: 4
Virtue: Prudence
Vice: Gluttony
Health: 9
Initiative: 10
Defense: 5
Speed: 13
Wyrd: 8 (Glamour 30/8, 100 Goblin Fruits, 11 Pledges)
Contracts: Elements (Air) 5, Elements (Water) 5, Fleeting Winter 4, Eternal Winter 4, Dream 5, Smoke 3, Mirror 4, Carnival 5
Pledges: Motley Pledge (Adroitness - Occult), Oath of the Rose and Thorn (Retainers)
Frailty: Minor Taboos - Cannot sleep without a open window, she cannot stand in the midday sun. Major Bane - A red hot poker.

Other members of the White Guard are Blank, a Stonebones bouncer, and Mundi, a Wizened Chatelaine who keeps track of all the Winter Cottages.

PAPSTESSEL - THE FAIRY MONSTERS OF VENICE

The term Papstesel is taken from the name for a creature of folklore. The Papstesel originated from the river Tibre, and was said

to have a woman's body, and ass' head, and limbs taken from a number of other beasts. Such a creature has become synonymous with the True Fae and the other creatures and beasts of the Hedge.

THE TRUE FAE

There are a number of True Fae that have been spotted in Venice over the years. The most notorious is the captain of the Fae ship Leviathan, Commodore Fathom. Another fiend that has terrorized Venice is the Endless Breath. The Breath is a creature formed from smoke and oil paint it seeks to release itself from its timeless prison.

Commodore Fathom, Captain of the Leviathan, Master of the Seas of Revulsion

Quote: "Look lively you dogs! Make more sail!"

Background: Fathom is the captain of the Leviathan. He journeys the endless seas of dreams and nightmares, looking for treasure and for new crew who he can persecute. In many respects Fathom is as much part of his ship as he is commander of it.

On the right alignment of the stars his ship can break through the Hedge into our world, and his crew of Hobgoblins will head ashore to steal away those who make a suitable crew for him.

Description: Commodore Fathom has many forms. His human form is typically that of a captain of a fishing ship. He is large and brutish and with a large dirty beard. The clue to his true nature is his eyes, which are dark beady pupils. His skin is also scaly like that of fish. His Mien however is far more monstrous. His maw is that of a lobster, a collection of chattering mandibles. His hair is made of seaweed and his limbs are more like those of a crab and octopus. Of course in Arcadia his form is more than just his physical body, as he becomes part of the ship itself.

Storytelling Hints: Fathom is a slave

driver. He will punish his crew and work them to the bone. There is not enough treasure in all of the worlds to sate his greed. He will raid the human world, taking what he deems to be treasure and also capturing people and changelings to be his crew amongst the hobgoblins that also sail upon the Leviathan. However, Fathom is incapable of commanding his vessel without his charts, and at times changelings have escaped through the destruction or alteration of his charts.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Crafts (Ship Repair) 4, Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Occult (Hedge Fruit) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 5, Brawl 4, Drive (Sail) 3, Firearms 3, Larceny 3, Weaponry (Sword) 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Intimidation 4

Merits: Harvest (Hedge Fruit) 3, Retainers (Crew of Hobgoblins) 5, Fighting Style: Boxing 4, Brawling Dodge

Willpower: 9

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Gluttony

Health: 9

Initiative: 3

Defense: 3

Speed: 14

Wyrd: 7

Frailties: Cannot stand in Moonlight (minor bane), Fire (major bane)

Contracts: Artifice 3, Dream 4, Elements (Water) 5, Fang and Talon (Fish) 5, Stone 4

Mien Blessing: Many Eyes, Quill Barbs, Swarm Cloud

The Breath of Endless Night, Lord of the Broken Clock,

Quote: "Tick tock, tick tock"

Background: The Breath was a Fae that once was able to travel to and from Arcadia. It was tricked by a painter and trapped within a realm within paintings. The pledge the Breath was tricked into was that if

the sun shone upon the painter's world. This however meant the paintings, which the painter ensured, would never see day light again.

The two paintings were copies of works by Titian. One is 'Death of Abel', and the second is 'The Death of Saint Peter the Martyr'. Both paintings however have within them, in the background, two sun dials. These are the additions that have trapped the Breath to the paintings.

However, when light does fall upon the paintings the Breath may use the paintings to escape. However to be truly free the Breath must destroy the power of the sun dials. This requires the removal of the 'Eve' ribs from 12 victims, who have their heads marked with the Roman numeral of their death i.e. V for the fifth victim. These ribs are used to create a clock which would undo the pledge.

The victims to this gentry leave some clues. All victims, at death heard it say 'Sine Sole Sileo'. A clue will be that the victim's ghosts think it said 'Sin souls lie', meaning perhaps that it is targeting those who commit the sin of lying. However, it means 'without the sun I am silent'. Other clues are: Revelations 5:7-9 'He came and received the scroll from the right hand of the one who sat on the throne. When he took it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each of the elders held a harp and gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of the holy ones. They sang a new hymn: "Worthy are you to receive the scroll and to break open its seals, for you were slain and with your blood you purchased for God those from every tribe and tongue, people and nation.", suggesting the number 24; Isaiha 38:8 ' "Behold, I will make the shadow cast by the declining sun on the dial of Ahaz turn back ten steps." So the sun turned back on the dial the ten steps by which it had declined.' This suggests the theme of the sundial. An actual puzzle is the rhyme written in blood next to a victim before they died. 'We all stand on the field of battle at Marostica. None can take first blood, such is our honor, such is our law. We are the armies of day and night.' This suggests the living chess match played at the

town (also located in the Veneto). But more importantly the solution is that 24 knights can be placed on a chess board so that none can take one another.

The link to the paintings of Titian will be further clues from victims (ghosts or messages in their dreams as they have foresight of their death). These are 'First among 12', and 'The First to Die'. With these there is the link to the paintings, but not Titian. The link to Titian himself is a bloody scrawl of alchemical symbols, in particular the symbol for the Sun, surrounded by the symbols for the other planets, along with the word 'Paridiso'. This is a clue to Dante's book, 'The Divine Comedy', and the line that taken from this work to describe Titian as "The Sun Amidst Small Stars".

The Breath exists trapped in the world of the paintings. One can enter the paintings by simply looking deep into them so that without realizing that they are in the paintings themselves.

Description: The Breath appears as a thin man with long gaunt features and wearing loose fitting clothes that conceal his form. His eyes are beady and black. But it his fang like teeth that give away his otherworldly nature. His mien is that of a shifting mass of shadows and dark oily paint strokes. Otherwise the only other feature it has is the wide grin of dagger like teeth.

Storytelling Hints: The Breath is desperate to complete its work to be free. It will stalk victims, who must be of the same bloodline as the original painter. It will let none get in the way of its goal, for freedom is all it wants.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Crafts (Ship Repair) 4, Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Occult (Hedge Fruit) 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 5, Brawl 4, Drive (Sail) 3, Firearms 3, Larceny 3, Weaponry (Sword) 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Intimidation 4

Merits: Harvest (Hedge Fruit) 3, Retainers (Crew of Hobgoblins) 5, Fighting Style: Boxing 4, Brawling Dodge

Willpower: 9

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Gluttony

Health: 9

Initiative: 3

Defense: 3

Speed: 14

Wyrd: 7

Contracts: Artifice 3, Dream 4, Elements (Water) 5, Fang and Talon (Fish) 5, Stone 4

Mien Blessing: Blurflash, Flicker, Nightmare Aura

Staccato, Master of the Strings of the Heart, Violator or the Harmonies of Hope

Quote: "You will sing for ME!"

Background: Staccato is obsessed with music. It is an ethereal, immaterial thing created by man, which makes it difficult to destroy. He sees himself as some master musician and composer, but to mortal ears his music is like pain and is disconcerting, leading to brutal nightmares.

Staccato invites other Gentry to his realm, within which is a large amphitheatre, where he plays his violin, and is accompanied by his orchestra of changelings. If any one of them gets a note wrong Staccato delivers a harsh punishment after the performance has finished.

Staccato looks for mortals who dream about music, and is sickened by the thought that mortals can have far more genius than himself.

Description: Staccato appears as a beautiful woman, slender and tall, with abnormally long fingers. Her voice is also too perfect. Too perfect in the sense that a real piano is slightly out of tune, while a piano can be perfectly tuned to a particular scale and as a result not sound correct to the human ear.

She tends to wear elegant dresses and has her long black hair tied up in a tight bun. She is alluring but cold and calculating.

Her Mien shows her true form as a

shimmering mandala of sound. Her ethereal form scrapes at the minds of mortals, and is a glow of purples and greens.

Storytelling Hints: Staccato is a collector of music, and a jealous artist, driven to destroy her own and others work. She will deliver severe beatings to her 'student' changelings, while cooing to those that display progress.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 4, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 6, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 4, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 5, Crafts (Music) 6, Investigation 2

Physical Skills: Brawl 2, Larceny 3, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression 4, Persuasion 3, Socialize 3

Merits: Harvest (Emotions) 4, Striking Looks 4, Token 3 (Violin of Wicked Song)

Willpower: 9

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Envy

Health: 8

Initiative: 10

Defense: 6

Speed: 19

Wyrd: 8

Contracts: Darkness 3, Dream 5, Mirror 4, Vainglory 5

Mien Blessing: Flicker, Lyrical Voice, Somnolent Perfume

CHARLATANS

Venice is of course home to True Fae that are Charlatans; those Fae who have for whatever reason become trapped in the mortal realm, unable to return to the Hedge and Arcadia. They are trapped either raging against the world looking for a way back home, or simply lost, with no knowledge of their previous existence.

Ophelia, Collector of Glass

Quote: "This piece is exquisite and

will fit in my collection so well."

Background: Ophelia was once a queen of a realm of gems and silver. Her cave was a glittering mine, and her slaves burrowed into the earth to gather more and more crystals for her throne room.

But it was a rumor, that the greatest gem to be found was in the mortal realm, that brought Ophelia out of Arcadia. She searched and searched, looking over all the Earth for it. She over turned homes, invaded dreams and stole mortals for their knowledge. But it was in Venice that she came across something unlike the gems in Arcadia. It was a piece glass, one of those pieces that contained the metallic flecks, apparently based on materials designed for the space program. Ophelia could not understand the piece of glass. It was strange and she soon discovered that there was many different types of these man made materials. In the space of an evening she was lost in the mortal realm. She had forgotten why she was here and now she was sat in a square in Venice, looking up at the rising sun without a clue as to who she was or how she got there.

She was initially taken in by a family in Venice and she got a job selling glass from the island of Murano. She had a persuasive personality and was a capable saleswoman. She eventually moved out and over the years she has become something of an art critique, selling rare glass art around the world.

Description: Ophelia dresses in a glamorous manner, wearing fur coats and designer dresses. She however is not particularly beautiful. Her Mien of course shows her to be the proverbial diamond in the rough. Her hair shimmers as if made from strings of pearls, and her eyes glisten like emeralds. Her flesh is like fine marble and light plays upon the surface of her skin

Storytelling Hints: Ophelia is prone to having screaming rants at her employees, and has been known to throw things at them. Her calm is a fragile thing when a sale is in the process of being completed. These are flashbacks to her tantrums as a queen of Arcadia.

Her need to collect the finest pieces of

glass and jewels are also a throw back to her former existence and her need to find the finest gem in all of the mortal realm. The twist to this quest is that the gem is naturally occurring, and in fact is a form of stone only found in meteors and so typically is anathema to the Fae as it is often in the presence of meteoric iron.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 6, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 6, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics (Antiques) 4, Investigation 4, Occult 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 5, Brawl 2, Larceny (Safe cracking) 4, Weaponry (Sword) 3

Social Skills: Expression 2, Intimidation 3, Persuasion (Seduction) 4, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Striking Looks 4, Fast Reflexes 3, Resources 3

Willpower: 9

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Greed

Health: 8

Initiative: 12

Defense: 4

Speed: 12

Wyrd: 6

Frailties: Must pick up the pieces of something glass shattered in her presence (minor bane), Quicksilver (major bane)

Contracts: Artifice 5, Dream 4, Elements (Glass) 5, Elements (Stone) 5, Vainglory 4

Mien Blessing: Flicker, Shocking Caress, Goblin Illumination (as Fairest Shining One mien blessing)

HOBGOBLINS

The misty marshes of the Venetian Hedge are filled with danger. There are many hobgoblins that navigate these strange water ways and decrepit canals. Some of these hobgoblins are of course unique Venice.

Gatto Burrattino

Quote: “Meewoow! Come closer little meowuse.”

Background: The Gatto were

apparently created by Fae known as the Puppeteer. This being also goes by the name of Burrattino. Some say they were once cats that had chased rats into the hedge and were then reshaped. Other legends say that they are mortals who the Puppeteer has been reshaped, turned in the Beast Seeming, and then sat back and watched them play their pathetic games of intrigue.

Other hobgoblins distrust the Gatto, and rightly so, and when their Fae master is in their presence they become nothing more than his play things to use and control.

Description: The Gatto appear to be human sized anthropomorphic cats. They wear the clothing of the 18th century. Their joints betray their puppet like form, and their eyes are made of unblinking glass. They have an other worldly beauty and they act with an air of grace that is sometimes lacking from other hobgoblins. But despite their beautiful, if fake, furs, and porcelain claws, the giant animate toys are sadistic killers. They roam the Venetian hedge, riding their clockwork horses, hunting other hobgoblins and changelings.

When not hunting, the Gatto set up camp, which is their own little court where they are attended to by their rat like servants. These are lavish affairs where there is dancing, fine food, and the drawn out torture of their captives.

Storytelling Hints: The Gatto are sadistic, melodramatic, shallow monsters. They will look for any fault in their opponent and using that against them. They are spiteful and taunt their quarry. But rather than just chase them down, they will play all manner of games, use all forms of torture.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 5, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Investigation 2, Crafts 2, Occult 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (Climbing, Running) 3, Brawl (Claws) 2, Larceny, Weaponry (Sword) 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken (Cats) 2, Empathy 2, Expression (Dance) 2, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Striking Looks 4, Fast Reflexes 3

Willpower: 4

Health: 8

Initiative: 9

Defense: 4

Speed: 11

Wyrd: 2

Turn: Vainglory 1

Type Damage Range Dicepool Special

Claw 1(L) - 6

Bite 3(L) - 7

Crush 1(B) - 8

Bite 3(L) - 9

Still to come – SAS, and the other supernatural creatures of Venice (Geist, Vampire, Mage, Hunter)

Mrs Cephalopod

Quote: <the sound of thrashing tentacles>

Background: A strange creature that has been born from the nightmares of all those women who have been harmed, abused, and murdered, thrown to be forgotten in the waters of the lagoon. In the Hedge these nightmares have taken form, wanting to reach strangle others with their pain. They appear as the Octopus With the Eyes of a Lady.

Description: These ladies appear as man sized octopus, with the typical eight limbs and shape. But their skins shimmer a multitude of colors, the parrot-like beak of the creatures shrieking with the voice of a woman, a woman being murdered. Of course their eyes are that of a woman, a woman that is frantically looking for release.

Storytelling Hints: The Ladies lurk in the waters of the Hedge, waiting for unwary Lost and Hobs, pulling them in the marshes and tearing their flesh from their bodies, and their hope.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Investigation 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Grapple) 2

Social Skills: Intimidation 2

Willpower: 5

Health: 8

Initiative: 7

Defense: 4

Speed: 13 (In water 18)

Type Damage Range Dicepool Special