

HUNTER: THE VIGIL



Drugs & Sales

The kidnappings happened every fifth week, a child taken right from their rooms. For the most part, it was the disaffected youths. Kids who wore the heavy black and whined about their lives because they thought they were hard. The parents still made the effort to look for them, police tried to find anyone with information. Feds were brought in with specialists and corpse sniffing dogs and underground sonar.

It all amounted to shit.

For us, we just started rattling our usual contacts. The drug pushers didn't know anything, they were too busy dealing with a bunch of vampires outside of town. The Union didn't know either, since they were too focused on the plant closings in the area to fight monsters at the moment.

We were left with one option then, and none of us really "liked" it. But if anyone had a chance of seeing those kids again, we had to use it.

So we went to the shop, "Holistics For You" . It wasn't some dumb crystal gazer shop that was packed with tacky statues and little pieces of rocks for you to feel your "energy" in. It was a bookstore, really, catering to a very specific crowd. Inside were books in dead languages, from Sanskrit tablets to preservation jars full of brine and God knows what inside, the air inside musty and stale. We didn't like to go to this place, Jerry especially, but we needed to find what was happening, and the owner of this place was our only source.

The owner wasn't what you'd expect. She called herself "Dessie" , but I'm almost sure it wasn't her real name. Course, we never used our real names with her, so it probably evened out. She was feeding her dog as we came in, petting his head as we came up to the counter, wearing a pencil skirt and white blouse. All I know is that despite my loving wife, it was a good thing there was a counter above my waist. "Dessie," I said, as behind me, the cell kept watch in the store.

"Oh, hey," she said, getting up, showing a little leg. "What's up?"

"You've heard about the kidnappings?" I asked, not removing my sunglasses.

"I did, but I didn't think much of them. Why, you think you know something?" She leaned over the counter towards me, smiling innocently. I didn't buy it, seeing as that was the same smile she had on when she changed into a dog-thing and cut a vampire to pieces three months ago.

"A buddy in the police gave us this," I said, taking the piece of thorn out of my pocket, sliding it across the counter. "It was found in one of the victim's rooms, figured you might know something about it."

Carefully, Dessie took the thorn, and looked it over, spinning it around in her fingers. Her smile disappeared. "I think I know what this is, and if I'm right, you're never seeing those kids again."

Jerry kicked at a bookcase, sending one or two tumbling to the floor. From behind the counter, the dog growled. "What, your Devil worshipping friends decided they'd make some good sacrifices, is that it?"

"I've told you all before, I don't worship anything you consider evil," Dessie said, shooting Jerry a look. "Now can you please pick those up before you make me angry?"

With a sneer, Jerry grabbed the books and put them back. He was an angry sonuvabitch, but he knew we weren't the home team in this shop. "So, you said you saw this before?" I asked, trying to diffuse the situation.

"When I Awakened, I traveled to a land of faeries," she said, Jerry letting out a snort. "These are not the faeries you know about, though. These weren't cute little men making toys for a great bearded drunk, they were beings of magic, pure magic."

"Are they human?" I asked, daring to step into her train of thought.

“Not all of them,” she said, taking out a box of matches. “The big ones, the real faeries, they’re totally inhuman, not a trace of emotion or empathy in them. They’re only interested in themselves, only concerned with what can keep them ‘entertained’ for as long as possible.” As she spoke, she lit the thorns on fire, and I watched as the flames went from red to green. My spine tingled.

“They’re kidnappers?” I asked.

“And worse,” she said. “On that shelf your friend just kicked, there’s a book on faeries that should tell you what you need to know.”

“Hell with that,” Jerry said. “We can find this monster without her help.”

“No, it could help us,” I said, ignoring Jerry’s cursing. “How much?”

Dessie’s smile returned in a flash. “For you? Seventy.”

“You’re kidding me,” I said. “Seventy bucks for a book that might not even be what I’m looking for? Thirty.”

“You want any information at all you’ll take what I’m offering. Forty-five.” He smiled got a little wider, making me feel uncomfortable.

“Thirty five,” I said. “Because if you don’t sell us the book cheap, more kids are gonna go missing. Can you live with yourself knowing you could have helped to stop this?”

Dessie chewed on her lip for a second, then nodded. “Thirty five,” she said, sticking out her hand. I shook it only for a second, and took the cash from my wallet. Nodding to Jerry, he took the book from the shelf, sneering at Dessie as he left.

So there we were, in the warehouse, putting the door into place. It looked weird, just a door standing up in the middle of a concrete floor, but according to the book, it was supposed to work with what we had planned. Jerry was almost finished pouring the salt around the door, cursing about the “pagan devil worship” we were committing. Lisa and Joe took the catwalks above the door, Joe loading his rifle, a leftover from his Marine days. Lisa was busy rigging the chains. If anything did go wrong, at least the freak probably wasn’t gonna leave the warehouse alive.

“We set?” Joe shouted, chambering a round. “I’m feeling real uneasy about this.”

“I told Louis to call the cops if we didn’t get back to him by one,” I said, going to the monster’s name, as Jerry got the trade objects from the wall to put inside the circle. An old inkwell, an MP3 player, a mannequin, and a plastic mask of the most famous Alaskan governor. If the book was right, this would be some kind of bargaining chip, if the monster was like it was described. “Okay, everyone got to your positions,” I said, checking that the ring of salt wasn’t broken. With the other three in place, I started calling out the thing’s name. “*Later*, Lord of All Words, High Powerful of the Contract of Language, come forth, for I have business with you.”

The door nearly flew off it’s hinges, a great roar opening it. Looking inside, I couldn’t believe for a second what I was seeing. A great barrier of thorns was suddenly behind the door, where before there was only the other side of the warehouse. It was bright too, and I almost went blind before shoving my sunglasses back onto my face. Grabbing for my pistol, I watched as the great monster emerged from the door, great sheets of parchment covering it’s body, it’s eyes milky white, a group of creatures scribbling on it’s parchments. I realized that some of the creatures had faces like the missing teens. “You who have summoned me,” he shouted, pointing a massive quill at my face. “Why have you summoned one as I to such a dismal place?”

“I’m here to deal,” I said. “You give us back the kids you took, we’ll give you that in their place.” Despite how I tried to make my voice sound, I couldn’t help but be terrified at the monster in front of me. It’s face alone was bigger than my chest, and I realized that it’s beard had managed to become the very parchment that the teens were scribbling on.

The monster looked the thing over, smiling as it did. Whether it liked what it saw or was working out a way to kill us, I didn’t know. Rearing up, it laughed, the teens cringing away in fear, but still writing. I got a look at the parchment, and couldn’t make sense of half of the stuff on it. One of the kids was scribbling on calligraphy from some Asian nation, while another was illuminating like how they wrote old bibles. “This is but a trinket, man,” it said, batting the mannequin away. My eyes shot to the salt circle, and I silently thanked God that the thing was still intact. “What have you to truly offer me?”

I desperately eyed the warehouse, but that was all we had thought to bring, until I remembered the book. Grabbing it, I held it up. Despite being what I could only call blind, his eyes latched on to the book, following it wherever I moved it. “You want it? Well we’ve got to make a deal.”



“And what deal would that be, man?” he said. I could see Joe lining up the monster's head in his sights, but I waved him off. No need to make it angry.

“If you can come over here and get it, you get the book.”

“And if I do not?” the thing shouted. As he bellowed, I saw one of the girls start to cry, unable to stop writing.

“We get all the kids you stole from the surrounding hundred miles back.” I stood as firm and tall as I could. It was like facing a wild animal, I guess. Either you show it you mean business, or it’ll kill your ass

“A poor challenge, man,” it said in what I guessed was a whisper. Laughing, it kicked the mannequin across the floor, breaking the circle. As it did, though, Joe opened up with his rifle, rounds slamming into the beast’s head. Roaring, it charged after Joe, as I felt a constriction on my throat. I tried to yell, but nothing came out. Shaking my head, I ran over to the kids, grabbing them and pushing them to the door. They shrieked and screamed, but I kept pointing to the door, and they started to get the picture when I fired my pistol at the ceiling. Quickly, they ran outside, Jerry waving at me, saying with his hands he was running with them. Nodding, I let him go, turning to face the monster. Lisa was tugging desperately at the chains, but they were stuck. Waving to Joe, I pointed at Lisa, before grappling with the monster. With a silent roar, I started tearing at the parchments on it’s body, ripping off parts of it with all I had. Before I realized what was happening, I felt the parchment wrapping around my legs and arms.

“You dare challenge me!” the monster bellowed, my ears nearly bursting. The parchment brought me up to it’s face, it’s long white hair flapping about around me. “You who dare to treat me like a fool!”

I couldn’t argue at all, so I did the only thing I could possibly think to do.

I smiled.

“You find this pleasing?” the freak said, pulling me close to his eyes. His breath stank like rotting paper, and I could see that his tongue was just more parchment. “Explain,” he said, as I felt the pressure on my throat ease.

“I just thought of a riddle,” I said, finally speaking. “You can’t figure it out, you have to leave Earth, and never come back.”

The thing laughed again, and I was sure I was close to going deaf. “A more interesting challenge! Should you lose, O Man, I take you and all in this building as mine.”

“Agreed,” I said, seeing Joe and Lisa still struggling with the cable. Taking a breath, I came up with the best riddle I could. “I can build a whole city, but I cannot speak. I can destroy whole armies, but cannot bleed. I can save lives, but cannot be thanked. I am two in one, but wholly neither. What am I?”

The monster pondered the riddle for a moment, simply freezing where he was. I could barely even breathe in it’s grip, and decided to just stay where I was, simply because I didn’t want to be crushed by making it angry. Finally, it laughed. “I cannot solve your riddle, man. I must concede.” Setting me down, I heard Lisa shout from above, and I ducked out of the way as a half ton of metal came crashing down on the monster. The floor shook, and the monster let out a great scream as the metal fell on him, ringing and screaming as it hit the floor.

Shakily standing up, I saw steam coming up from the pile of metal wreckage. Smiling, I gave him the answer. “I am steel.”

We burned the door before we went outside, making sure nothing else could come out. The kids we took stock of, and it really did hit us hard when we learned three of them were still in that monster’s world. Still, we’d saved who we could. We sent them back to their parents, with specific instructions to not tell them anything about what had happened.

I heard the kids are getting therapy now, so maybe there’s some hope. But Dessie called me up the other day. A member of her little coven had gotten word that a gang in the city was making waves about a “mistake” that had to be corrected, and that one of the kids we’d saved was being harassed. That thing shouldn’t be back according to Dessie’s book, so I’m gonna pay her another visit. If she’s playing both of us, this relationship is gonna be very strained.

Journal of T. Harris, found outside the burning wreckage of “Holistics for You” . The owner, Diana Mordred, has yet to be found.

Introduction: Once Upon A Time

*Nicht die Kinder bloss speist man mit Märchen ab.
It is not children only that one feeds with faerie tales.
- Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Nathan der Weise (1779), III, 6.*

You know the story. The big bad wolf stalks the little girl through the forest, watching as she skips merrily to Grandma's house. He skirts ahead, killing Grandma and nearly kills the little girl.

Or maybe it's the one where two kids get lost in the forest, you know the one, with the breadcrumbs. They come across a house full of candy. They at least got luckier than Grandma, they fought their way out.

What about the tale of the fish-woman who wants to fall in love? Not a bad deal she made, except for when the deal went south and she got turned into sea foam. What a bargain, right? Means you always have to get your contracts in writing, probably.

Fairy tales. The Grimm brothers compiled them. Urban legends continue to add to their numbers. Children fear them. Adults are fascinated by them. After all, what does it say about a culture when their stories involve child-snatchers and little old men fixing shoes, when another weaves tales of old hags stealing children in the cold night out on the tundra and maidens made of snow melted by love?

Hunters, by default, learn fast that the monsters in the night are all too real. So if ghosts and vampires exist, what stops other creatures from preying on humanity? Sure, a few hunters notice the witches in their town, and there are those who know that there are wolves indeed wearing Grandma's skin a lot of the time. But surely that's all, right?

No. You see it everywhere. A blood drinking fiend is brought into the sunlight, only to smile and kill more hunters before it's put down. A woman using magic to make others less beautiful gets a bomb under her house, but the dental records don't match with her identity. They match with a missing person's case years gone cold. And none of the "friendly" witches your cell contacts can find her trace.

The Fair Folk. The Fae, The Seelie, the Sidhe, they go by many names throughout time and the cultures they interact with. Maybe they're something not quite human. Maybe they're something wholly different from our own reality. Whatever they are, they aim to use us and abuse us.

Theme: You Don't Know the Rules

It's a fact of life, hunters get out of their depth. They didn't plan for a vampire that can turn into mist. No one told them werewolves hunt in packs. Hunting faeries is something different. Any hunter can screw up, fail to prepare properly but what do you do against the folk who laugh at the very notion of preparation? How do you prepare to hunt the folk who can change the rules with a spit and a handshake?

To hunt the fae is to be lost in an endless thicket, desperately seeking some reference point before you are gone forever. A way to navigate the Kafkaesque rules of etiquette before you are called out or sell your soul. A way to hurt the beast who's contractually immune to your weapons before it tears your throat out. A way out of an endless thicket before the thorny hedges tear you to shreds.

Those Hunters who chase the Fae are always marked by their time in that mad world. The Sons of Cú Chulainn draw their strength from warrior codes not seen since the iron ages. The Wilde Society, uniquely able to understand the fae on their own terms, have been driven mad by the beauty they've seen and delight in their madness. The men and women of Searchlight find themselves torn between two worlds, they are kind and gentle among humanity yet ruthless and terrifying among the fae. Even the

sensible and grounded Lord Stewards follow nonsensical codes of behavior agreed to in long forgotten treaties.

Mood: Hysteria and Melancholy

Sometimes a hunter's life is a battle of dualities. A hunter can be at the top of the world one second, then wallowing in self-pity and loathing the next. It's just the way of the Vigil, because you have to do it, since no one else will, or even can.

Two moods may seem odd, but it's what happens. A hunter sometimes needs to divide what they feel, their triumphs from tragedies. It's essential to their lives, and even more so when the fae come into the picture. The fae feed off the emotions of a human being, it being nearly as valuable to them as water or air.

Sometimes though, it's the hunters who are able to turn the tables, because hunters are just insane, sometimes even more than the monsters, and it shows. The hysteria shows when a hunter realizes that killing human looking creatures has become a routine for them, usually after they're done dismembering. The melancholy sets in when they have to come home that night to find their children already asleep, with their spouses telling them the excuses they had to make to explain why a parent missed an important event they promised their children they would be at. That's the toll of the Vigil, and that's why hysteria and melancholy go hand in hand.

Contents

Chapter 1: The Road in the Wood

deals with the stories of the fae throughout the ages from the files of the hunters who have faced them. Just what are they? Where have they come from? Why do they seem so interested in humanity?

Chapter 2: Wyrd and Wooly

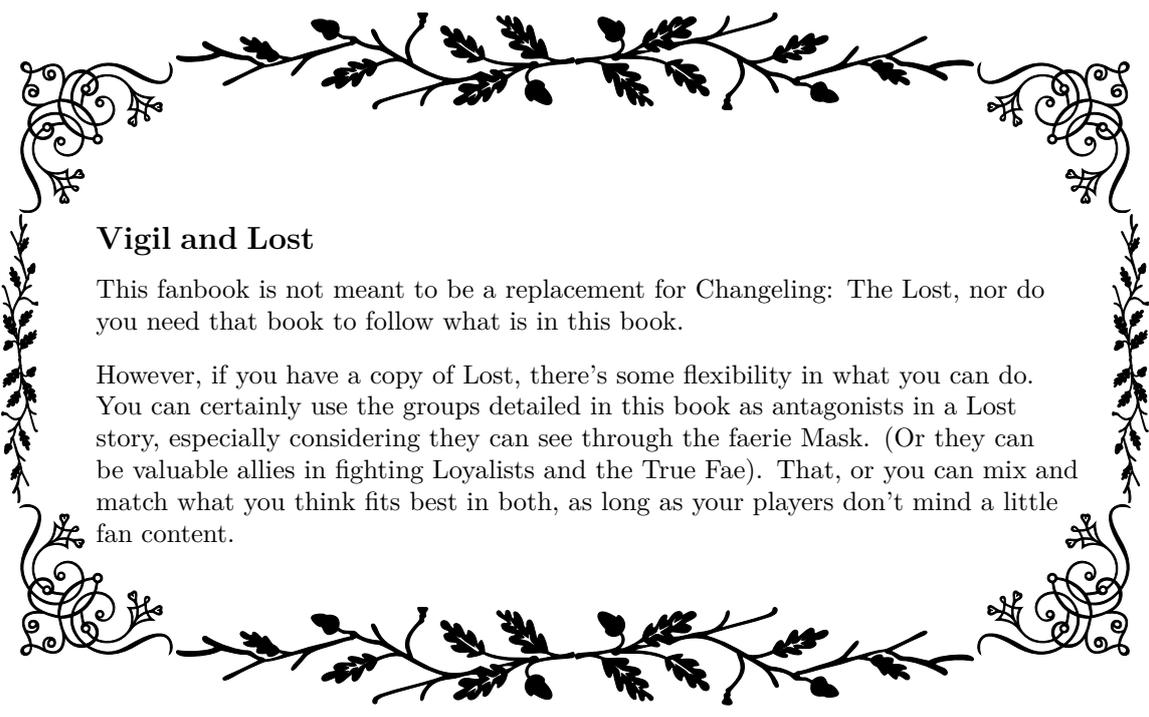
details the methods in the madness used by the larger world of hunters to combat the fae. From the improvised tactics of a tier one cell to the high technology of VALKYRIE, it's a firsthand primer on the fae menace, along with three more compacts and a new conspiracy.

Chapter 3: Cold Iron

allows the player and storyteller access to Endowments, Tactics and other special Merits specifically tooled to deal with the menace the fae present, just like a piece of iron to their warped heads.

Chapter 4: Hedging The Bet

Looks on the surface of the fae. Just who do they think they are? Where do they really come from? Do they ever tell the truth? Can they? And once more, Hunter pounds the pavement in Philadelphia, looking into the hidden freeholds and derelict court structure that resides in the city and surrounding areas.

A decorative border made of black ink, featuring a central vine with leaves and berries, and ornate scrollwork in the corners.

Vigil and Lost

This fanbook is not meant to be a replacement for *Changeling: The Lost*, nor do you need that book to follow what is in this book.

However, if you have a copy of *Lost*, there's some flexibility in what you can do. You can certainly use the groups detailed in this book as antagonists in a *Lost* story, especially considering they can see through the faerie Mask. (Or they can be valuable allies in fighting Loyalists and the True Fae). That, or you can mix and match what you think fits best in both, as long as your players don't mind a little fan content.

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ThatOtherGuy – Title Page

Straw Dolls

“Where the fuck did he go!” Jimmy shouted, kicking at the chairs outside the closed restaurant. “He was right fucking here!”

“Giving the cops evidence we were here doesn’t help things,” Mary growled. “But how did he manage to vanish like that without us seeing him?”

“I told you we should’ve shot him!” Jerry barked. “Hell, anything would’ve been better than just standing around here like morons!”

“I think you did get him,” I said, looking at the door. There was some liquid on the door, a yellowish-red liquid that didn’t quite look orange near the handle. “He was hit by some shrapnel, I’m sure of it.”

“Then where’s he?” Mary said. “This building’s alarmed, we’d know if he was inside.”

Shaking my head, I turned around to get everyone leaving when I saw something in an alley. It was only for a few seconds, but I thought I saw a scarecrow in the alley, scythe and all, pointing at me like I was gonna be next. I froze, unable to move, as the thing dragged its scythe across the road, bringing up a long trail of sparks behind it. My pistol dropped from my hand, and I heard the others try to yell out to me to start shooting.

“You can’t come here at night, little man,” it said in a harsh whisper, as I heard the others start to fade into the background noise. “You’ll find out what’s in the dark.”

The scythe was speeding towards my face when Jerry grabbed it and pulled the freak towards him. Mary was on the thing with her knife in an instant, stabbing its neck and back. Slapping myself out of the trance, I grabbed my gun and shoved it to the thing’s sack covered face, putting three rounds into it, the monster dropping into a heap of gangly arms and legs.

“The fuck happened to you?” I heard Mary shout, as sirens approached in the distance. I couldn’t speak, I just looked into the dead things eyes, shoving the pistol into them.

“Don’t ever show me my daughter like that again,” I said, pulling the trigger before running with the others.

As the hunters ran, a gangly armed figure emerged from the shadows, reaching down to touch the body, turning it back into a small doll.

Chapter I: The Road In The Wood

After two hours it stopped raining and in the same moment the spell broke, which Peroquet and the Admiral and Captain Jumeau knew by a curious twist of their senses, as if they had tasted a string quartet, or been, for a moment, deafened by the sight of colour blue.

-Susanna Clarke, Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell

What exactly is a faerie? There are so many differing terms and definitions of the monsters that no one really knows what to expect. Then there's the fact of how relatively few there are. Vampires get attention because they literally suck the life from a city or town. Werewolves are a sign that things have quite literally gone to the dogs, and witches are too powerful for anyone to trust to do the right thing for any amount of time. So why even bother with a bunch of freaks with flowers for hair and bronze clippings for fingernails?

Well, that's the problem. Those flowers in their hair smell good, don't they? So good that you just want to spend every waking minute around them. Or maybe you just like guys with a really animalistic bent to themselves, huh? Like your girls a little more rough around the edges than most? All that and more with faeries, at a price you don't even know you're paying. What happened to those memories of the vacation you took with your wife to Vermont? Who are these kids that keep calling themselves you children? Did you even remember where your mother raised you? And why are your moods swinging so violently lately? Or are they even moods at all, when you can find the energy to have them? And what about your dreams? Can you even have dreams anymore?

Medieval Times

The most stories you'll hear about the fae and their machinations come from Europe, specifically those two islands in the north Atlantic that can't help but fight with each other and themselves. Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales, all have stories and legends of the Fair Folk inhabiting their lands, both above and underneath the ground. Other nations of course have their own tales, but for some reason, these four have become the most famous.

Ireland alone has become almost synonymous with faeries, from the wee leprechauns that have become mascots to the world of the glories of sugared cereals and booze, to mighty horned gods that were soon found and taken up by neo-pagans who wanted something different from the usual crystal gazing crowd. Is there really, then, something under the Emerald Isle's green hills?

In the Middle Ages, such beliefs were all too real, an entire class, the druids, devoted to keeping the traditions of tribute to such creatures intact for future generations. Until the arrival of Christianity, the druids held a place of reverence in Ireland's kingdoms, for only they knew what pleased the mighty beings that lived just out of sight, unraveling their almost unknowable whims and wants.

Even in mainland Europe, traditions of nature spirits and gods of the woods kept their place, even in the face of the iron hand of the Church. Offerings of harvests and animals, and at times even human lives, were given to these creatures, and hunters did little. After all, many of the hunter conspiracies that came before the Renaissance were polytheistic themselves, and felt that a group worshipping some

invisible forest god was less important than hunting down the shape changer that was breeding like mad, or the blood drinker ruling half an empire in the shadows. In this climate, with such confusion, the fae practically survived untouched, only a token few daring to stand against them, whether by design, or by sheer chance. The Church itself taught against the dangers of faeries, saying that new born children and women who had just given birth were susceptible to faerie machinations, in danger of being stolen away and replaced with simulacrum that were not quite perfect. This led to interesting encounters when missionaries traveled those parts of Europe still under the sway of paganism and polytheism.

Under the Mounds

Transcribed from Medieval Celtic Parchment by the Malleus Maleficarum, 521 A.D.

“As we missionaries worked inland, we continued to encounter pagan traditions in the native peoples. Stone sculptures dotted the landscape, surrounding the small mounds that dotted the land. When asked, the locals told of small creatures that would appear from the hills, wreaking havoc and stealing their children and women.”

“The chief of the tribe I encountered, a great brute of a man covered in the peculiar tattoos of his people, told me the daemons demanded a tribute. Each night an offering of milk and meat was left at the mound, each morning the bowls empty. And once a year, in the celebration the pagans call Samhain, they are told to leave an offering of child at the mound. I told them that the reason for such events was the animals of the fields, wild dogs who took from the villagers who were these ‘fae’, and they were told not to leave such offerings anymore, that they should instead become focused on giving thanks to God almighty, and must set to work building a proper church and house of worship. Satisfied in my duties, I set to explaining what the Church expected, and was given a place to sleep for the night.”

“I awoke to the sounds of a great wailing in the village by the rising sun, and ran out to see the chief of the village laying in a circle of blood, the great man himself somehow fused with the bodies of a wild dog and cat, his face a strange grimace of pain and joy. When pressed, I had discovered that the headmen of the village saw the chief drawn outside by a woman of unimaginable beauty. As they gathered their weapons to protect their chief, he had vanished, the smell of rotted flesh and waste left behind. I then realized the power the daemons had over this place, and decided then to exorcise the land.”

“The villagers being simple farmers, I called on the seven escorts I had been given by the archbishop, to give the villagers a measure of protection. In the name of the Lord, God, we went about the village, destroying their idols and finding the heathen witches that dared to call themselves holy men. A great fire was started in the village center, the idols and pagans burned to cleanse the village of the Devil worship that was found.”

“That night, I awoke, at what I believe to be the Lord’s warning, to what any man would see as a woman of unearthly beauty and grace, floating into my chambers in the moonlight. But I was guided by God, and saw instead a creature of the Devil, the daemon possessed of a visage made of flesh like that of an animal, eyes wild and a nose sniffing at the air in the hut. I saw blood on her arms, and knew that my guards had been felled by the beast. I would pray for them after I had dealt with the monster.”

“You dare to steal from me my worshippers,” she said, daring to draw her hand down my cheek. I felt my mind cloud and fall, but I prayed to the Lord for guidance, and my mind cleared in an instant. “What authority has you to do so, foolish man?”

“That which is given to me by the Lord, God almighty,” I answered, rising in my bed. Despite the darkness, I could see her clearly, the moonlight gathering around her. “I come in the footsteps of Patrick, to cleanse this land of its pagan traditions. You, a succubus of the Devil, a being made to tempt the hearts of men, you shall cast back into the depths of that dark hole, to rot with your ruler who dared to go against God’s message.”

“The creature stared at me for a minute, as if trying to decide whether or not I was worthy of its wrath. Quietly, I prayed, and as the words left my lips, the creature let out a great shriek, covering its ears and writhing on the ground like a snake. Realizing that it could not stand the sound of such righteousness, I pressed my prayers, the noise of the villagers roused bringing me heart. The headmen reached my hut first, and running inside, found me praying over the creature, as its body of animal hide and moonlight was shrinking, withering as smoke erupted from its mouth and eyes. The monster kept fading, until I pressed my cross to it, a creation for me by my brother, a blacksmith who forged it

from the strongest iron. Pressing it into her head, I finished my prayer, as it's head crumbled into dust, swiftly followed by the rest of it's body."

"The entire village converted after, and many have sought to become fellow wearers of the cloth. The mound has since been destroyed, to prevent any more daemonic incursions, so that the light of the Lord might shine ever brighter. I, for my part, will continue on, to search out other such villages under the sway of the daemons."

Story Seed: Emerald Isle

Fae and Ireland go together like drinking and Ireland. It's a part of the culture inseparable from it's popular depictions, and in this case, all the more true. Even in the age of science and technologies' conquering of the known world, rural villages still keep their traditional stances, honoring the "wee folk" that live in the faerie mounds and rings across the island. Surely it's all just folklore, though. Tell that to the monsters who still demand tribute. Plenty of villages, not just in Ireland but around the world don't like to talk about it, but they still need someone in the village to keep the tributes up. Because as much as the Catholic Church likes to ignore it, there are still a few "snakes" left in these areas, and unluckily for the people living there, more than a few have woken up to find out the old ways are being replaced. It's time to remind the people of the pledges and contracts they made centuries past. How do you protect a people from a contract no lawyer can get out of?

Story Seed: Holy Hell

That priest probably thought he was doing the village a favor in ridding it of it's fae master, but what he left out of his report back to the archbishop was that a few days later the village wells became dry, and the animals sickly. The local priests tried to pray for aid, but eventually the villagers gave up and ran, leaving the abandoned village to the elements. Until three years ago. Then a team of workers found the scattered remains of the village and now the entire area is an archaeological site, students running to and fro, carrying the few idols that survived the missionary purge. Then one of those idols passed where the faerie mound used to be. Now all hell's broken loose. It started slow, just a few malfunctions with the machines and generators, but now people are getting sick, and others are talking about the woman appearing in their sleep. What exactly is it running over the dig site? If the priest really did destroy a faerie, then who is the monster driving the students and teachers to madness? And what kind of deal did the old faerie make with the people that kept the land fertile?

The Age of Discovery

With the travels of brave explorers in the early 15th century, mankind started to push until then unknown boundaries, pushing through the world to find so many new people, creatures and discoveries. Stories flooded back to Europe. Columbus told of men without heads, of foot-men and cyclops, though they were soon found false. Other discoveries, like that of giant horned horses, or snakes that were as large as a man, were soon proven true. Then came tales of great apes, like men but not like men, of great lizards that could kill with but a single bite. Forests where the rain never stopped, and where the sun never shone, even in the middle of the day.

With this new age, mankind's mastery over the planet was practically guaranteed. But there were still places they needed to learn of. The sea itself, the method of mankind's mastery, was still an unknown, giant serpents sighted bringing down whole ships, if it wasn't a giant octopus or squid attacking the sailors. But then there are the tales that just sound downright insane.

Across the Seas

Journal found by the Loyalists of Thule, dated 1429 A.D.

"We were three days out from Copenhagen when we first heard their songs. We thought they were simply a few noises made by the creatures of the sea. After all, the great whales made songs often, and

the men found them a break from the monotony of life aboard. But this song was far too human to be of any comfort, and I ordered that the music be avoided. The helmsman complied, but I did not miss the look of discomfort on his face, sorrow on leaving the song behind on our voyage to the Indies.”

“Three days later, the singing came again in the night, and I awoke to find us eight miles out of position. The helmsman, it seemed, was leading us towards the voices. When we tried to grab him away from the helm, he gripped it like a man possessed and we were forced to knock him unconscious before we were able to right the ship back on course. Angered, I ordered the helmsman be lashed, doing the duty myself. But I saw in his eyes, as the lash opened his back, that he was smiling through the pain, lost in his mind.”

“Putting him to work tending the sails, the time lost was made up quickly, and we reached the coast of Africa to resupply. Setting off again, I thought we were rid finally of the songs, and the former helmsman even started to return to some semblance of sanity. Until we had reached the midpoint of our journey, and the singing started again.”

“Quickly I ordered my first mate to loose the sails, to catch as much wind as possible. But looking up, we saw the linesmen lax at their posts, the helmsman somehow spreading his madness to the others. I sent others up to wrench them from their posts, and down on deck, they quickly regained their senses. Except for the helmsman. Bringing him down, I saw in his eyes that all sense had left him. As a matter of enforcement to the rest of the crew, I flogged him again and put him in the brig, and made the voyage forward.”

“By the grace of God, we made the rest of the journey without incident, and filled our holds with silks and spices that would fetch fine prices back in Denmark. The men were in high spirits, and for a day I allowed them to partake of the pleasures that the Indies had to offer. I and the first mate alone watched over the ship and helmsman. Despite the pleasures that awaited us inland, I was focused solely on the poor sailor, a man of many voyages at the helm of the ship I commanded. His eyes were clouded, his mouth working silently. I looked to the first mate, who shook his head.”

“Finished in the Indies, we set off, back to our homes and families. The wind backed our sails the entire journey, and we made excellent time back to the West of Africa, the crew convinced the voices were merely a trick of the wind, joking and laughing about them as they made their plans to go ashore with their money. I wanted so dearly to take part in their cheer, but both I and my first mate found ourselves still preoccupied with the helmsman, who had not slept since we left port.”

“Then came the final nights of our long voyage, and the greatest danger. As we neared the Canary Islands, the unearthly singing returned at night, loudest and closest to the boat. The men roused themselves this time, myself only awakening to the sound of musket fire, the cannons firing into the ocean. Running to the quarter deck, I saw the first mate leading the fight. ‘What has happened?’ I shouted over the fight.”

“The watch spotted them coming in by the stern, by sheer chance,’ he said, reloading his pistol. ‘They heard the singing, and saw them on the waves.’ I ran to where he was pointing, and were it not for the men’s fighting, I would have sworn them but the addled mind I had gained during the voyage.”

“They were like women, but not like women, creatures I had heard tell, called ‘mermaids’ by the English sailors, women of half-fish, half human bodies, with the ability to tempt men right from the decks. By a miracle or by their own memories of the Indies my sailors managed to fight their temptations, but only by sheer chance was I able to see them for what they really were, in spite of the English stories.”

“Their bodies, almost serpentine, were grotesque and covered in terrible scales. Their faces, despite being human like, were angled like a fish, with rows of jagged teeth inside. Their eyes had no lids, and were slits, like that of a cat. Their webbed hands were savagely clawed, using them to climb the hull to the rail. Our gaff hooks and cutlasses were all that saved us.”

“Then, in the din of the battle, I heard a voice singing, and instantly the creatures were placated. Looking back, I saw the helmsman, freed of his shackles by simply wrenching them from the walls, the iron chains dragging behind him. His eyes were still clouded, but he sang out the song, words I dare not commit to any page, for fear they will drive others to his state when heard. With a roar, he dove over the side, the creatures swarming over him, their inhuman screams still heard.”

“Quickly, I ordered the ship put to full sail, and we left the battle, the waters still churning as we moved away. I ordered the men not look back, as I did not want them to see anything more, but I did, and did the first mate. What we saw was a watery hand, reaching up from the ocean itself, pulling down on the waves, until they were crushed underneath.”

“Even as I write down the tale, the men have left the ship for new employ. The first mate has hung

himself, and I feel I shall soon join him. The madness we witnessed was too much for his mind, I see, and I will soon join him in his merciful silence. For I dare never sail again, knowing what lurks beneath the waves.”

Story Seeds

Beyond the Sea

The Hedge is a funny thing, isn't it? Anywhere there's a door, a faerie can open the Hedge right up. There are even natural occurrences sometimes—a group of sorry bastards walking right into a thorny patch of what they think is forest. Until the wolf-things come out to play. But what about the sea? Over two thirds of the world, and we barely know a thing about it. So what do the fae do with the sea? What happens to the ships that vanish like a puff of smoke?

The sailors on the USS *Cyclops* might know, if they still had the mouths to speak. And the sailors who found themselves lost in the Sargasso Sea would be able to tell you about the seaweed that actually had thorns on it, if they weren't now a permanent fixture of that tangled underwater forest. The point is simple enough; the Hedge can appear anywhere and everywhere, even in the middle of the oceans. What happens when your cell goes out looking for sea monsters, only to find a group of people literally walking on water?

Seaman's Stories

When it comes to the fae, folklore is more than valuable, it can be a lifesaver. After all, look at the tales of mermaids. They call, they tempt, they draw lonely sailors into the depths of lust and over the sides of their boats, right into the jaws of oblivion, it not the mermaid's herself.

So when your cell comes across a story of a mermaid running about in your territory, you read, do your research, and arm up. Only to find the remains of a better equipped cell pulling themselves out of the water, shouting the old stories are fakes, that the monsters aren't affected by what you were told would work. But the other cell thinks they know what can, and ask your cell to help. Can you trust them at all? Or do you do your own research into what the monsters really might be? Could you even trust your own research anymore?

Trails Blazed

By the 1700s, North America and large swathes of Asia were being charted out by “discoverers” of the lands they found, planting flags and claiming ownership. Often, though, they were met by the people and groups living on those lands already, with their own governments, traditions, and legends.

But the explorers in North America couldn't stop, because behind them were hordes of immigrants flooding the continent, hungry for land and growing room. More often than not, they ran right into the lands of the Amerindian tribes that had already lived on those lands for generations, who were more than a little worried about the white men coming on to their lands saying it was now theirs. Of course, the explorers had technology on their side, coupled with numbers. A tribe of a few hundred can only hold out for so long against a horde of US Cavalry bolstered by Irish and Italian immigrants from the old countries.

Of course, there were problems even the cavalry couldn't face up against. While the spirit world was usually handled by the shapechangers that resided in the tribes, more often than not, the legends of the native peoples were handled by humans alone.

River Monsters

Transcribed from the files of Null Mysteriis, dated 1766 A.D.

“The Seneca tribe living on the river called the Genessee possess a most curious tale that they constantly relate to the visitors their tribe take in. As we were coming off the river on the fourth night of our journey among the people, I noticed our native guides grow uneasy, hurriedly taking their boats from the water and stealing away into the forests. I asked our guide, Jean-Pierre, a half-born of a French trader and

Mohawk bride, why they moved so quickly. "It is the river," he told me. "They fear what lives inside it, a creature they say will kill them." Knowing the reputation of creatures in the land was less than amicable towards man's encounters, I kept pace with him, finally passing through the palisades of the village as the sun set beneath the trees. The tribe welcomed me as a friend, my cloth and tools fetching fine furs and skins."

"As with their peculiar style of rule, the Seneca let their eldest women interact with me primarily, though they eyed Jean-Pierre with suspicion. His French blood did not bode well with them after their wars with the French, but I stated that I would handle any indiscretion he may commit in the village. Satisfied for the time, the trade continued, though I could not shake from my mind the looks of fear on the men's faces. Daring to ask, I looked to the oldest woman, the tribe's leader in dealing with outsiders, and asked why the tribe feared the village so."

"The woman looked at me with eyes like those on a hawk, scanning me well with a disdain borne from probably many a dealing with outsiders who were less than trustworthy. Nodding, which I took to see as an indicator of my trustworthiness, she spoke."

"It is a legend from the time before men knew to speak,' she said, the longhouse suddenly quiet. 'Before the white man came to the distant shores and before even the people knew to build the longhouse. They call themselves the gahonga, spirits of the rocks and the river.' The entire longhouse had gone silent now, as the old woman went on, her wrinkled face hard set, her eyes rock steady in their gaze. 'The gahonga are the guardians of the river, protecting it, nurturing it. Any man who dares to wrong the river wrongs the gahonga.'"

"I looked at the old woman, and the longhouse as a whole. The native tales and superstitions always held some sway, but to see the very real fear in their eyes reminded me of how uneducated and sorry they were, for their ways, while valuable for survival in the forests and rivers in the area, allowed no chance for them to learn about the world they lived in, woefully under developed as a people."

"I told them I would prove their superstitions false, and bade Jean-Pierre accompany me to the river. The natives begged me to stay, but the old woman told them to hold their grasping hands. 'If the white man wants to die, so be it. His quest will be in vain.' Smiling at my own bravado, I looked at Jean-Pierre, who to my shock, sat where he was. 'I would rather sit with my enemies than risk a death by spirits.' Shaking my head, I left without him, making my way by torch back to the water."

"Still cursing Jean-Pierre's foolishness, I made my way back to the river, and for a brief time, thought I had found the cause of the native fear. By the night, the clear river made the fish beneath the water reflect the moonlight, shimmering just beneath the surface. Looking around, I saw many of the rocks nearby also reflecting the moon, their mosses acting as the perfect "mirror" , if one would. Satisfied I could convince at least Jean-Pierre to come back and support my discovery to the natives, I went to leave when I heard the sound of footsteps on the banks. Turning, I lowered my torch, and let out a gasp."

"A creature, looking to be made of rocks, stepped out to the banks, surrounded by smaller creatures, like fireflies, but smaller, and faster, their light constant. The brute at first seemed not to notice me, and quickly I doused the torch in the water. That, however, drew the thing's attentions, and he stormed across the river towards me. Drawing my pistol, I fired at it, but the ball had no effect other than making the monster angrier. I knew my knife would do nothing against the brute, but I drew it still, along with the only tool I had not managed to trade off, an iron hammer. The brute roared at me, but I roared back, remembering that to stand one's ground in the face of such beasts meant better chances of making it back to one's home."

"The insects flew away into the night, leaving the great brute and myself alone. As he stormed across the river, I stood my ground, determined to fight even if it were my last. A wiser man would run, but I could not, for I had to prove the foolishness of the natives. Waiting until the towering beast made it to my shore, I went to stab it, watching the steel blade break as it made contact with its hide. I barely had time to gasp before a mighty hand sent me flying backwards. I gathered my wits in time enough to use the hammer to hit the massive hand that was about to engulf my entire head."

"To my shock, the creature reared back, clutching at its hand. Looking at the hammer, I realized that I had hit a creature of rock-hard hide with a blunt object. With careful approach, I dodged the monster, hitting it again on the back. It arched backwards, screaming in pain. In the moonlight, I could see that where I had hit the monster, the hide had turned a brilliant red, like that of when a man brushes against a poisonous plant. I still, at the time, did not realize the cause, but I kept fighting the monster, until finally, I placed a great blow on its head, the creature falling onto the cold earth. Winded and near collapse, I could not sate my curiosity, and put the hammer atop the monster. Its skin steamed,

and I realized that the hammer was a sort of bane to the creature. I now believe that the knife, made of steel, had lost some crucial piece of it's nature in the process, while the simple iron hammer had won the day due to it's less advanced making."

"Running back to the village, I announced my kill loudly, claiming that I had managed to give the people a body to study. Seeing my wounds and my eyes, the old woman of the village sent me with her finest warriors and trackers, Jean-Pierre amazed to see me alive. On return to the river, however, I lost heart, for the body had disappeared. But the trackers did vindicate my claim, for they said a great beast had been felled near the bank. They begged me for the hammer, but I had decided to keep it for myself. I still seek out another such monster, to test against it again whether or not the hammer had any kind of special property."

"Thomas Jacobs"

Sidebar: Iron and Steel Fairies hate iron, plain and simple. Unrefined, it's deadlier than uranium to them. After metalworking, it's even more dangerous to their bodies. It destroys their illusions of humanity, making their nature clear for all to see. Their magic can't affect it, and when you see the look on a fae's face the second before you bring that iron hammer down on their head, you'll never want to forget.

So what about steel? Hunters know that steel just won't cut it, only iron will do. Some say that since the Fae made deals with the elements, shoving carbon inside of iron makes it susceptible to faerie control. Others say it's the opposite, that the Fae has some deal that makes them weak to iron in exchange for some payment. Hunters don't know the truth, they just know when fighting the fae, you want iron.

Story Seeds

Campfire Stories

Many a hunter has noticed that a faeries in the real world love stepping into the stories and legends set up by humans. It's like faeries are almost drawn into being part of a story, both to use as a cover, and because it seems to give them some kind of purpose. Maybe having lost their own lives, they seek to find new ones in the stories they heard in life?

A cell of hunters from out of town is about to find out the hard way. Coming in with video cameras and claims of "blowing the lid off things" , they say they want to film the local legend on your turf, the one about the goat-man who lives near the abandoned mines. Normally, you'd just let them go on their way and watch as they kill themselves. But that particular legend involves the goat-man killing anyone who knows of his existence. Can you stop them from their own zeal? And what if they do succeed? You can't protect everyone with access to the Internet from the goat-man, can you?

Lay of the Land

The faeries know the land, too well for many hunters to like, in many cases. You thought you had one cornered in a warren the last night, but the damn thing managed to escape and run for it, leaving you and your cellmates to explain your "late night hunt" to the cops. If it weren't for your contact in the department, there would've been jail time and a court date. As it is, you're stuck with community service.

Still, it's stuck in your craw that the faerie managed to escape like that without any sign it was getting away. You went back when you had the time, and saw that the thing had actually dug a tunnel through the ground to escape. Then your friend said it hadn't dug the tunnel. The tunnel had opened for the faerie. How did that happen? And can you stop the faerie before it decides it wants to get back at you for the other night?

Modern Times

After the sad case of Bridget Cleary in 1895, belief in faeries waned for a time, though the case of the Cottingley Fairies stirred attention back to old folklore in 1920. For the most part, though, the idea that

faeries were real faded around the time witchcraft stopped being taken seriously as a danger and when monsters on film were less frightening than the evils man had just unleashed during the Great War.

For hunters, that just meant there was a lull in the Vigil on the front with faeries. Yes, on occasion, a faerie hut was found and burned, or a group of faeries were found and killed, but for the most part, faeries were less important than the vampires using crime as a cover and witches creating cults everywhere. Added to the fact that iron was practically everywhere in modern life, and hunters thought that faeries had finally been defeated by man without mankind ever knowing it.

Yet it was never the case all over the world. Records from hunter groups in Japan detail oni, mountain dwelling ogres who were known to cause disaster and destruction wherever they went, to say nothing of the cost in human lives. Creatures called the diwata were recorded by Malleus missionaries in the Philippines as “dethroned gods, hungering against for the worship now rightfully given to God, using trickery and evil to attempt to tempt the faithful away.”

But even monsters can travel, and the mass immigrations of the 19th and 20th centuries scattered ancient faeries everywhere, particularly faeries bound or “watching over” a particular family. Once again, the Irish were connected, their scattering in the face of famine, revolution and oppression also gave ample chance for the faeries of the British Isles to flee their “homes” as well, finding new and fertile ground around the world. Records from an Ascending Ones cell in Rio de Janeiro reported seeing two factions of faeries fighting in the slums, one faction with features similar to the natives, another with more European features. Brooklyn and Boston were filled with leprechauns and imps running rampant, and until the locals could stop them, many homes were destroyed and many dreams lost, with never a pot of gold found to their credit.

Bronx Beatdown

Record given to the Sons of Cú Chulainn, 1923 A.D.

“Pat was the one who found the hole they were hiding in, the wee monsters using the basement as their hiding place for the stolen goods and children. He’d been clawed up pretty well, though, and we left him with the doctor with the story of animal attack before setting off. The doctor only said that it was the most dangerous wild dog attack he’d ever seen.”

“We asked Leary to keep his buddies in blue away while we went to work, we knew what would happen if the cops showed up, the little bastards would escape. The building was abandoned, so we were able to get to the door without worrying about looking suspicious. Colm was able to break the lock, and we sped inside, throwing the few drunks and hobos inside out to the street. Kenny was at the basement first, but then the floor gave way, and he fell into a pit of wooden spikes. I guess it was a mercy that one went through his throat, the others didn’t have to hear any screams or pleas for help.”

“Colm broke through the basement door, and just barely missed being hit by a little monster carrying an old musket. ‘Get away, you men!’ one of them shouted. Despite being the tallest of the group, the fucker was a good two feet shorter than me. ‘This is a doorway for them, they’ll be able to come freely if you stop us!’”

“I just shot the little bastard with my revolver, the others rushing in, breaking the mirrors like our grandparents taught us. The little monsters just watched in shock, as we broke the doors and mirrors in the rooms, breaking them or putting the raw iron in front of them. Finished with our work, I looked over to see the leader of the bunch bleeding out on the floor, his blood a sickly yellow. ‘You...you knew?’ he said, the others parting at I approached. ‘How?’”

“Family secret,’ I answered, firing another bullet into his head. ‘There, one of yours for one of ours. And in exchange for not killing you all, we demand that you all leave the city known as New York, including the Island of Manhattan, for a period of no less than four hundred years.’ The little bastards got moving right then, running out the door and up the stairs, out of the building, and I knew, out of the city for good. As they left one turned back “You have your deal,” she spat on the floor “and much good may it do you. After what you did you’d be fools to stay.”

We grabbed Kenny’s body before we left, and to be sure of it all, we lit the building, watching from a distance as the fire worked up from the basement, destroying any door or window left. We buried Kenny later, after making sure it was really him. Despite all our tricks, we couldn’t make the corpse break down into anything else than a body.”

Story Seeds

Conflicting Tales

The faeries seem to revel conflict. Entire courts have been created, each one battling the other for permanent supremacy, while smaller social units skirt each other's territory and tempt their enemies into starting the first fight. But even these battles appear to be smaller fights, because every changeling captured tells of bigger enemies, bigger threats looming just beyond the veil of reality. They call them the Gentry, and the changelings say that they're nothing in comparison to these "lords" of the faeries.

So, when a faerie "lord" comes to your cell, he's not a monster at all. No horns, no cruel words, just a question for help. Seems some changelings keep stealing his "possessions" and wants your help in getting them back. In return, he'll completely destroy another cell of competition, whose methods you feel are less than desirable. You can't argue that he seems powerful, and the changelings are bastards indeed. But can you really sell out another cell of hunters when you know you're giving them to a monster?

Gentle-Fae

The Fair Folk, the Gentry, they go by quite a few names, the self-proclaimed rulers of the land faeries claim they were taken to. Some of the faeries say they're evil. Others say they're the best rulers anyone anywhere could ask for, bar none. Maybe hunters would have their own opinions, if the freaks came out to play often enough.

Well it looks like your city's getting the chance. A ruler calling himself Master of All Knowledge, Keeper of Darkest Secrets, Guardian of the Greatest Challenges, and Lord of the Dance is coming to town from the chatter. Even the werewolves and vampires seem quiet, meaning that this thing is big. But the bad faeries, the ones who keep causing trouble, they're fucking terrified, meaning now's the perfect time to hit'em. But just how bad is this faerie, anyway? And why would he be interested in your city at all?

Russian Front

Archived by the Loyalists of Thule, originally found by the members of a Russian Union cell after the author was found desiccated in his own home, 1942 A.D.

"22nd February. The men and I found an abandoned farmhouse just outside of Smolensk. I feel fortunate there was no one inside, for the men have been tired and in need of an outlet. I have tried to follow my orders to scout for enemy forces trying to pass the lines, but I feel now that command has just led us on a chase for shadows. Still, we will do our duty, for to fail may mean death. One thing of interest, we found strange tracks in the forest. Yodorovski said they were of no animal he had ever seen, but did mention they were fresh, at least three days past. Still, it is of no importance to us. We press forward."

"28th February. We found the bodies of some Germans in a thicket of trees. There had obviously been a struggle, since there were signs of a scuffle between the men. Each was riddled with bullet holes, the symbol for the SS on their collars. I smiled at the sight, of the bastard SS getting a just fate, but Yodorovski pointed out that there were plenty of bullets in the bodies, but no shell casings on the forest floor. I can't be bothered to think about this now, I have to focus on finding the other SS that probably made it into the forests."

"2nd March. I fear committing this to paper, but I must write what I saw. We found a farm, deserted, and made our way forward to investigate when Menshov spotted the tracks again. Calling Yodorovski over, I ordered the rest of the men to investigate the house for food. Yodorovski said the tracks were fresh, at most a day old. Then the men called from the house, and we ran. As we can up, I could see from the angle I was at that the roof of the house had been crushed in. I wish I could write collapsed, but the truth is that it was crushed. But I noticed shadows in the barn, and went inside. I still regret my decision."

"Inside, the bodies of the animals were still standing, and at first, I thought them merely asleep. They looked thin, starved, the skin hanging off their frames. It was only when I came close and poked at one with my pistol that the skin and bones fell to the ground. All over the barn, faces without eyes started back at me. But not a drop of blood or piece of flesh could be found. It frightened me. Yodorovski called

me out, and told me that the men had found a pictures of the family inside. Holding out his hand, he gave me a picture of a father, a mother, a son and two daughters. He also said the bodies were those of three women, but nothing like in the picture. I ordered him to take me to the bodies.”

“They were all elderly hags, with brittle bones and parchment skin, sheer terror frozen for eternity on their faces, hair white as the snow on the ground. But to look at the picture, I saw a young wife and teenaged daughters, outside on the farm with their father and brother. I could only order the men move on, but then Menshov started shouting about Baba Yaga, the old hag. I ordered him to quiet himself. We will press on.”

“5th March. My hand shakes as I pen these words to paper. We found the source of the tracks. At first, it appeared to be the peculiar cottages of the reindeer herders, standing out in the forest. But as we approached, the men hopeful for fresher meals, it started to move, it’s legs like that of a chickens. I wanted to fire on it, but I ordered the men to hold. Whatever madness could make us all see a moving cottage, it was more powerful than anything we would be able to bring to bear. Sending Yodorovski to investigate the scene, I grabbed Menshov and ordered him to tell me everything he knew. He said that Baba Yaga was a frightening hag, a witch who flew on a giant pestle, vindictive and terrifying to behold. But he knew nothing about the reasons she would steal the youth from three other woman, and I could not help but silently agree. I then called the men together. Yodorovski said the tracks of the hut matched the tracks by the farm, and that the body of the father was at the former base of the at the former base of the of the cottage. He said the corpse was in a terrible and disconnected state, and that he advised no one to look at it. I agreed, and I quickly told the men that such a threat would not be allowed. They knew it was no political bantering like that the party throws about. They were willing to kill the evil that was stalking the forests.”

“7th March. We did it. We finally killed Baba Yaga. I don’t know how a man can kill a legend, but we did. I write to ensure the true story is preserved.”

“Yodorovski found the hut, and I had the men take positions around it on all sides. Raising my field glasses, I looked inside to see a woman, flirting around the place, not a hag like Mencshov had described, but not young. Middle age, with graying hair and a face of wrinkles starting to form. The boy was there too, weeping and terrified, strapped to a bed inside the cottage. I could tell his bones were broken, and knew his fate was to be much like his fathers unless we moved.”

“I gave the signal to Sokolov, who fired his anti-tank rifle at the joint of the right leg. The cottage suddenly reared up, starting to move, but another round from the massive rifle broke the leg, sending the cottage collapsing to the ground. The left leg kicked futilely at the air, until it just curled in on itself, like a bug. We surrounded the cabin, cautious of the leg, and ordered the hag to release the boy and surrender. It is only now I realize that had the cabin not been magically held together, there was no chance the boy wasn’t being smothered under the weight of the bed.”

“The door was ripped from it’s hinges, and I ordered the men to use our grenades on the hag. The explosions went on for a minute before I dared look out from behind the tree I took cover behind. There, on the ground, her body, now a wretched hag’s, lay on the ground atop a giant pestle. I sent Yodorovski and Menshov inside, and they yelled the cabin was clear. Once more, all manner of horrible sights were inside, and I quickly rushed to the bedroom to see about the boy. Cutting his bonds, I tried to bring him out of his wide eyed stare. But he would not come back, as the doctors will attest to. All I could do was cover the boy in my coat and take him away.”

“I ordered the men build a fire, and we set the house and body alight. As we watched, the fires took on a blue hue, but it burned cold, so cold that icicles started to form around the fire. I ordered the men run, and I am not going to lie. I led the way.”

“10th March. The Politburo has taken an interest in my report, and has ordered that I report to Moscow immediately. The men are still being held in their quarters, and the doctors say the boy has made no attempt to speak, and his wounds are not yet healed. I have made sure to smuggle this journal to my brother in Vladivostok. I have instructed him not to open it until he either gets news of my death, imprisonment, or that I somehow just disappear. I know he will see my story as true. If not, then all hope of the truth has been lost.”

Story Seeds

Will the Real Fairies Please Stand Up?

So who are the real monsters when it comes to the faeries anyway? After all, when you see one monster kidnapping people and screwing with their heads, why should you see them as any better than the ones they say are the kidnappers and mutators?

Well, now you have a chance to find out. A group of fae has come to you, because they think you can help them get revenge on their captor. They say they can guarantee your safe return, and even give you the secrets needed to find some hefty financial compensation for your trouble. But you're not stupid, you can't be when you're on the Vigil. So how do you turn down money like they're offering and a chance to kill an honest to God monster when you know they can easily double cross you? Are there really offers too good to pass up that you just can't take?

Globe Trotting

So let's say you've managed to chase a faerie through those mysterious doors they manage to open up, right? You run through it, chase them with the miracle of NOT getting hung up on the thorns, and you think you've got the monster where you want it. Then it ducks through a door and out the other side, and you run after it. Suddenly, your cell's turf just turned into Paris, London, or any other city worldwide.

Now you're undocumented, and probably armed, foreign nationals on another nation's soil, without any papers that would even remotely help. You might not have any contacts in that place, and you need to get out, fast. And that monster is still on the loose. Is it possible to carry out the Vigil when you're probably wanted worldwide?

The Boy Who Never Grew Up

Lucifuge Report, Received 1940 AD

My Lady,

As you by now know, I have been on the run from both the Nazi agents sent to kill me, and the British intelligence trying to interrogate me, if not study me. I hide as best I can, sneaking out to keep up on the pace of the war. I pray the Allied forces can end the madness I have seen. The Devil himself would be hard pressed to devise such evil as I have seen at Auschwitz and Dachau.

As I have made my way through the London slums, bombed and still smoking, I have noticed a curious sight. Groups of children, running through the ruins and through the alleyways, stealing torn clothing and pieces of jewels. I could make sense of the clothing, as such poor orphans would recognize the need for warmth, but the jewels I could not fathom. Possibly to pawn off, for money that would buy them food, but the British rationing made that an impossibility. And for children so young to know about the criminal markets struck me as odd, though not impossible.

Following them, I found that they all seemed to gather heavily near the Kensington Gardens, the patrolling local authorities seemingly oblivious to them. Curious, yes, that such children were able to move so close to a royal residence without issue. Worried, I followed closely, knowing that I would be able to escape whatever problems would arise with Franz's aid. The guards of the property, frankly, were more worried about threat from the air than from land.

I was able to see the children more clearly in the night starlight. Their clothes seemed to shift as they went deeper into the garden, from torn rags and shirts to loincloths and animal hides. They almost started to march, prideful and strong in their destitute glory. They carried on their shoulders food and sacks of flour from the bombed houses, others carrying small knives and arrows. One seemed to have a small pistol, some heirloom from a family that would think it destroyed.

I feared that something was raising an army within England, my Lady, and so I set it on myself to stop such madness. To use children for such things, deplorable, below even the Nazis and their sickness. I summoned Franz, and followed them closely.

The children congregated at a statue, a small figure atop it, playing a flute, as smaller figures moved around the bottom. I dared not move closer yet, for I would not risk the children without cause. As I observed, the children seemed to chant, softly at first, but gaining volume and momentum. "Peter,

Peter, come and play, we've gathered for you well this day. Peter, Peter, come out tonight, join us in a jolly fight."

On and on the chanting went, and I feared that the children would summon the guards. Yet no one raised alarm, or fired into their ever growing circle. As they chanted, I heard what was like metal groaning, being formed and shaped. I found my eyes drawn to the statue, the small boy atop it starting to move, the other figures leaping off and singing praise at him as well. The figure jumped down suddenly, his flesh like skin and his clothes a bright green. He played his flute loudly, dancing about, the children cheering in ecstasy. I suddenly felt as though I was witnessing something forbidden, a barred participant in this heathen ritual.

"Good job, Lost Boys," he shouted, giving a loud crow like a rooster. "Now that we have all this, we can fight tonight! Those fools at the stump don't realize what they're going up against tonight!" the children cheered again, working up into a frenzy. I knew not what "stump" they were talking about, but the children were being sent off to be killed, and that was something I would not stand idly by and watch.

I ordered Franz to draw the attention of the soldiers nearby, as I followed the children to their battle. Their leader flew above them, playing his flute and crowing loudly. Clearly, some enchantment was keeping their voices contained from the rest of the world, as even a deaf man could hear such revelry. I did my best to keep hidden, though I would be a fool to think that the boy leading them had not realized my presence. It struck, then, that he might not even care.

The target of their march soon came into sight, a gnarled stump carved with figures and small wooden statues of the very wood, made to look like the faeries of stories and children's tales. As they jumped to life, another group of children formed opposite the first, two armies matched and ready to fight. To see this, knowing that the children had already lost everything, to be forced to fight for mad creatures, that was too much. I stood up from my cover and shouted, "No more, Peter!"

Both factions froze before they could commence their battle, staring at me with revulsion. Truly, I had disturbed something unholy, for the children started to inch back, fearful of punishment or some other adult means of keeping them in line. But the boy with the flute continued to laugh, flying up to me and dancing on the air above my head.

"And who do you think you are, Frenchman?" he asked, laughing without care at the fact he had been discovered. "Are you fighting with the stump, or fighting with me and my lost boys?" He waved his hand, and three small girls ran up to me, holding treasures and jewels from a dozen bombed homes. "I can make sure you get whatever you want, just fight for me!"

"He can offer you but paltry gifts and trinkets!" the leader of the other faction shouted, a small elf with wrinkled ears and a face not unlike a victim of hellfire. "We can give you what a man truly desires in life!" Parting the children, he bade a woman to step forward, her face ashen and sullied, tears forming at the edges of her eyes. On seeing me, though, her face lit up, as though a new hope had been put into her heart. "Fight with us, and you shall have a bride for the rest of your days!"

Why are you both using children in your battles?" I asked, ignoring both offers, but still edging close to the woman. "Surely they are no true fighters, worse even than dogs in war."

What're you talking about?" the boy said, ceasing his dancing and floating down to the ground in front of me, as I put myself between him and the woman. "Are you saying there are better ways to have fun?"

"You tell me this is a sport?" I asked. No longer could I consider him a boy, for his actions betrayed a worse foe than I had wanted. He was no young wizard or magic user, and not a child of our own diabolical lineage. This boy was truly evil, no morality except what he decided for himself. "What of the children who fall in battle then? What would happen to them?"

"As long as I stay alive, who cares what happens?" Peter said, the "lost boys" shouting in agreement. Carefully, I looked at their faces, and realized theirs was a false enthusiasm. For all their cheers and shouts, their eyes had a much darker story. You could see that some longed for death, others were fearful of the creature in front of me. Looking back at the woman, I saw the same face, a life fooled into servitude to powers beyond her reasoning. "Do you even know who I am?" he asked, like he was genuinely shocked that I had no knowledge of his existence.

"No, nor will I care," I said, grabbing his neck. For all his magic and flight, he still had the body of a small boy. He tried to fly away, as his "army" broke from their trance and scattered into the gardens. Peter looked down in shock, but I held my grip firm, though the added weight of my female companion made it even harder for him to lift off, her hands wrapped around my right leg. It was when I heard the

shouting of men from below, accompanied by rifle fire, that I knew Franz had accomplished his task. I dared give a smile, but as I did, I turned away from the boy, and we fell hard into a tree, the branches breaking most of our fall, along with my ankle. The only sign that I had been strangling anything at all was the golden powder covering my palms.

“You really stepped in it this time,” Franz growled, climbing up to meet me, the woman scurrying away from Franz, an unholy terror in her eyes. “Those guards are going mad looking for more intruders!”

“Then off we must be,” I said, sending Franz away, giving the woman my coat to get her safely away. It took the rest of the night, but we escaped safely, hopefully without fear of recapture. I sent her to a local Anglican mission, where I hope she may put her terror behind her one day.

My Lady, we must ensure that no more children would be indentured into such hellish servitude. Surely we must have allies inside the British royal house, to prevent such kidnappings from ever happening again. The children of London must be made safe from these monsters.

Sincerely,
C. Theleme

Story Seeds

Clap Your Hands if you Believe

You hear something; the faeries really can't affect you, it's all just the power of suggestion. You don't believe it at first, because that fire you nearly got engulfed with last week felt pretty damn real, but then you see this one guy just tell a faerie flat out in the middle of a fight that it couldn't shock him with lightning. You even saw the faerie try to kill that man, and fail. Is there some truth to the rumor then? Or is it a con by the monsters to kill as many hunters as they can?

Loyal to No-One?

So let's say your cell knows that the changelings aren't really the faeries you've been told about. Fair enough, you think, they just need to hide out and keep quiet. But you start hearing about disappearances in their area of town, involving mothers and their young babies. They keep saying it's a loyalist among them, a traitor who will always be loyal to the faeries beyond the veil of reality. But their “investigation” is taking too long. Maybe you need to remind them what happens when the monsters step out of line in this town.

Sex, Drugs, and Fairies

The 1960s and 1970s were a time of change in the world. New ideas on politics, religion, and sex entered the public consciousness with a vengeance, and people sat up and took notice. Anton LaVey challenged the Christian hold on America by founding the Church of Satan, which advocated the fulfillment of self as opposed to others while not advocating worship of any “divine” being. Drugs flowed through every strata of American life like never before, opening new doors into how people comprehended the human mind.

Faeries fit easily into this new upside down world, and hunters played hell tracking them down. Task Force: VALYRKIE had enough trouble with cults springing up across the country that they didn't noticed creatures with cloven hooves spreading dream-stealing drugs around colleges nation-wide. Null Mysteriis was inundated with reports of sightings of monsters from students in drug fueled hazes, describing monsters with eyes on their fingers and prehensile tongues coming out of their elbows. Lone cells saw their communities' dreams and hopes stolen away, to say nothing of the children who ran off and never came back. If any monster could have something considered a heyday, the faeries had it during the 1960s and 70s.

File 239-S

Null Mysteriis Patient Interview, 1972 A.D.

Dr. Hendricks: Now Jason, why do you think that you aren't who you are?
Jason Lang: I...I see things, sir...*Sobbing* I want them to stop!

Dr. H: It's okay, Jason. Just tell me what you keep seeing.

JL: I see a man, like me, but he's not me, you know? *Sobbing* I see him with a bear's jaws, and giant claws. *Subject makes swiping-gestures* And he's coming after me, and I want to run away. But then the thing, it takes me in it's arms...and it takes me away, through the thorns.

Dr. H: And you think this was an effect of the hallucinogen?

JL: No, because when I came out of it, my friends said I looked different. Said my eyes had changed color or something about my face was wrong. I called up my parents, but they said that my voice was someone else's! Doc, how can they say that about their own son!

Dr. H: Calm down, Jason, we'll figure it out somehow. You just have to keep calm, alright? *Subject nods* Alright. Now Jason, can you tell me anything about this hedge?

JL: Well, it's just full of thorns, thorns and darkness. The sun, it wasn't there at all, there was just a light, like it was coming from everywhere. And there were...things, things skirting the very edges of the place. I tried to look around, but I couldn't see a thing! Then, it all went black, and I woke up. *Subject weeps* Doc, can't you help me?

Dr. H: Of course we will, Jason. We'll figure out exactly why these things happened, the right way. For now, you need to take your medicine and go to sleep. *Subject nods, follows orderly out* Christ, this is gonna take forever to figure out.

Silence for ten seconds, tape resumes

Dr. H: Addition to the file for Jason Lang. Last night, in between the last bed checks of the night, orderlies discovered Mr. Lang gone, in his place plastic bags and drugs, laid out on the bed in the shape of a roughly human body, each drug apparently corresponding with a body part. Marijuana for the head, cocaine for the limbs, etcetera. The police have been told that this was a breakout by Mr. Lang's companions, who probably left the drugs as a warning. The cell has had no luck in locating Mr. Lang. I hypothesize we never will.

Story Seeds

Fetching

Old stories tell of how the fae left fetches, simulated people in the place of the ones they abducted, forced to live out the lives of the people they replaced. Made of trash and spare parts of whatever a faerie could find, the fetch had no idea of it's true nature until it died.

So when a man comes to you for help telling you he's a fetch, you're a little confused. But he says he's got a happy life, a full life, a wife, two step-kids he loves, and a steady and fulfilling job. Now the changeling he replaced is back, and the fetch doesn't want to lose his place in existence. Can you help? Should you help? Is there a way to resolve this at all?

Grab'N'Go

You've started to notice something off with someone close to you. Maybe it's the way they're walking, maybe it's how they're treating the people around them differently. Maybe it's the fact that, after a lifetime of red meat, they've gone vegan in a day. Somethings up, and you're shaking all the supernatural trees you know for answers.

Then a group of people too pretty to be normal approach you. They say your friend isn't your friend, it's actually something called a "fetch", and it needs to be contained or destroyed, if your real friend has any hope of regaining a normal life. They won't say a word about who they are or what they want, they just keep badgering you about the things you need to do. Is there any grain of truth in what they're saying?

Contemporary Tales

With the change of the centuries from 20th to 21st, a resurgence in fantasy literature arrived, tales of wizards and vampires leading the charge. And following these stories came faeries, a little closer to the ancient tales than a lot of people thought. Gone were the days of faeries as little women flitting about

as brightly colored Marilyn Monroe caricatures, reborn were cautionary tales about dark woods, joined by deserted alleyways and decrepit warehouses.

They joined tales that took decades to gain recognition. Stories about elemental spirits in Leap Castle were investigated, but whether the public that saw the tape felt it was true or not, no one knows. Still, it launched a new series of investigations into the old stories and folk tales that surrounded the modern world, sometimes at great expense.

From a Publication by the Organization for the Rational Assessment of the Supernatural, Recieved by Subscribers In Project FORT.

The Dreamtime?

A New Look at Jung's Collective Unconscious Based On Observations On the Anatomy of Our Kind Neighbours.

Professor Hanzsel Jaminson, Dr Isabella Franklin, Dr Jacob Calloway

Abstract: Observational studies into the good folk often mention that the quiet folk seem to be able to appear and disappear through any door they wish. Just where the grey neighbours go to on the other side of those doors is one of the largest unanswered questions about our kind neighbours.

In this paper we draw together previous research, as well as an analysis of mythology and observations about fairy magic to come to suggest the kind neighbours travel to the collective dreamscape of mankind. Finally new evidence is presented to argue that the grey people are in fact archetypes from mankind's collective unconscious who walk among us.

A note is attached: This might be worth looking into, the guys at ADAMSKI swear this isn't anything of theirs.

From a letter between Loyalists of Thule, intercepted by The Cheiron Group

Dear Fritz,

In my studies I came across a theory that the dragon in the heraldry of the British crown symbolises the loyalty of the monarchy to the devil. We are, of course, both aware that there is no dragon in the arms, the fool had misidentified the lion. Somehow it never occurred to him that the unicorn might be of occult significance, it is no great mystery why the unicorn appears in the arms, or who chained it.

I have enclosed a copy of the original documents, after your latest correspondence I could not help but feel that you needed some cheer.

Ever Faithful, your friend

John Bergmann

The Pet Shop That Wasn't There Tomorrow

VASCU Case File #481470-JN8, 1998

...With the death of Agent Charles Howell, it was deemed necessary to investigate into his case files on one "Count D" , a suspect in a various murders and suicides, though never formally charged with any crime. On review of the evidence compiled by Agent Howell, it has been found that there have been various "Count D's" , the first written reference in Howell's files referencing a "Giant Rat of Sumatra" from Victorian London, along with various other cases that have, to date, all been written in the official records as "animal attacks" . Of the victims, all had visited Count D's shop, a pet store, before their death.

Researching further into Howell's files, it was discovered that, among the survivors, they had to write out detailed contracts with Count D, in order to purchase an animal. The survivors, those who were not rendered mentally unsound, reported that the contracts were relatively simple in nature. One individual

reported that the contract consisted of three rules. Never expose it to bright light, never get it wet, and never, ever, feed it after midnight. The victim's family was later found dead in their home, the victim himself scarred and covered in the blood and entrails of his family. When the local authorities found him, he could only mutter "They were fed."

With the permission of AD Skalmer, the victim's memories were probed. After Junior Agent Flannigan was treated for severe paranoia and mild shock, she related the location of the former shop in Los Angeles' Chinatown. However, the location was merely a shell, a small convenience store put in its place. Coordinating with the LAPD, one of their detectives was mentioned as having been with Agent Howell just before his death. The detective, however, had taken a sabbatical from the force, and his whereabouts currently unknown. His files, however, have been copied and added to the file.

As far as can be determined, this "Count D" is not a traditional murderer, in that he does not seem to take any steps to kill his victims. Instead, his victims seem to kill themselves by breaking these "contracts" he makes.

Story Seed: Contractual Obligations

Fairies make deals, that's certain. They make deals about what you have to give them, they make contracts that you have to follow, or else you lose a leg. If you tell them, "I want to be the best trumpet player in history", they'll make you one, you just have to perform every night, non-stop, until you die. If you're lucky. So you're worried when a family member of yours comes to you. They signed a deal with a good looking talent agent who said they would make your family member a face "no one would forget". Now your relative is suddenly filled with murderous urges towards people they've never even met.

Story Seed: A Spit and a Handshake

The oral contract is the oldest form of contract mankind has. Since man first discovered language, the power of words to enforce another's actions has been a powerful tool. That's why faeries love it. Watch what you say, or else you're going to have to rob that pharmacy, or else you lose your first born. Never mind all the poor bastards who've said, "I'd give my left nut for that Harley".

Now a new trend is spreading around town. People are giving a spit and a handshake for whatever they want, and all they have to do is be available to a "favor". You found out what those favors could consist of when a mother reportedly threw her children out of a moving car, saying that it was "part of the deal".

Bell Island Hag

Recording discovered by the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, 2009 A.D.

Subject 1: You're getting this, right?

Subject 2: Audio and video. Man, the networks are gonna pay top dollar for this!

Subject 1: That's not what it's about though, it's about finally getting the truth out, and you know that.

Subject 3: Guys, we're walking through mud and brush. I thought you said there was a path here.

Subject 2: Quit complaining, this is gonna be worth a dozen pairs of those dumb sneakers you always wear.

Subject 1: Okay, we're coming up on the turn now. Do we have the iron?

Subject 3: A whole fucking bag full. Do you think it'll really be one of those and not a ghost?

Subject 1: Every piece of evidence says this is definitely something cross-dimensional, and all that research says iron- *Sound, identified as twig snapping* You hear that?

Subject 2: Guys, our equipment's acting kinda funny.

Subject 1: Funny how?

Subject 2: It's not spiking at all. No EMF, no infrared, nothing. I'm pointing it at my own fucking hand and it won't read, all the equipment's busted.

Subject 3: What about the camera and recorder?

Subject 4: Three to come and make the pact...

Subject 2: Still working...you hear that?

Subject 1: Hear what?
Subject 4: Three who come, and not come back...
Subject 3: I just heard it, sounded like a voice.
Subject 1: What direction?
Subject 2: Everywhere, like right above us!
Subject 4: Will they face eternal blight?
Subject 1: Fuck! *Sound of a safety on a pistol being turned*
Subject 4: Or will they see tomorrow's light? *Loud shriek, sounds of gunfire*
Subject 2: Fuck! Get away from me, get away!
Subject 4: The price out of my woods is steep The Hag's good mercy's never cheap.
Subject 2: I'll pay, I'll pay! Just don't do that shit to me, I'm only an inside man! *Undiscernable noise, yelling identified as Subject 2, yelling ends abruptly*
Subject 4: To those who dare to walk my path Remember the Hag and her vicious wrath.
Victim found three days later, clothes torn and clutching a digital recorder. Remains mute and unable to relate experiences. Body shows no wounds or signs of struggle, nor identification. Unable to tell at current time victim's identity. Search ongoing for two other subjects as well as the possible assailant. No one has come forward to identify the victim

Story Seeds

An Alien Vigil

You've done enough research to find that the faeries aren't all pretty lights and wee people. You've seen them wreck enough homes with sick head games, and children going missing are too many children for you to abide. Someone has to stop these sick fuckers before they can go any further. You planned the raid, and you were ready to rock and roll with enough cold iron to last a decade.

Then you found their hideout already burning, a group of freaks with horns, hooves, ice for hair and giants with sharp teeth were already cheering their victory over the faeries. They explained they were fighting the same fight, that the "loyalists" were giving the children over to their faerie masters, and that the "motley" saved the children they could, letting the children out from behind them as proof. But you know about fetches and faerie tricks from the old books. But are they really telling the truth? Have you finally found a monster that holds it's own Vigil?

Deal Or No Deal?

You've captured one of the faeries, and are trying to get him to spill what he wants. When he finally broke, you got a heap of information, and quickly put it to good use, and all you had to promise was to let him live. Of course, that didn't save his butt when you all came back alive and killed him anyway. One less freak running around.

But then Jerry got hit by a car and broke his leg. Still, not a major problem, right? Then there was Sally's broken ankle while she was walking down a flight of stairs. A little out of the ordinary, but all in all, under the realm of possibility. But it wouldn't stop, until finally, you were nearly hit by a drunk driver who had both his headlights burnt out as he was being chased by the cops and the road was wet from the rain that had been going all day. Now you're sure that the freak made some kind of attack on you for breaking the deal. So how can you break a contract with a monster you've already killed?

As For Granny?

The house was molding, the stale smell of old furniture and age. A pile of old newspapers tied up in twine sat by the front door, the worn carpeting sending up dust and dirt with each step. Yellowed wallpaper and an ever-present stink of cigarette reeking from the walls rounded out the lovely abode, and I hated it.

“Granny,” I said, gently shutting the door behind her. “It’s me. I brought you some treats, where are you?” As I spoke, I pulled the hood of my red hoodie down from my face, scanning the old house.

“In the den, deary, come back and talk for a while,” she said. I walked slowly, passing a giant cabinet of nick-knacks that had slowly gathered dust over the decades, smiling rosy-cheeked cherubs and little toddlers fishing in a grime covered pond. It was the kind of house you expected to see featured on a reality show, where the kids try to convince mom to stop being senile for one damn minute and clean up. They probably never show the fact that cleaning up once isn’t enough to change a person’s life forever.

“Hey Granny,” I said, entering the den. The furniture was covered in plastic, and I had to make an effort to actually sit on the couch without sliding off. The TV was a wood-panelled relic from the Seventies or Eighties, barely working at this point. “Brought you your lunch,” I said, placing the tin meal pack on her sidetable.

“Thank you deary, you always treat Granny nice,” she said. Even with her thinning and worn patch of gray hair on her head and thick glasses, I didn’t buy the act for a second. Why Granny kept going with it, even when I knew, I don’t think I’ll ever figure out. “So, what do you need from Granny?” she asked, digging into her meal with the plastic fork.

“I think I figured it out Granny, all those accidents,” I said, praying the plan would work. “None of the places you said would give us an answer, none of them knew anything about the kids getting hurt. I don’t think they even cared, really.” Granny just kept on eating, hand shaking slightly as she brought a pile of peas to her near-toothless mouth. “Sure, they were bad, but when we got them talking, none of them knew. That’s when it hit me. You wanted us running around in circles, didn’t you Granny?”

Granny’s hand stopped shaking instantly, and I knew I’d had her. “Yeah, you thought we’d do the dirty work for you, take out the competition in the area. We really bought it for a little while too. Munchausen-by-Proxy, right? Kindly old lady takes care of all the little kids that come to her door, and the parents give you a nice chunk of change.”

“Deary, you’d best not make accusations without proof,” Granny said, shaking her head. Her milky eyes started to suddenly clear, and I noticed her hair slowly thickening. “It could get you hurt.”

“I’m fine with getting hurt, so long as the real problem gets taken care of,” I said, levelling my revolver at her. “Now why don’t you tell me about why you fucked with us?”

“Damn, I hate your kind,” she said, her mouth suddenly sprouting teeth every time she opened it. “You can never leave an old lady in peace.”

“An old lady?” I asked. “I thought Red Riding Hood took out the wolf.”

That was it. Granny dropped the act, hands turning into claws and eyes going yellow. Her wrinkled nose turned into a snout, teeth protruding out of it haphazardly, cloudy yellow drool staining the carpet. “Whelp,” she growled, her legs suddenly bent backwards. “Granny will have to punish you now.”

I fired into her face twice, and I know I drew blood, but Granny smacked the revolver out of my hands and batted me into the TV, the old appliance finally giving up in a fizzle of sparks and ozone and a pile of broken glass. “Now look at what you’ve done! Granny will have to punish you!”

I grabbed the only thing I could, a piece of glass from the screen, and waited. I could at least mark her for the rest of the guys, make sure she couldn’t get off easy for killing me.

That was when the guys burst through the door and shot her, Granny screaming in pain and falling to the ground, writhing in agony as the iron burned through her.

“Took your fucking time,” I said, pulling myself up. “You needed an invitation or something?”

“Your bug went dead, guess she went for the peas first,” Mikey said, taking out a knife and slicing into Granny’s stomach. “Now get the rocks and iron shavings, we’ve got to make sure she can’t get up before we finish sewing.”

Nodding, I went to the van, helping Sean with the rocks and shavings. Just because I thought it would be fitting, I decided to shove her little figurines in too. Now she’ll always have some children nearby.

Chapter 2: Wyrd and Wools

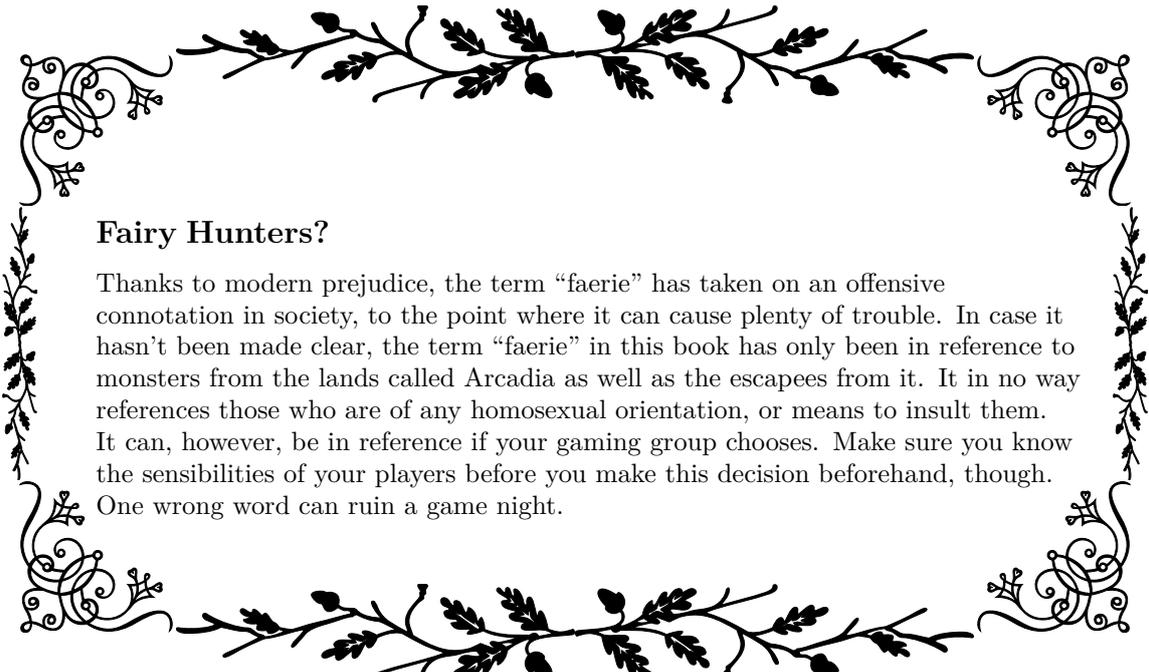
Set your heart at rest:

The faerieland buys not the child of me.

– William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (c. 1595–96), Act II, scene 1, line 121.

The Wyrd. To hear the faeries tell it, it's the force that makes them them, in the sense of what gives them their power. They say it's just a force, flowing everywhere, that enables them to make their deals, use their powers, and hide themselves from the rest of the world. Too little of it, and they risk insanity. Too much, and they go power-mad.

An average hunter (if there could even be such a thing) doesn't care about the supposed "force" behind a faerie's power, because the faerie aren't Jedi, and don't know a damn thing about the force. Try telling that to the faeries, though. Still, hunters see the freaks and faeries as monsters just like the rest, so it falls to them to make sure the Wyrd doesn't get too weird.

A decorative border consisting of a central horizontal branch with leaves and small flowers, with ornate scrollwork and floral motifs at the corners and ends.

Fairy Hunters?

Thanks to modern prejudice, the term "faerie" has taken on an offensive connotation in society, to the point where it can cause plenty of trouble. In case it hasn't been made clear, the term "faerie" in this book has only been in reference to monsters from the lands called Arcadia as well as the escapees from it. It in no way references those who are of any homosexual orientation, or means to insult them. It can, however, be in reference if your gaming group chooses. Make sure you know the sensibilities of your players before you make this decision beforehand, though. One wrong word can ruin a game night.

Tier One

No hunter can be worse off against the fae than a lonely group of people in a single cell without the means or connections to help them in battle. A hunter at this level barely has anything to help them except their wits and their cell in this case.

Cells mostly don't have the ability to really differentiate between the fiction and the reality of the monsters, on the ground the distinction between various fae creatures can be confusing at best. Add in the innumerable lies and fictions created by paranoid fae trying to hide, unscrupulously manipulative

creatures of all stripes and fantasy authors trying to entertain and the truth can be impossibly obscured leaving hunters with nothing more than a few lucky guesses that might be right in a few old books or new age crap.

First impressions can count for a lot with cells. A hunter who first hears the story of faerie slavers from a manipulative changeling is less likely to believe that story when another changeling genuinely means it. Even when a hunter is convinced that abduction is the cause of faeries they are hardly going to know the whole picture: How do the kidnappers choose their slaves? How do some escape? Was it even an escape or were they aloud to leave? Even the fae don't know everything, how is a hunter supposed to piece together the capitol T Truth from scraps of third hand information and lies? No, it's far more likely that a cell will end up with some stitched together idea from folklore, faerie tales, and what scraps of information they got from the fae. Full of wards or behaviors that might at best be effective against a particular faerie.

It's not just the big issues that can be confusing. The little ones are just as obscure. If a hunter with The Sight sees a group of graceful elves rescue a child from a band of gruesome ogres what will she conclude? She might think that "elves" are good and "ogres" are bad. She could even extrapolate: Pretty faeries are good, ugly faeries are bad. That's usually how faerie tales go, Cinderella was beautiful but her stepsisters were ugly. What she probably wont think is that this was a battle between those who oppose the True Fae, and those still loyal to them. She might even try to work with the elves.

That's right, work with faeries. Since a lone cell isn't usually bound by any mission statements or restrictive dogma, they are able to make their own choices about which monsters they could possibly trust. It's not easy, and a lot of lone cells make the mistake of thinking that the faeries they know aren't capable of the evils other monsters are. The tightrope is long and thin, and the fall into being a slave to a faerie's whims is far. Still, it's part of the Vigil, and the risks are often overlooked if it means saving lives. That's all a tier one hunter has a lot of the time. Then again, they could learn to specialize....

On this job you've got to be careful the pressure doesn't get to you. A guy I ran with for a few years snapped, he started seeing monsters, "faeries" he said, everywhere he looked. No matter how he tried to prove it, they were human. I had to call the cops on him.

- Billy Houston, The Paladins

Last week I dreamed of a boy I used to date. We just talked about my life, he seemed so heartbroken when I told him about my husband. I just found out he's been murdered. The boyfriend not the husband. Someone shoved a blackberry vine down his throat. What's going on?

- Shauna Brown, The Sixth Street Slayers

Iron doesn't work! I beat a faerie with an iron railing and she just laughed at me.

- Louis Williams, Brooklyn Heights Neighbourhood Watch

Does anyone know which folk tales about changelings are accurate? My son's exact double came home yesterday saying he escaped from the faeries. I need to know how to protect my boys, both of them!

- Clare Fisher, lone Hunter.

A faerie told me the secret! If you want to tell good faeries from bad find a proper blacksmith and get a nail made of iron. This is important! The nail must never be heated, work it cold with hand tools only. All you have to do is prick a faerie with it, if they're good they won't feel any more than you or me. If they're bad they'll be in agony.

- Duncan Smith, God's Demons

Story Seeds

It's game time. You've found a goblin market, and you've never seen so much magic for sale. You know you're out of your depth, but using magic to fight the monsters. Only the big players can do that, and you're no sure you trust those creeps. Maybe it's time to show that even the little guy can get his hands on a little something.

After months of dodging tricky contracts and questionable pledges, your cell has struck a deal with the local faeries for information in return for leaving them alone. It's working out well so far, but there's rumor a new cell has rolled into the area, shaking down other hunters for information on local faeries and their dealings. Just who are these guys? And can you keep them off long enough before they see your cell as sympathizers?

Tier Two

Compacts are probably the best suited to combat the fae in terms of abilities. While first tier cells are limited by manpower, information and supplies, and conspiracies are slowed by their own size, a cell in a compact knows little in the way of central organization, giving it the fluidity needed to combat fae when they need to.

Most compacts have at least some quality information about the fae. The problem is, they almost certainly have picked up a lot of bad and incomplete information as well. For example, most compacts have heard that some faeries were once humans who were abducted by powerful lords. The problem is they've also heard those same "changelings" explain they're really just harmless nature spirits, figments of imagination that got lost and became material, part of a pagan pantheon who are happily retired ever since Christianity took and even more outlandish lies spread by the paranoid fae to keep themselves safe and hidden.

Perhaps the biggest advantage of having information, even information of dubious quality, is that it teaches hunters to have an open mind. A lone hunter could become convinced of a falsehood from a mistaken first impression. Members of a compact know that whatever the truth is, it's not clear and obvious. This keeps them second guessing and open to possibilities. When the monsters are both varied and delight in trickery that's the attitude that keeps a hunter alive.

"You have to remember that not all faeries were born like they are. Some were once humans, somebodies husband, wife, or child. It can be hard to tell which were human but you have to try"

– Melissa Gilbert, Searchlight, New York Chapter

"I'll tell you something weird. I was doing a doc on grays when I ran into another NetZo chasing faeries. This stuff keeps happening, and faeries are meant to be good artists, maybe the aliens buy from them too."

– Heather "Scully" Christian, Network Zero

"Every now and again someone posts the same story on the forum. They're going to help a faerie that used to be human before it was abducted. Half the time we never hear from them again. Look, I don't know what the deal is, but keep your wits about you."

– Robert Tompson, the Union, The Trashmen

"Go to your church and dig up the bodies. If the coffins are full of trash you've got faeries."

– Reverend Peter Green, the Long Night, The Seven Angels

"I heard that if you do a faerie a favor you'll win the lottery, turn into a supermodel or something. I've invited one to my next party, why don't you come. You could do with losing a few wrinkles dear."

– Catherine de la Haye, Ashwood Abbey.

Ashwood Abbey

Maria was always one with the more unusual tastes, so when the club brought in their guest, a bestial man with large fangs, a mane, and a tail swinging behind him, she had to be with him for the night. She finally found her chance when he had downed an entire bottle of whiskey with little aftereffect, and hurriedly dragged him upstairs, whispering all manner of ideas and games into his addled mind. Then, minutes later, the screaming drew everyone's attention. Grabbing their weapons, they ran upstairs, and found Maria nursing a clawed arm and holding her axe, the monster bound with electrical tape, a large cut on it's chest. It looked to the other members, eyes pleading for help.

“I’m fine,” Maria said, a new gleam in her eye. “Just leave me be for the night.” She licked her lips as the other members left. Oh yes, Maria loved her unusual tastes, and that night, she would indulge in three of them.

The Abbey loves it when it finds faeries. After all, the more exotic the monster, the more interesting the party. What on Earth could top the experience of being with a monster made out of living fire, or a person half-horse where it counts most?

The fact is that the faeries on Earth save some special animosity for the Abbey. Actions made by the Abbey, from kidnapping innocent changelings to killing entire motleys for perceived slights. The faeries level accusations at the Abbey of being just like than the “True Fae”, ignoring human morals and beliefs, instead killing or enslaving indiscriminately in the name of bored moral solipsism. The Abbey, par for the course, could care less about what a few freaks are saying about them, just what kind of fun they can get. After all, what kind of a night could you have with a creature that is able to control vines and plants?

Of course, the Abbey is nothing but respectful of traditions. A good many Abbey members often lead a “wild hunt” through their regions, tracking down and pursuing faeries in a game of cat and mouse before killing them. These hunts often tear through an area in sports cars and SUVs, though a few clubs stick to folklore and go on horseback with swords and bows, a pistol on their person for good measure.

If there was an issue with the fairies, it’s that they remind the Abbey, at times, too much of themselves. As often as they try and dress up like they’re doing good for mankind, they see the fae as sybarites, much like themselves, and perception is a bitch to behold. So, until the Abbey can rid themselves of the looking glass, they usually just stick with using the fairies as party guests and prey, and try to avoid talking to them while intoxicated.

Story Seeds

A faerie your cell usually gathers with has recently been hanging around with other sorts of creatures, from vampires to witches. While the parties have certainly been more entertaining, you slowly noticed that you never saw your “friend” with any of his own kind. He says it’s just because he wants to protect you, but you smell skeletons in his closet. Who, or what, is he hiding?

The outing last week was amazing, the transition between drug-fueled soiree to bloodthirsty hunt flawless, and you cut down the freaks one by one through the mansion, as your vision shifted from room to room, from Victorian estate to primeval forest and back again. Then you noticed Harold acting differently the next week, shocked when you used the silver broadsword on the werewolf’s manhood. Harold was never a squeamish one, especially when it came to werewolves, and that probably means something changed Harold that night. What tampered with Harold’s head? Or worse, did Harold make a deal himself?

The Long Night

James waited for the monster to creep from it’s hole, the hollow man. The others waited behind the dumpsters, waiting for the signal. “Yeah?” the man said, cracking the door open. “What is it?” The man’s breath reeked of alcohol, and he had a good amount of stubble on his chin.

“Good afternoon, sir. I was hoping for a minute of your time to talk with you about the teachings of the Lord.” James smiled innocently, praying he could distract the man from the cell crawling through his window.

“Not even God can help me with my problems,” the man answered, closing the door.

“The kingdom of Heaven is coming!” James shouted, trying to keep the man distracted.

“Then maybe I can finally sleep again!” the man barked, slamming the door in James’ face. Then, the sounds of a scuffle, followed by one of James’ cellmates unlocking the door. “We got him!” he said. Running inside, James saw they had trussed up the hollow man in duct tape.

Quickly, James took the hammer from his coat and brought it down on the monster’s head, until all that was left was straw and hair clippings.

The Kingdom of Heaven was coming. One demon at a time.

Demons walk in human form, it's true. But sometimes their real form isn't a horned monster with cloven hooves carrying around a pitchfork and cackling evilly. Maybe it's a little imp solely bent on weakening a man's resolve by destroying his life bit by bit. Maybe it's a seductress with hair literally of gold drawing him away from his proper place with his family and church. Whatever it looks like, it is an evil thing, and must be destroyed.

The Tribulation Militia has heard stories from the captives they've taken, of deals and pledges and contracts, and the Long Night members just shake their heads. The Devil, after all, has no control over the soul of man, and if a man does sign his eternity away, then there is nothing the Long Night can do to save them. They have made their choice, after all.

The trick then becomes finding the monsters, and then deciding what to do with them. Some members of the Long Night have attempted to rehabilitate faeries, showing that the lives of these poor people can be rebuilt somehow, as long as they swear off their faerie sides in exchange for the Lord, of course. Others bring out the fire and brimstone, deciding that to speed up the Apocalypse, no mercy can be given to monsters like faeries. All the talk about being kidnapped and changed forcibly is just a ruse to disguise their real natures as tempters and destroyers.

The creatures called "fetches" hold a particular place of loathing for the Long Night, and many a hunter for the Militia will go out of their way to hunt these monsters down at the expense of more valuable or sensible targets. The fact that these monsters aren't even real people, merely simulacrum of trash and rubbish, kept alive by the Devil's magic and living the lives of the people they replace gives the Long Night's hunters a special hatred.

Of course, some Long Night members aren't all fire and brimstone, after all. Many work at battered women's shelters and homeless soup kitchens, and know all too well the damage of abuse and neglect can do to the human spirit. So to hear a creature with arms where it's legs should be and a face made only of mouths speak about the tortures it was forced to endure, they can't help but feel like they need to help them in some way. Often, they put faeries together with one another, and have secret arrangements with a group of changelings. One is a fae "court" of sorts, trying to reconstruct a semblance of human life without the worry about being kidnapped by their masters again. Others enroll the faerie in a support group of any stripe, letting the poor creature come to terms with it's captivity in a way where it can talk a little about it's experiences, and not feel like it's singling itself out.

The Long Night has little other information about other courts, freeholds, or the Hedge, though, and could frankly care less about this information. Two disturbing trends have emerged, however, in cells that know about the existence of faeries. Leaders have arisen that feel the Hedge is the barrier to the Apocalypse and the Second Coming, and that by tearing it down, they can hasten the return of Christ. Other stories attribute faeries to be really neutral angels, those in Heaven who did not take sides in the war between God and Lucifer, and so were cast out of Heaven, but not sent with Lucifer to Hell. There are others in the Long Night who feel these fallen angels can be remade, reformed to their old selves, elevating them to their status as the messengers of God again.

Story Seeds

A man has come to you for help. He says a doppelganger has been trying to kill him, a man with skin of molten rock and hair of smoke. Good Christian you are, you take the man in, sheltering him as the other members of the cell hunt the monster hunting the poor soul. But then, one of the doors to the Church bursts open, and out of the light steps the man your cell is hunting, the heat nearly unbearable. He says that the man you're protecting is the doppelganger, and that he needs to die so the fire-man can get his soul back in whole and return to his family. With the others gone, how are you going to protect the very real man behind you?

It's finally happened. A leader in the Tribulation Militia has gathered enough support and found a faerie willing to take a force into the Hedge, and assault the land that the faeries come from. With a guide and backing, your cell is picked out as the latest recruits. But a group of faeries stop you, warning that an assault on the Hedge is doomed before it could even get off the ground. Can you trust a monster, and betray the work of God?

The Loyalists of Thule

The iron, fresh from the rail yard in Lansing, is heavy in your pocket as you finish the circle around the door. Jacob's on the balcony, assault rifle in hand because, hell, why take any chances on a summoning like this

Finished, you start chanting the true name of the monster you want the information from, and in seconds, the creature appears through a blinding light in the doorway, laughing as it materializes. "You called me, what will you exchange for my presence?" it booms, holding a massive lance.

"A gift from my family precious to me," you say, "But only after you answer my question. Will you give me the books that I seek, so that I may use them against enemies so hated?"

The monster nods, and in a flash of light, throws you a book. Quickly leafing through it, you knew the book was full of the information you needed. Jacob, looking through his infrared, confirmed the book was also tangible, or at least able to be detected by human technology, which was good enough for now.

"A fair trade," you say, starting to pull your hand from your pocket. "Now, your trade, completely fair." With a quick toss, you pay the monster. Grabbing the book, you hear the door slam as the faerie flees. With a relieved breath Jacob lowers his rifle and the two of you get to work. Holding iron, you and Jacob soak the house down in gas and run, burning the door to the ground. Now unless someone builds an exact replica of that house, that monster will never find you. It says so in the books you read on him, after all.

In the early days of the Thule-Gesellschaft, researchers into faerie tales regarded them as differing ideas on the true nature of Thule, an unspoiled wilderness and home to many magical and mystical beings. Even as the Second World War approached, the Thule Society continued to press forward with their research, uncovering long forgotten Germanic and Roman texts about forest gods and animal spirits. Despite the outbreak of war, some of the texts were protected, and in time, the new Loyalists decided to test for themselves just what was in the books.

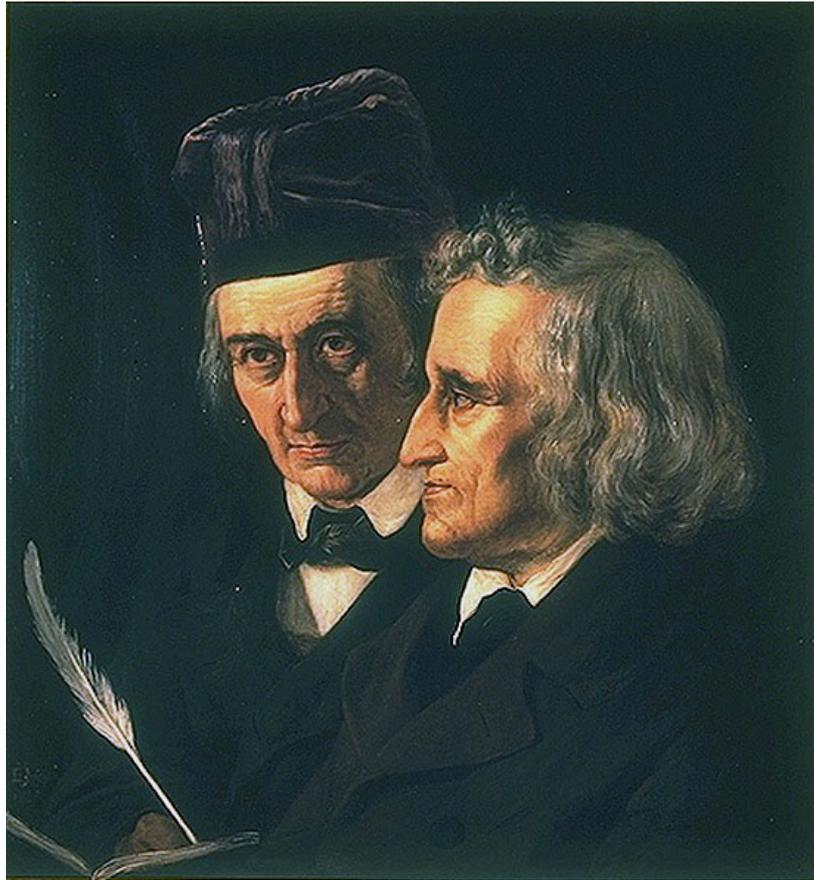
Finally, after the bodies had been cleared away and the building burned, the scholars realized just how wrong they had been about the old books and stories. They weren't the precursor race they were looking for at all. Instead, they'd only found more monsters, more dangers, and a wider world than they first knew.

The Loyalists feel faeries are a threat to anyone who lives on Earth, and take care to make sure that if they are ever encountered, great care is taken in speaking. Loyalists rarely talk to the faeries directly, and when they do, they make sure to precisely plan out what to say before saying it. The Loyalists know all too well the power of words to sway and control, and when mystical forces come into play, they tread all the more carefully.

For their part, though, the Loyalists feel they know more than the average hunter when it comes to the various types of fairies. Little house-spirits or massive ogres, they know that each one can be bribed, bullied or destroyed, and those Loyalists who hunt the fae always make sure to go in packing iron on their person. Their archives contain rare texts: Roman treatises on Celtic and Germanic mythology, studies of folklore, even the unpublished journals and stories of the Brothers Grim, and when they decide to use those texts, it's always for a specific reason thought out well beforehand, and always with a prepared wording so that, even if the fairy gets away without making the bargain complete, they at least can't harm or kidnap any Loyalist present.

Of all the faerie legends, the one that sticks out the most are sightings of the Wild Hunt, the ancient fae hunting party that is rumored to be a precursor to war or destruction, bestial riders and mounts tearing across the sky and land, baying for prey. Numerous records of the Loyalists state the Hunt has been encountered before, and that each time, it's appearance heralded catastrophe on a massive scale. So when a report is heard about a hunting horn on a suburban street, or of hoofprints tearing down a road in the country that are literally part of the asphalt, the Loyalists waste no time finding the source and trying to stop it. Because if the Hunt can be called once, it can be called again, and anyone can be the quarry.

As for the other creatures, "changelings", "fetches" and "goblins", the Loyalists are more inquisitive, and have taken great pains to learn the differences between each species, as it were. They seek answers from changelings on lore they might know, or study a fetch to find out how a creature with an incomplete soul is able to be so human. Goblins are given trinkets that catch their interest, in exchange for ancient tomes that they feel are worthless. Most hunters would call it collaboration, but when the Loyalists



argument is to give their fellow hunters the exact weakness they've been looking for when the faerie they're fighting tries to disappear to its hiding place again, the other hunters shut up and listen.

Story Seeds

You've managed to track the monsters down to their hiding place in the abandoned factory, and you're ready to move in. You break down the door and rush in, only to find an empty warehouse and fuel drums rigged with wires in the center. You ran out, and jumped into the river, just as the warehouse exploded. You thought everyone made it out, but Jerry got caught in the blast, and you found him in three different places. You started to carry the remains back to your car, but stopped when you saw the note on the window. "The tomb is where we say it is. 5th St. tomorrow night." The tomb. That could mean anything, but you know it could mean the number one thing you've always been looking for. Should you risk meeting the same people that tried to kill you tonight, even if it's the biggest truth you could ever hope for?

Now it's gone too far. You knew the changelings were an odd lot, but they crossed the line when they started plastering swastikas all over. Sure, they're the correct Hindu pattern indicating good luck and protection, but it's got the locals riled up and worried there's a white power group around. You tried to tell them what was wrong, but they said it was the only thing keeping out a powerful ogre, a beast who would tear the neighborhood apart. As you both talked, a group of men with shaved heads and red shoelaces walked up. Now you've got a group of white pride idiots ready to make trouble over a symbol. This won't be easy to get out of, and even if you do survive, you have to find a way to figure out how to get rid of this ogre for good. If there's an ogre at all.

Network Zero

“Are you sure that’s all you can remember?” Terry asked, as Patty kept watch from the windows. Terry kept the camera focused on their “guest”, a man that was about as large as the ceiling in Terry’s apartment.

“I just know that the thing that took me loves to take people,” the ogre said, because frankly Terry couldn’t think of a better word for the creature. “Wherever it can find the strongest and meanest, it takes them and changes them like me.”

“Can you tell us anything about this hedge you mentioned?” Terry asked, as Patty tapped on the wall three times with her gun. That was the signal they were running out of time.

“Only that it was sharp, even to skin like mine,” the ogre said, flexing his arm, a massive limb that looked to be made of reptile hide. “But I escaped, and that’s all that matters.”

“Alright,” Terry said, shutting the camera off. “Thank you for your time, sir, we’ll make sure this video gets out to the net.”

“About that,” the ogre said, flexing his bulk. “I been thinking that maybe I don’t want to be famous just yet.” Before Terry could protest, the ogre reached out and grabbed the camera, crushing it to pieces before anyone could object. “And I can safely presume you’ll protect my privacy, right?” Laughing, the ogre nearly tore the door of its hinges as he walked out, his laughter echoing down the hall.

“That bastard,” Terry said, cradling the broken remains of his camera gently in his arms. “Why’d he do that?”

“Don’t worry, I figured something like that would happen,” Patty said, going over to the kitchenette. Opening one of the drawers, she pulled out her laptop. “You wanted to know why I hid this away earlier?”

Opening it, Terry broke out smiling, watching the entire interview unfold. Quickly hugging Patty, he got to work, making sure to use the proper format during the upload.

The crews of Network Zero believe, that much everyone can tell. They always come out with their cameras of all sizes, their little audio recorders and their EMF detectors, always searching for the truth, no matter what the truth looks like. They look for changes in the temperature, and say it’s a haunting. They see shapes in the distance and call it a spirit. But when the monster walks right up to them and claims it is what it really is, that’s when NetZo’s get all hot and bothered.

Why faeries, you may ask? To the Secret Frequency, the answer is simple; if a faerie willingly bares themselves for the camera it’s the shot of a lifetime. A vampire on film is just a blur, and a witch captured on video looks just like you or me. But a creature that has horns and vines and who knows what else growing from their very skin? Now that’s something the world can’t ignore, especially when you shove it in their faces and force them to see the truth. And when one domino falls, the rest will follow suit.

The issue is the insular nature of fae society. Every faerie seems to be some kind of refugee hiding out in the world of humanity, and the fact that a NetZo can even find a faerie means something in the faerie structure of life has probably gone wrong, and the creatures quickly attempt to fix the situation, often by manipulating the memories of those who witness their real selves. But cameras and film aren’t always affected by magic, and when it comes time to download, no faerie can get the shoot off the ‘Net, no matter how many deals they make.

As for members of the Secret Frequency themselves, they only know that faeries are some kind of abductees, and that they’re severely traumatized by their experiences, meaning that any interview could turn into a bloodbath or worse. So NetZos always take some precautions, whether it be using live broadcasts and multiple cameras to make sure at least some footage can make it out, or simply conducting the interview in a place where a murder is bound to draw some attention. Network Zero didn’t get to where it was without having some level of common sense.

Story Seeds

You caught some weird stuff out last night in that haunted house. Your cell had the usual EVPs, EMF readings, even a few images of shadows moving on the tapes. But on your own personal camera, you found something that made you realize you weren’t hunting ghosts that night at all. In the picture was a creature that had four arms and a single eye. That didn’t match up at all with the story you were told about the place, and you did some research. Now, you’re going back with some iron, and you’re

going to force the monster to tell you why it's causing a "haunting".

Your contact in the police told you about it first; an supposed alien abduction in your area, and the victim begging for some help. You went to his house, took his interview, and promised you would get to the bottom of things. After three days, though, you found nothing. Willing to admit defeat after finding nothing at the scene, you came back to his house to find the door open and a pile of leaves, branches and dirt on the floor. Figuring the owner was out, you left, only to have the house explode seconds after you got in your car. Your cellmate said he saw men in black suits running from the house before it went up, and he has it on film. Great, now you're dealing with the government.

Null Mysteriis

"Subject shows no negative reactions to the surgery," Gregory said, observing the man from behind the one-way mirror to the recovery room. "Calcium growths on the frontal bone of the skull have been removed without incident, and subject has reported no issues with medication." Turning off the tape recorder, he straightened his outfit and stepped inside, putting the stethoscope over his neck as he walked in.

"Hey Doc," the subject said, waving as Gregory walked in. "Thanks again, I was worried that I'd look that way my whole life."

"Glad we could help," Gregory said, taking the blood pressure gauge from the wall and strapping it to the subject's arm, as the man/animal lay on the bed. "How're you feeling today? Nauseous, dizzy, lightheaded?"

"Not at all," the subject said, smiling. "I'm feeling better now than I can ever remember."

"Well, we've got a ways to go yet," Gregory said, taking the gauge off. "90 over 60, you're doing better this week." Taking out a pen light, he ran it over the subject's eyes, as they barely dilated. "Breathing?"

"It's tough," the subject said. "I think it changed my lungs somehow, I had trouble breathing when I opened the window."

"Probably because your keeper might have had a thing for high oxygen contents," Gregory said. "Right now it's like you're climbing Mt. Everest without a mask."

"Everest...that's the mountain in Asia, right?" the subject asked. Gregory nodded, taking his stethoscope in hand. "Alright, lift up your shirt?" The subject complied. "Just breathe normally." Moving the scope, he heard the movement of air and lungs inside the subject, and felt glad the transplants were successful. "Well, you're good for now. I'm gonna make some notes on your charts, okay?" the subject nodded with a smile, and Gregory walked out, scribbling on the clipboard.

"Any luck?" Andy said, walking over.

"The new lungs are inside, and he's breathing, that's what I have," Gregory growled. He just wanted to get some pills into his system and get home. "All I know is that you guys won't need my services anymore soon."

"Yeah, but we're lucky you were willing to help with this one," Andy said, patting his colleague on the back. "Hell, how many vets do you know willing to take a case like this?"

Null Mysteriis members love a good challenge, it's part of the mandate the compact has, as it were. No one wants to leave a stone unturned or question unchallenged. "Fairies" are just one question to be answered, one that frankly excites the group to no end. The fact that human beings have been modified in not just body but psyche in such radical fashions is a boon of understanding to the biologists and psychologists in the compact.

Null Mysteriis first found it's attentions drawn to faeries during the incident of the Cottingley Fairies. Though their numbers were drained by the Great War, a small cell made their way to the village, examining the evidence with hope they would find some evidence of the supernatural and of faeries. Though they could not validate the stories the girls had told, they had found something else. A large beast-man with gnarled hands and fangs, who attacked the cell with gusto, screaming at them for "looking for faeries". The cell called the local authorities to the area, but constables found nothing. The scientists did find something, though. Tracks, leading back to a warren of trees that contained their attacker. After burning down the trees and finding the remains, they studied the bones to find that the creature was part man and part wolf, but wholly neither.

Like everything in Null Mysteriis, the split in organizational doctrine has come to a head, with faeries especially. The Rationalists feel that those who come back from their captivity have to immediately be

treated as patients and returned to their normal state if possible, while studying the mutations and new genetic quirks in their DNA. Open-Minds, however, feel that the key is in where the changelings, as they call themselves, were taken to, trying to analyze a changeling's story to find the route back to their captors, and find out exactly how these beings managed to do such things. If the answers could be found, the possibilities in medical treatments and genetic modification would be staggering.

Complicating the issue are the changelings themselves, because while some are accepting of Null Mysteriis' offers to bring them back, even partially, into their former lives, others vehemently, even violently refuse, saying that some kind of mystical force prevents such a thing from ever being a reality. Seizing on this, researchers took a series of Kirlian photographs of changeling subjects who voluntarily dropped their human guise, and in each case, a strange interference was noted, that appeared to be thorns wrapped around the subject. In testing out old folklore, the Open-Minds found that placing unrefined iron deformed this Kirlian signature. Testing further with Rationalist aid, they discovered that iron in any form damaged this "thorn" around a changeling. Some hypothesize that this reaction to iron is in fact a byproduct of the process that transforms them, but evidence is needed to confirm if this is truly allergic or a deeper chemical and molecular reaction.

In studying what the changelings call fetches, Null Mysteriis has discovered that while the subjects show typical human internal structures and DNA, they also appear to, psychologically, have some element of what makes their bodies. Fetches of rocks and gravel are coarse individuals, no matter what, while fetches of trash and refuse are usually dirty, unkempt and unpleasant. Of course there are exceptions, but as far as Null Mysteriis has found, this is the general route. None of their members have had a recorded encounter with a "true" fae yet, but have extrapolated from the empirical reports from the changelings that beings of such parapsychological ability would have difficulty existing in any reality where they could not find a constant source of energy to fuel their abilities.

Of any single possible group of faeries, Null Mysteriis often runs into changelings when investigating new sources of the paranormal, as well as the study of independent "journals" that detail far too much of faerie abilities than any regular person would know. While some of these changelings almost always met with either force or a tactical retreat, others intrigue Null Mysteriis members, since they seem to show quite often a more scientific look on the paranormal. Otherwise, they simply threaten the scientists and members of O.R.A.S., shouting at them to get out of the area while they study the truth. This has led to many Null Mysteriis members fighting with faeries for the grounds they want to study, which has had the effect of making those members of O.R.A.S. who study fairies slightly more militant in their actions.

Story Seeds

You think you've succeeded. A changeling has been successfully operated on over the course of a year, including surgery, psychotherapy, and physical therapy. A union of Rationalists and Open-Minds worked for months, and made him a man again. You even went through the trouble of giving him a fake identity and went the full gamut of even getting registered through immigration. You thought you'd finally found the key to bringing the changelings home, as well as maybe bridging the gap that threatened O.R.A.S. Then you found him dead, with a note saying, "Stay away!" Now the two factions are threatening to rip the group apart, and you've got a dead subject that was supposed to be your solution. What the hell happened? And who murdered him?

You've been keeping track of the "peer reviewed" magazines you discovered, the ones that know too much for you to feel comfortable about. Still, it's good archival material, and every so often they pan out as truth on a hunt. Only now it's primary article is about "The Ones Who Hunt For Us!", and details a list of groups you know about who also carry the Vigil. Someone knows, and your cell has names on that list. Is it possible to trace these articles back to a single source before you're eliminated as enemies?

The Union

I don't know who they are, they just keep getting in our way! Tim said they started a Goddamn riot outside his store the other week, just riled up the people and made them start stealing shit right off the shelves. Cops couldn't stop them until it was night, they're saying it's some kind of flash mob. But Tim says the tape doesn't lie, he saw the thing make a little dance and off the thieves went.

Then there was the theft at Tommy's workshop, all the fresh metal stolen from his latest work order.

Then they decided to pin the blame on Tommy's cousin Steve, only because the security cameras caught him leaving for the night last, even though Steve swears that he was already home then.

Our buddy in the cops told us that they think it's a new gang in the area, call themselves the "Eight Street Motley". Well we don't care who they are, they aren't just gonna walk all over us like they own this neighborhood. So get your stuff, we're gonna have a talk with these punks, and tell them they're not taking away our lives.

The Union treats faeries like all the other monsters it faces; don't cause trouble, and we won't kill you. You would think the fae are a little more immune to such troubles, since their primary goal is to avoid attention. And it's true, for the most part, since the Union is just as busy working for a living as they are fighting monsters to notice the weird types skirting the edges of their stores and workplaces.

But the Union looks out for it's communities. When kids go missing, Union leaders are some of the first to organize searches. When crime goes up, so does the call for police action from Union cells. The Joes and Janes notice when the kids in the area are acting funny almost instantly, and can always have a cop or bartender ready to tell if someones using a fake ID.

Like the group itself, though, the Union doesn't have one set method of dealing with faeries. Unless the faerie is actively stirring up trouble, the Union lets the freaks go on their merry way. When the freaks start causing an issue, whether it be selling drugs or tempting kids or even ruining a man's life, that's when the Union steps up and takes action. Sometimes that's beating it with a pipe and sending it out on a rail, other times it gets a quick arrest and kangaroo court.

Sadly, the Union knows little about faeries and fae lore in general, and has to make do with what they have, their forum page. There are some subsections on types of creatures that are considered faeries, and the top of the list in bold, italics, underlined and in capitols, it's, "BRING IRON!" Though few Union hunters put little concrete faith in their forum, the fact that it's the single thread with the most hits and fewest flame wars gives credence to the post.

No one really knows any differences between any fae or if there's any real governing body to them at all. What they do know is that the freaks steal people, and that has to be stopped. Missing people equals missing lives, and that's a theft no one can correct.

Then there are the things that are left behind, the "fetch" things. Only a few Union hunters have managed to uncover them, making them a little known part of the Union knowledge base. What they do know is that a fetch isn't the real person, so what's the harm in getting rid of'em, right? Trash and rubbish a human being is not, most of the time.

Except, sometimes the Union's noticed that a fetch is a better replacement. Okay, so it's a soulless abomination that needs to be wiped from the Earth as quickly as possible, but then there are posts about how a fetch was a better person than the changeling they replaced, how it could hold down work and raise a family in a way the kidnapped victim never could. So, if the faerie is still the waste of space it was before, well, it's a monster now, not a person. And the Union hates having monsters on it's turf.

Story Seeds

A new lumber operation is opening in your area, meaning that your community is finally going to see some jobs and life flow in to battle the stagnation. The work began in earnest, but then tapered off. At first it seemed like simple eco-terrorism, from caltrops to spiked trees, but it kept stepping up until a pair of lumber men ran into town panicked, saying they saw tree-men moving around in the forest sabotaging the equipment. Your town can't afford to let this thing destroy the economy, and your cell is probably made up of the only people in town who can do anything. That cell being only several people large. You need help, but can you really afford to bring anyone else into the cell when you're facing monsters that you don't even know how to fight?

Your local police are getting a lot of reports about a new club in the downtown, a club full of drugs and madness and drunken idiots causing trouble. You've heard stories about how inside the staff isn't quite normal, and more than one OD has been rushed out screaming about the "monsters" working inside. You could care less about freaks working a nightclub, though, your problem is that the drugs and drunks are getting to be too much for the cops, drawing them away from the rest of the neighborhood. What's worse, you've caught peaks at the people working inside, and they almost seem high off the feelings of the people inside. How're you gonna shut this place down when they've got the home field advantage?

Tier Three

It's hard for a conspiracy to really organize against as nebulous a group of monsters as the fae. Most conspiracies need some kind of concrete proof that a threat is out there before committing valuable resources and tools to the fight. Even if a faerie is in the area, though, conspiracies might not commit until there are multiple faeries. Because frankly, faeries stay far below the "normal" monstrous radar. Vampires, werewolves, witches, they all cause major issues. They directly interfere with day to day human lives and institutions. Fairies, though, they often to stay quiet, interacting with mankind in a limited manner that concerns conspiracies less than the other monsters.

That isn't to say conspiracies don't fight fairies though, far from it. Fae and their machinations negatively impact the way society functions in every conceivable way. Despite their claims of abuse and torture, refugees that cause trouble aren't let loose to do as they please. Every person under the control of a fairy is one less able to stand up as a human, and that is something no conspiracy can stand to see. But like an elephant fighting ants, for every freehold a conspiracy stomps down, another seems to rise up in it's place. Yet like an elephant, when a conspiracy makes it focus ready, it brings incredible weight to bear on the problem, and any enemy caught in their crosshairs are torn to pieces.

As a rule the conspiracies know all the important basics about faeries, and sometimes more than that. They know what a True Fae is, why you should always watch your words and how changelings are created. What they also know is that knowledge is worth jack shit if you can't use it properly. Even if you know that this guy is a changeling, and even if you know that some changelings are free while others are still loyal to the more powerful fairies, you're still talking to a freak with a literal sliver tongue and the ability to back his story with illusionary evidence. Are you confident you can tell which side this changeling is on? Confident enough to decide if he should live or die?

Of course some hunters prefer to kill them all and let God sort them out. That cuts though most of the tough questions.

"In this labyrinth we store our knowledge of the Fae. There are over a thousand years of reports, studies, the heads of our best Faerie experts and even a few Relics that give information in these vaults. None of it will help you if you fall for the first illusion you see."

– Rupert Quinn, Aegis Kai Doru

"There's a simple trick; play one against the other. Use the suits to get two groups together in one location, then pack your heaviest gear just outside and gun'em down when they start asking who called the meeting. When the survivors start pointing fingers, that's when you get them fighting against each other."

– Gunnery Sergeant Franklin Leaman, Task Force: VALKYRIE, Mobile Response Unit 14-2

"In matters of the djinn only the wisest can tell good from evil. As I am not wise I can only strive with dedication and trust Allah to guide my hand."

– Imam Daud Ismail, Ascending Ones.

"There's no magic that proves which changelings still serve the lords of Arcadia and which are free but there's a trick I use. I agree to meet in a certain time and place and if my word is not bound I will turn up a few minuets late. It doesn't always work, but if they can't cope I know to be on my guard."

– Kitty Dixon, Lucifuge.

"We will know them as we know other men; by the fruits they bear."

– Sir Reginald Spenser, Lord Stewards

Aegis Kai Doru

We'd waited too long. Kopsis Alexopoulou had said we must remain true to our mission and safeguard the Relics in our care. She would contact Athens and have The Sword send it's warriors.

No one came, and now the witches have taken over. They have woven their enchantments over the people and plunder the land for their own. We spoke with our Kopis and she acquiesced to our concerns. I do not fear. The Sword may have the warriors, but we of the Temple hold the weapons.

Nathaniel was looking through our collection of tomahawks for one that would never miss its target. He had already taken sandals that can walk through walls, a mask in the form of a red stag that let the wearer slip beneath notice and a cloak of fox fur that bestowed supernatural cunning. You could see what he was thinking, and that it was going to be effective.

Céline had taken every relic that bestows strength in the labyrinth. A plate mail gauntlet which appeared to work by a series of pulleys, we'd only recovered one of them. A belt made from a black bull's skin that pre-dates leather working. A torc shaped like a serpent that sunk its fangs into the wearer and a necklace of wolf teeth that once belonged to a Norse berserker. The Hammer she was carrying probably weighed more than all of us together and crackled with lightning, no it wasn't Mjöltnir. Mjöltnir is much smaller, and louder.

And as for me, I'm no expert at swordplay but I believed that if the Witches spells couldn't touch me then I'd already won. I was wearing a Corinthian helmet that protected against illusion, on my back was a battered glass shield. We thought it would protect from magic and I was putting a lot of faith into that. All I needed was a weapon, I was heading for a knife that could slip through any defense when a sword caught my eye. I hadn't noticed it before but something told me it was the right weapon for today.

"Not that one" said Alexopoulou. "It has its own fate. This sword never loses a battle, but its wielder never survives a battle."

I thought for a moment, and took the sword.

Some relics are... special. They are the among the most mighty known to the Shield and Spear but it is not their abilities that set them apart. It's Destiny.

Deep within their hidden treasuries the Shield and Spear holds legendary relics. Curtana, "of the same steel and temper as Joyeuse and Durendal". Andvarinaut, a cursed ring that produces as much gold as the owner wishes. The Book of Thoth, containing great magic and the reader's own destruction.

There are other relics, just as powerful but unknown to the world. A ring only called Peace, who's wearer can end any conflict only for the fighting to return even worse in eleven years. A small statue, it's features worn away, which will guide any person to their true love with both destined to die shortly after. A soot stained Barbie doll, her owner always becoming the absolute monarch of school as coincidences and fate cause the new queen to grow shallow and cruel.

These relics are of great interest and value to the Shield and Spear, the thought that he who holds the right relic can wield the power of destiny itself. That holding the sword is really does make you the rightful king. It has a certain appeal. Yet the the Shield and Spear are also cautious because for every noble destiny forged into a shining sword there are ten cursed fates. A relic that seems powerful, but anything it builds will turn to ashes.

And what of the fae? They're not witches. They're not werewolves. They're not Relics. So why does the Shield and Spear care about the fae. The answer is that the fae and Fate are two peas in a pod. No matter how cunningly the Relics are hidden sooner or later the fae are going to turn up looking for it. It's Fate. Explaining that it's Fate isn't likely to help either, the fae usually know it's Fate but when you're daughter is about to be sacrificed to a dragon it doesn't matter if Fate's behind it. You still need Ascalon and the Guardians of the Labyrinth must fight to defend it.

The Sword

The Sword don't know about a lot of the greatest relics, and it's just as well because if they did they'd use them. If you're fated to kill your enemies then die yourself, well a lot of hunters die before killing their enemies don't they? What the Sword wouldn't realize is how many of these relics have effects that ripple out from their use. Nothing good can come of using them as a simple weapon.

The Temple

The Temple has a tough job, not only do they need to keep their fate bound relics safe from thieves but also from fate itself. Fate seems to want a lot of these Relics out in the world, and the ones it doesn't seem to care about can become the focus of a powerful destiny in an instant. Some relics weave the

people guarding them into their story, even if they are not used. It's a hard task guarding objects of power.

The Scroll

On this the Scroll and the Temple are in concord. The Scroll study and catalogue the relics owned by the Ageis Kai Doru and what they have uncovered often convinces them that some things are best left alone.

Story Seeds

You managed to capture one of the fae relics during a raid on their safehouse, and are trying to activate it. Prayers, offerings, even an animal sacrifice didn't work. You think it's time to give up when you're contacted by a survivor of the raid, warning you that taking the thing will come at a price. You've seen enough "bad" relics to keep from writing it off as an empty threat, so you try to destroy it. Nothing. You tried to ship it away, but it always found it's way back. Finally, you struck it with some iron, and it shattered. But the faerie came back and said now you've worsened the situation. What exactly is coming after you now?

After fighting through all manner of traps a team of archaeologists working for the Shield and Spear found the vault... it was empty. A cathedral sized collection of nothing. Nothing but a single ornate key. The key is definitely a relic, it turns to gold in the firelight and silver in the moonlight. Any woven cloth becomes a thicket of tangles in it's presence, but if that's all it does then why are powerful faerie rulers making lavish promises and dire threats just to get that key locked away in the Aegis Kai Doru's deepest vaults for all time?

Ascending Ones

"Park it right there," said Luthor. "We want fucking nobody seeing tonight's business."

His men knew the game. Tonight was the third night with a gibbous moon. That was why Luthor was standing here parking a beaten up truck so no one could see into this alleyway. Not that they were likely to try, there were hoppers on every corner. Anyone from this neighbourhood would know what that meant.

A church bell chimed the twelve of midnight, the kids on the corners looking around in confusion. No church rang bells for miles. Luthor and his men in the alleyway didn't flinch, they had pledged to the Vigil and heard the mysterious bells every month. With each chime twisted briars grew through the walls and street, vibrant green even in the dark night. On the twelfth chime the hobgoblins came, led by Grippin. A wrinkly olive green goblin wearing clashing suit trousers and waistcoat.

Grippin bowed, it was a curious sight, he folded at the hips and bent so low his long nose scraped the street. Luthor replied with a more human bow of his own.

"Greetings O mighty Phoenix" intoned Grippin, his voice smooth and oiled. "Greetings fabled guardian of the night, you honor this miserable worthless toad of a merchant with your very presence."

"It is I who is honored, merchant prince of the endless thorns. Custodian of endless wonders from beyond the fields of man." replied Luthor, once again glad for his rehearsals. "If it were not for the charity you show to grace this rat of the gutters with such wonders I would be forced to profane myself before my God and declare myself unworthy to serve."

"Each word pierces my heart, for I am but a worthless pirate who trades scraps in the hope he can feed his family another day. Why look at my goods!" Grippin led Luthor to his cart and opened a box to reveal the most beautiful fruit imaginable, each deep rich purple with a red blush upon the skin. Just looking at them Luthor could taste dreams of a lover's lips. "Bruised! Wrinkled! Begged from the bottom of the farmers barrel, I shame my fathers and the name of my family by offering such as merchandise."

"Then the bottom of a goblin's barrel are finer than the very pick of the Sultan's own orange trees. Alas, it is I who must grovel for charity. Look at what paltry goods I can offer in return" Luthor led Grippin back to his truck and opened a box of discarded teddy bear eyes. "It is worthless garbage, why if it weren't for your charity we would dig a deep pit and throw them in so they will not offend our eyes."

“Garbage? There must be some mistake. Look at these, can you not see the friendship and loss trapped within each eye? I shall be able to put food on my family’s table, and I owe it all to you, o flower of the night.”

Grippin and Luthor gave each other a nod, that was the signal. Both retired to their conveyance while their people exchanged crates and barrels. Not for the first time Luther thought about the business relationship he had with the hobgoblin. It was an unusual relationship, but a profitable one.

At the other end of the alleyway Grippin was thinking the same thing.

The Ascending Ones have heard stories told about monsters in the darkness long before many conspiracies were even a dream in their creator’s mind. They have battled for centuries against the Cult of Set, defended the innocent from the predations of mad sorcerers, eliminated shapeshifters who dare to take humans for their own. So when it comes to faeries, they’re old hands.

Among the desert sands of Egypt they battled with strange hybrids, part man and part beast. In the dark corners of Bagdad’s bazaars they traded impossible wonders with mysterious merchants. They bound powerful enemies into baskets and lamps with chains of vows and manacles of promises.

They’re still at it of course, millennia of endless sacrifices and the faeries still come. The Ascending One’s persist for their vigil is a sacred mission. They hunt strange gremlins formed from cannibalised television sets in the dark sodium lit alleyways of New York. They offer gifts and appeasements to beings of living sand and glass in the deserts of Iran so that they might leave the people in peace. Over opium in Hong Kong the Cult of the Phoenix talked peace between the Turtle of the North and the Lion of the West so their fighting would not touch the humans. And yes, eventually they joined the fights against and forged contracts of peace with ethereal glamorous beings of impossible beauty in the Emerald Isle. Wherever the Fae come, the Cult of the Phoenix stands ready to defend their communities.

There is a pay off, a reason that holding a Vigil against the faeries is not just a sacrifice but a benefit to the Ascending Ones. Goblin Fruit. The denizens of the Hedge have communities, a society, an economy, and most importantly, they have exports. The Cult of the Phoenix is a rather rich organization, and in darkened alleyways and obscure shops they import the produce of other realms for ingredients in their alchemical laboratories.

The Order of the Southern Temple

The alchemists and occultists of the Southern Temple benefit hugely from their dealings with the fae. From under the hills comes a wealth of mad and impossible ingredients to form their elixirs while the fae themselves are often all too happy to barter in occult secrets and alchemical formulas for favors and a share of the Southern Temple’s own discoveries.

Knife of Paradise

While the Jagged Crescent reaps the material profits and the Southern Temple acquires occult knowledge it’s the Knife of Paradise who find themselves left with the task of upholding the Vigil. Though the fae are usually content hide away those who do not present a unique challenge to the Knife of Paradise. Their knacks for stealth and subtlety match the knife’s assassins, while every faerie is a lawyer who will graciously agree to sulha and stab you in the small print. The Knife of Paradise rises to these challenges and overcomes them, the will of God demands nothing less.

Jagged Crescent

What do a drug dealer and a hobgoblin at the market have in common? They’re both businessmen. The Jagged Crescent are experts in stealthily moving goods. Cocaine from Columbia, heroin from Afghanistan, fruit from the Hedge. All around the world cells of the Jagged Crescent have business relationships with hobgoblin merchants, in the dark of night they import goblin fruit in bulk for redistribution to the Conspiracies drug labs and alchemy labs.

Story Seeds

The vampires own this town, and you own the vampires. A new goblin fruit is in season and it makes drugs the leeches just can’t resist. Funding for community charities? You get it. Keep those fangs away

from necks in your part of town? It's a deal. Some are even quitting blood entirely, your product is just as nourishing and frankly it tastes better too. Only it seems the good times might be ending. Changelings are moving in on your turf and undercutting your prices. You have to get rid of them or come to some sort of deal, before the vampires play you against each other.

The Ascending Ones know how to make "Genie Lamps", it's so simple pretty much everyone knows how to do it. Get a faerie to promise it'll stay in a lamp and obey whoever holds it and you're done. Only there's a reason you cut that shit out when Arabian Nights was contemporary. A faerie can cause just as much damage by interpreting wishes as it can leading a wild hunt. It's better, safer and cheaper if you get the fae just to promise to stay away instead. Unfortunately there's still a few lamps hidden in the Southern Temple's stashes, and after a particularly bad attack there was no one left to tell a young hot headed initiate to keep her hands off. On the surface it's working: The fae have gone into hiding, the vampires that aren't dust have fled the city, and the witches aren't leaving their warded towers. But beneath the surface the "ironic consequences" are starting to pile up. It falls to you to put a stop to this before anyone gets some bright ideas to break out the other lamps.

The Cheiron Group

"Well this is interesting," Perry said, looking up from the exam table. "Seems this one's left ventricle is actually made of some kind of plant fibers, not muscle."

"Can we use it?" Gretchen said, not looking up from the microscope.

"Don't think so, there's not enough left to really get a decent culture from." Sighing, Perry got up from his chair and walked over to where Gretchen was examining part of the thing's brain. "What about you?"

"No dice, big boy," she said, shaking her head. "Thing's just more plant fibers, albeit plant fibers designed to look like human neurons. Like someone was trying to make the most detailed horticulture in history."

"I'm pretty sure you're screwing up your terms," Perry mused. "So what can we tell the boss lady?"

"You can tell her we did everything we could, I'll stay down here and keep Johnny Appletree here company." Perry nodded. Despite the week-long session, they hadn't been able to find anything of use from their latest subject. Admitting defeat, Perry went to hang up his surgical smock.

"H-h-help...me..."

"Oh Christ, he's out of the anesthesia again," Perry said. "I told them to keep it a constant drip, now I know they're just screwing with us."

"It doesn't matter, just put it out." Nodding at Gretchen, Perry went over to the "Johnny Appletree" and smiled. "Sorry buddy, slight change of plans." Taking a scalpel in hand, Perry cut the veins leading to the heart, watching the light fade from Johnny's brown-green eyes.

"That reminds me, I have some gardening to take care of when I'm done here." Gretchen said, going to hang her own gear up.

Cheiron loves faeries, absolutely. They're a grab-bag of new implants to dig through, and a new jumping point for new company expansion. It's an uncharted area of study, and Cheiron wants to lead the way.

First, there's the profit to be made. Like Null Mysteriis, Cheiron is excited about what the faeries can offer in terms of human medicine, from gene therapy and potential manipulation of human/animal genomes, to the introductions of new life forms and seeds of alien plant species. A new way to modify their agents, without the time consuming surgical procedures, or the risk of agents dying in the process. Yes, Cheiron loves faeries, especially on the operating table.

What Cheiron has tried to do is a strategy similar to what park rangers do with wild animals. It's all about not spooking the prey. If a fae runs and hides it will probably escape, it's the patient hunter that gets the prey. They follow at a distance, track it carefully and move in when the opportunity presents itself.

Over the years, Cheiron has started to learn the difference between the different creatures that fall under the term "fae". The changelings are the ones that interest them the most, the humans changed in such ways that seemingly require no surgery at all. Whatever this method is, Cheiron is willing to go to great lengths to have it. Goblins and other creatures that were never human can go either way, though

the possible implants to be gained do pique the interests of some of the higher ups, and the board has authorized limited collections.

The most powerful fae, however, are sought with the greatest interest, and the greatest force. The Company handbook contains a highlighted section on the True Fae, detailing the enormous rewards offered for a live True Fae, though with little on how to actually capture one. Even though Cheiron has never successfully taken one of these beings alive the siren song of money continues to lure the Field Projects Division and hunters of a mercenary bent into trying.

Retrieval

They're starting to get in hot water over in Retrieval. Cells tasked with bringing in fae have never exactly been great at meeting quotas, and it's only seemed to get worse. The faeries almost seem to know when a Retrieval team is coming, and the second they do, it's time to bail the hideout and go elsewhere. So Retrieval's been making some desperate bids, but one takes the cake. They're trying to get people kidnapped. Someone found a way to call up a faerie for sure, and now they're gonna use all they have to grab what comes out. They think that as long as they plan out the situation, they're always gonna come out ahead. Almost none of them see any problem with this.

Recruitment

There's not really a reason for Recruitment to worry about the fae. After all, they're looking for other hunters, not monsters. But every so often, one of their people goes off the handle about how they're gonna be killed by their double or doppelganger or whatever. That's when it hit that some of their people were already compromised. Now everyone is combing the records, trying to root the monsters out before things get really out of hand.

Field Research

Field Research has been doing just the opposite. They've actively been looking for fae to come in and help Cheiron with it's "research" on their fellows. So far, few takers, but they've encountered a group who seem to share Cheiron's interests, a large group of changelings who are willing to work with Cheiron to unlock the secrets of the source of a faerie's power. Field Research hasn't taken the offer up yet, but if they feel there is some very real gain to be made, they'll take the chance and start up relations. Like in Retrieval, the Directors aren't very happy at Field Research's progress with the fae.

Story Seeds

The bosses had a fellow cell of yours try out a new implant last week, and at first it worked out well. You heard they managed to start bringing in the freaks by the dozens, and you were there as backup and getting the credit too. It seemed like they knew exactly where the freaks were going to be any second of the day, and it kept working. Until last night, when one of them was found dead and hanging from a streetlamp in front of the office. The company managed to get them down before anyone could call the cops, but then a second member of the cell turned up dead, it's body and head found in two separate locations across the city. Now you've got to round up the cell, and figure out why the freaks want them dead.

You've hit paydirt now. A whole group of faeries who didn't even know you're coming. You and your cell were loaded up with tranquilizers and enough drugs to take down a raging werewolf. You got in, took them out, and got'em back, dollar signs already flashing in your eyes. But as you started walking towards the exit, things go into lockdown. Seems a freak with water for hair managed to short circuit the electronic locks in the room, and now all hell's broken loose. Now you're trapped in a multi-story lab with panicked civilians who don't know a thing and a bunch of monsters looking for blood. This is so not worth that bonus.

The Lucifuge

The thing, the "goblin" looked over the gun I was offering, weighing what I knew was it's emotional weight and power inside. It stuck it's eye down the barrel, throwing it around in it's hands. "This could

fetch a price, but I need to know what you want,” it said, putting it down on his empty table.

“I’m looking for the Grimmoire of Azaphel,” I said. “Written in 1134, in Bagdad, by Musharaf bin-Gazari.”

“I’ve heard of that book,” the thing said, smiling. It’s crooked, pointed teeth were stained and yellow, and the smell out of his mouth wasn’t all that different than rotting meat. “But what makes you think I have it here?”

“Your sign says you have all the needs a customer could want,” I answered. Truthfully, his was the only stall that didn’t have a dead body on the table, so I figured it might be a little more trustworthy. It may seem stupid now, but at the time, I figured it was my best chance. “And I want that book quite badly.”

The thing smiled at me, and I could feel it’s eyes in my soul, looking me over to decide whether I was a good customer. That it smiled even wider made me all the more uneasy. “Of course. Just wait one moment.” Taking the gun with it, I felt a tug at my mind, and knew that something had been taken. If I had been blessed with better luck, it would have been meeting my “father” for the first time.

“Here you go,” it said, placing a musty and ragged book on the table. Flipping through it, I found what I’d needed. “And I hope I can see your business again.”

“I doubt that,” I said, leaving in a hurry. Sparing a final glance back at the stalls, I realized that the overpass it was underneath was slowly being encased in vines. That’s why we’re going tonight. We need to make sure they can’t go back there again. We need to destroy those vines.

The Lucifuge knows what it’s like to be hated for who you are. Not many hunters are willing to work with a person who can summon up demons and throw hellfire, even if they explain that they’re fighting Hell itself. With a reputation like that, it’s little wonder that the Lucifuge are the most merciful towards beings called changelings.

In the Lucifuge, mercy is just as valued as combat ability, and they do their best to understand the changelings and their situation. The changelings, they didn’t ask for any of their new lives, and neither did the Lucifuge. There’s almost a kindred spirit between the two groups, as the Children of the Seventh Generation will often go out of their way to understand the changelings, their fears, and getting them away from the bright lights of other hunters, unless, of course, they’re the loyalists who are attempting to help their fae masters, or the privateers who decide they’re better suited selling their services doing evil. It’s part of what the Lucifuge see in themselves. Some rise above the madness and slime they find themselves in, becoming part of something higher than what they are. Others fall to their natures, and they are sought out and killed without a second thought. It is as old a tale as the Lucifuge, and they pity those in the same fate.

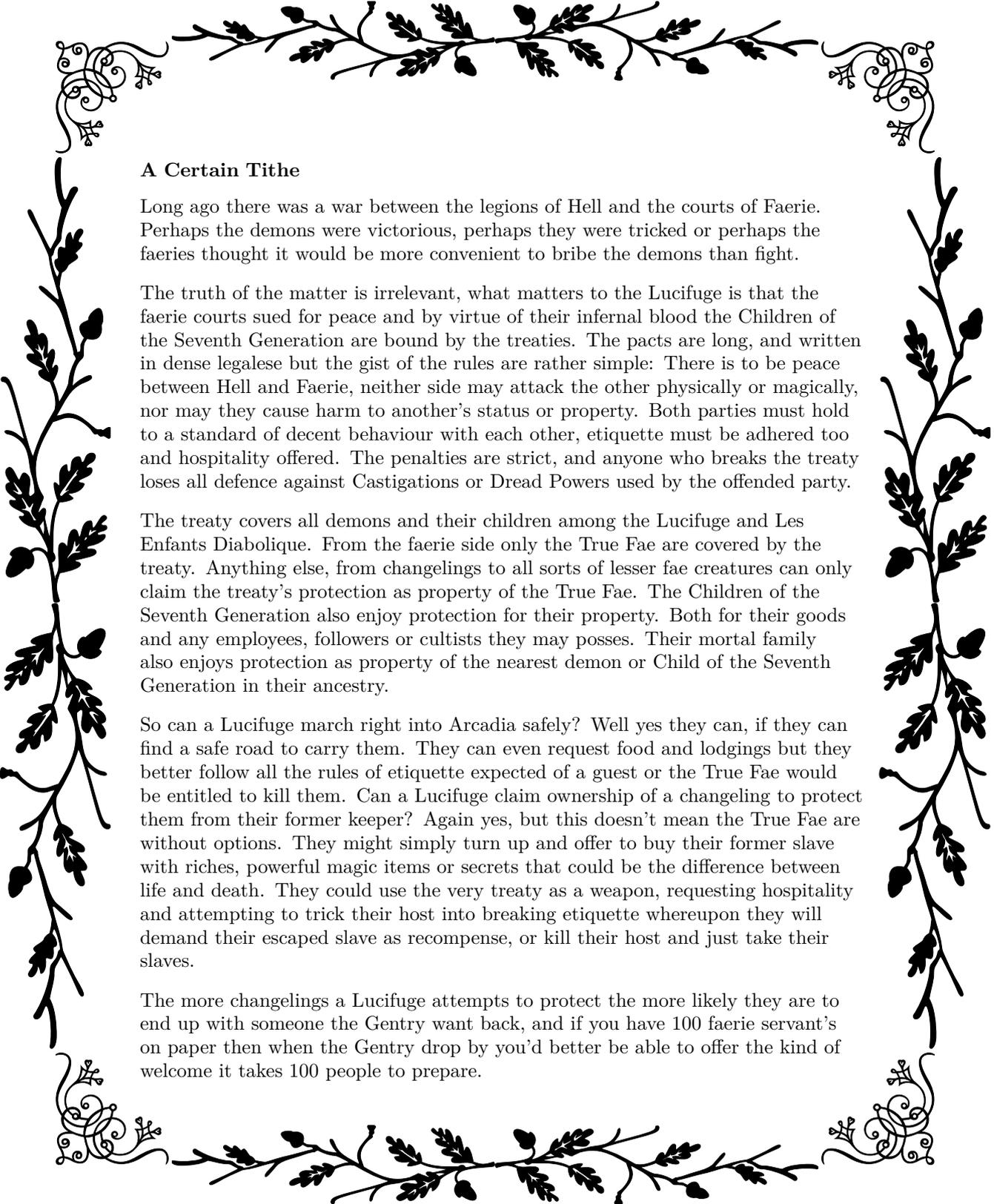
The True Fae, however, are as terrible a creature as the “parents” of the Lucifuge, and the Seventh Generation do their damndest to hunt them down. No deals, no bargains, no contracts, just iron and hellfire, neither of which the fae can control. Lucifuge hunters with access to the Lady’s special libraries especially take an interest in combing through records and lists of names, discerning just what is demonic and what is fairy, since the two at times share frighteningly similar characteristics. Sometimes there’s a lucky strike in particularly old tomes, and some have succeeded in striking a few names from the lists. Hell’s record keepers, so to speak.

Fetches as they are as pitiable as the changelings to the Lucifuge, if not more. They are non-people, constructs meant to imitate life, and so they are doomed to either die without rest or be killed without knowing. The Lucifuge makes it’s own judgments on a case-by-case, and if the changeling is deserving of it’s life, and is able to reintegrate into society, the Lucifuge engineer a way for the fetch to be destroyed, ensuring the changeling a way to return to their old lives. Many times the process has failed in utter disaster, but the few cases where there is success makes it all the more poignant that, to the Seventh Generation, redemption and rebirth can be found.

Two things have gained the attention of the Lucifuge, though. First, the fae contracts and bargains is close to the use of contracts and deal making in demonology. To get the knowledge, some occultist had to pay the price, and to get anything from a fairy, someone had to make a deal. So a select section of hunters has been combing the “files”, looking up deals to make sure there wasn’t any mix up between the thing making the deal. Hell’s record keepers, as it were.

The other issue is more complex. After years of spying, trailing, and many lost hunters and allies, the Lucifuge found out about the goblin markets, locations where hobgoblins and fae trade everything, yes everything, for a price. From a video game console to the arm off of the world’s best shooter, everything’s

for sale, even lives, as Lucifuge have spotted chained changelings being herded about for sale. The first time, the rescue failed, as the changelings were literally dragged through a forest and over a train track, with one unfortunate changeling being run over by a freight car. So the Lucifuge learned, finding that there must be a trade. The Lady Lucifuge had two ideas that night; one, study the hobgoblins. They're too much like demons for comfort, and she wants information on what they are quickly, thank you very much. The second is trickier. She's secretly trying to negotiate with the most powerful of fae lords for an offer no one can refuse.

A decorative border of black ink-drawn branches with leaves and small flowers, framing the text. The border is composed of horizontal and vertical sections with ornate, swirling flourishes at the corners.

A Certain Tithe

Long ago there was a war between the legions of Hell and the courts of Faerie. Perhaps the demons were victorious, perhaps they were tricked or perhaps the faeries thought it would be more convenient to bribe the demons than fight.

The truth of the matter is irrelevant, what matters to the Lucifuge is that the faerie courts sued for peace and by virtue of their infernal blood the Children of the Seventh Generation are bound by the treaties. The pacts are long, and written in dense legalese but the gist of the rules are rather simple: There is to be peace between Hell and Faerie, neither side may attack the other physically or magically, nor may they cause harm to another's status or property. Both parties must hold to a standard of decent behaviour with each other, etiquette must be adhered too and hospitality offered. The penalties are strict, and anyone who breaks the treaty loses all defence against Castigations or Dread Powers used by the offended party.

The treaty covers all demons and their children among the Lucifuge and Les Enfants Diabolique. From the faerie side only the True Fae are covered by the treaty. Anything else, from changelings to all sorts of lesser fae creatures can only claim the treaty's protection as property of the True Fae. The Children of the Seventh Generation also enjoy protection for their property. Both for their goods and any employees, followers or cultists they may possess. Their mortal family also enjoys protection as property of the nearest demon or Child of the Seventh Generation in their ancestry.

So can a Lucifuge march right into Arcadia safely? Well yes they can, if they can find a safe road to carry them. They can even request food and lodgings but they better follow all the rules of etiquette expected of a guest or the True Fae would be entitled to kill them. Can a Lucifuge claim ownership of a changeling to protect them from their former keeper? Again yes, but this doesn't mean the True Fae are without options. They might simply turn up and offer to buy their former slave with riches, powerful magic items or secrets that could be the difference between life and death. They could use the very treaty as a weapon, requesting hospitality and attempting to trick their host into breaking etiquette whereupon they will demand their escaped slave as recompense, or kill their host and just take their slaves.

The more changelings a Lucifuge attempts to protect the more likely they are to end up with someone the Gentry want back, and if you have 100 faerie servant's on paper then when the Gentry drop by you'd better be able to offer the kind of welcome it takes 100 people to prepare.

The Denial

There's a reason the Lady Lucifuge wants to negotiate with the faeries that every other member of the Lucifuge doesn't know. It's the idea of playing one against the other, of the enemy of my enemy. The

Lucifuge is directing the Denial to start contacting the Gentry of the fae, trying to strike a new contract on behalf of mankind. It seems that there were a few mistakes in what the Denial is convinced the last one was, a contract that the ancestors of man made with the fae. It's in the research they've done, the fae can't really act without a contract, and stealing men, women, even children, well that's some serious screw-ups in that deal. So the Lady has a plan; rewrite it, or write a new one. Have the faeries steal the monsters away. The vampires, the werewolves, even the demons, they feel the faeries might be the ones who can clear them away from earth. And then, once they're gone, the Lucifuge can get closer to it's goal of destroying the monsters and their evil from the world.

The Reconciliation

Fire and sword are two words the Reconciliation live by, and to try and show kindness to creatures who lost themselves the way changelings and fetches did are unworthy of any redemption. It's not like they're people anymore, and if they choose to give to their monstrous natures, to follow the path of their "faerie" selves and forgo their own, then they are to be sought out and destroyed. Only, there's something different about the knives they use after killing a changeling. Oh, it still smells of sulfur and roses, but when they press their ears to it about an hour after killing a changeling, they hear not roars and rattling chains, but a content growl and freezing wind. Try as they might, destroying hobgoblins, other monsters from the dimension the faeries come from, even the True Fae, none produce the same result.

The Truth

Members of the Truth are looking for the existence of the gentry, the faeries who kidnap and kill at a whim. Everything has a reason for existing, after all. Demons came as the angels who decided to buck God's commands to let humans take the Earth and follow Lucifer in rebellion. Werewolves have legends about a mighty wolf-god who had lain with the spirit of the moon and so brought about hybrid children. Witches spin tales about lost Atlantis, etc, etc. But there's no great tales about how the faeries came about, no stories or facts. There's ideas that they're dreams given form or maybe even humans who found a way inside and managed to survive in their new world, but they haven't found a faerie who can tell them. So they're burning through the books, looking in the oldest tomes for answers. The only ones they can't access are the ones in the Lady's library. But they've got a few ideas how to get those.

Story Seeds

There's a rumor among the Lucifuge that Hell and Arcadia are just different sections of the same dimension. Though "conversations" with demonic parents try to put an end to such ideas, few are willing to put much faith in those "truths" put forward by their demonic ancestors. After all, the tales told by the changelings tell of tortures at the hands of beautiful women or perfect men, if not machine-creatures or watery nymphs. The truth is rumored to lie in a bottomless hole in Montana, even if it was featured on a silly radio show that doesn't know half of what it's talking about. Unfortunately, one thing it did get right were the men in black standing guard over the area. Something's definitely up, so what now?

A recent trip by one of your fellow Lucifuge to Germany's Black Forest yielded some interesting results, not the least of which was a changeling, literally made in the image of the cartoon fairies, a dancing light that on closer inspection is a human woman with wings. She claims that the fairy has been tempting women away for centuries, holding them captive for it's own amusement. Only it says that the contract was cosigned by a man who could shoot hellfire from his fingertips, and that the family is still running around. If you're lucky, it's a member of L'Enfant Diaboliques causing the trouble. If not, then you've got some digging to do through the Lucifuge genealogies.

Malleus Maleficarum

"In the name of God, the Father, creator of all things, I commit these actions to His holy work." With those words, Fr. Hennessey pressed the hot iron onto the monster's body, the creature letting out a great shriek of pain, the sin released from it's form. "Confess, or be damned to hell for eternity!"

The monster shrieked in agony, as it's human face shifted into one of plastic, glass eyes rolled up into it's head. The hot iron melted the left side of it's face, plastic dripping onto the concrete of the church basement. "Please!" it screamed, it's face distorted in pain. "I don't know anything, I just wanted help!"

"We're giving it to you, you monster," Fr. Hennessey said, as James and Karen stood by the door, keeping the other instruments hot in the kerosene burners. "Now tell us where the others are!"

"I told you," the thing cried, as it's wound slowly solidified. "They're gone...you killed them all...why are you doing this!"

"This is the work of God," Hennessey said with conviction, turning and walking back to the burners. "Any word from the others yet?"

"No, Father," James said, putting his phone back in his pocket. "But my cousin in the police just texted me, they're putting out the fire now."

"I see," Hennessey said, taking a set of iron pliers from the burner. "And your contacts, my dear?"

"Nothing, Father," Karen said, putting the iron on the burner. "What happens if we can't find them? What if... Oh God, Father, what if she's lost forever?"

"She will not be, my dear," Hennessey said, putting a comforting hand on her shoulder. "We will have the faith to see this through, and not even the servants of Hell can keep us from this task."

"Amen," they both said. Nodding, Hennessey turned back to the monster. "Now, before you start losing your teeth, tell me where they are."

To the Shadow Congregation there is an order to things. First vampires, then witches, then demons. Bauldino, and by extension most of the Shadow Congregation's hierarchy does not care greatly about faeries. They have a party line, but it's rarely enforced or even explained unless someone goes out their way to attract their attention. However this disinterest does not bely the entire beliefs of the Malleus Maleficarum. Away from Bauldino and his Order of Longinus the Hammer of Witches can be very interested indeed, and without a stern hand on the leadership the Shadow Congregation engages in theological and doctrinal dispute as heated as any argument over the scripture.

Over the centuries, the Shadow Congregation has learned that there are indeed differences between the various fae creatures, and there is some difference in handling them. The changelings cause the biggest divisions between the Orders. Opinions range from changelings being victims in need of support, no longer human but still able to accept God and one day ascend to heaven. Others say the changeling is just another monster wearing a humans identity as a mask, at best it's simply not hurting anyone, yet. The "true" fae rarely get such benefit of the doubt, whatever they are their actions speak clearly. The gentry are monsters to be purified with iron and fire. The doctrine is like that of all other monsters; it is not of God, but of evil and sin. The Bible, or the works of the Church, do not mention them, and with how they behave towards God's creation, it's little surprise that they're seen as evil.

There is one case guaranteed to attract the Shadow Congregation's full interest, rare though it may be. Some of the fae set themselves up as gods. They thrive on worship, feed on it like it's a drug, and some of the followers are too happy to comply with calling their false lords their gods. The issue is telling genuine faerie worship from bored teenagers gazing into crystals and drinking crappy organic tea. Or knowing the difference between the followers of a changeling who just wants maypole dancing and free beer and the cult that follows a member of the fae who demands human sacrifice.

The Malleus favors using it's community links to uncover the truth; put thirteen good Catholic children in a coven and at least one of their parents is only too happy to talk to a reassuring member of the Church. If they're just taking drugs and talking about seven circles of Frali, then they're just idiots and it's the not the Shadow Congregation's responsibility; they are the Church's soldiers. It is for the local priest or missionaries to bring wayward sheep back into the flock. If they are followers of something darker, then things take a turn for the drastic, as police raids on their homes and jobs discover drugs, weapons, and sometimes worse. They're taken away, and even if nothing can be proven in a court, the disruption is more than enough time to show their so called gods the wrath of real divinity. When religions start hurting people, especially false ones, the Hammer of Witches takes a very keen interest.

Order of St. Ambrose

The Ambrosians are learning more and more that the changelings are not creatures to be feared, at least most of the time. Mostly, they deserve pity and mercy, both of which the Order has in ample supply. For the True Fae and those changelings loyal or mad enough to serve them only the Lord's justice will suffice.

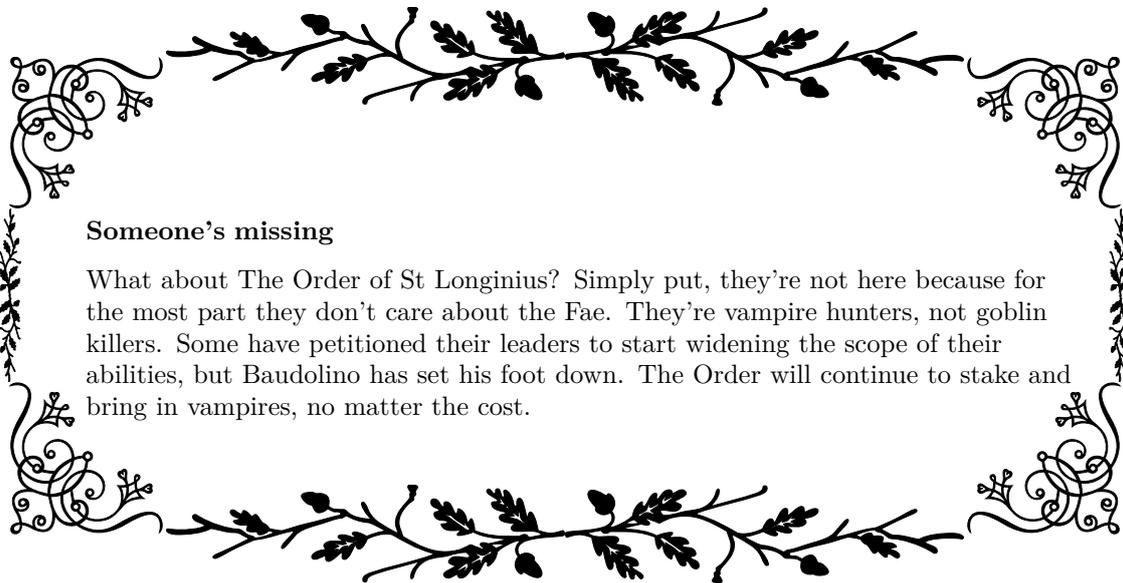
They're gathering data on the changelings, secured by their knowledge of technology that the other orders still need to gain. They've learned there's a structure to the changeling life, that courts and freeholds and brotherhoods are major players to the kidnapped and abused faeries. They're building a database of all they've found, spread across a variety of computers over dozens of networks. That way, even if their others find the truth, they can't see the bigger picture unless they find the other computers. Why go through the trouble? Because the Ambrosians have noticed that there was an upswing of changeling returns over the past few years, same as a few changelings. They fear something big is coming.

Brotherhood of St. Athanasius

Like everything else, the Athanasians look at faeries through the eyes only a fanatic can possess. To the Athanasians, the changelings can only find their redemption in death, and whether that death is quick or slow, it still has to die. Fetches, hobgoblins, True Fae, they have no human self, and so they are destroyed without remorse. Archbishop Gallaher has made it clear, no faerie can be allowed to live. Plus, it provides ample proving grounds for how loyal an Athanasian really is, because Gallaher still plots war against the Longinians, and the fae provide an ample testing ground to prove the skills and abilities of loyal brothers and sisters.

The Sisterhood of St. Wisdom

The Sisterhood is not like the others. The Sisterhood has a merciful purpose, and they keep the Vigil by tending to those who have been harmed by the supernatural. To the Sisterhood every changeling has been harmed, taken to Arcadia and suffered torment perhaps only exceeded by Hell itself. Every changeling is therefore within their remit to help and heal. Some among the Sisterhood think that since a changeling is still mortal they need only help them rebuild a good Christian life; so that they might one day reach St. Peter with a clean slate. Others seek tirelessly for a way to break the "curse" that makes changelings what they are. None have taken the dangerous and risky task of offering mercy to one of the True Fae. They, more than the Ambrosians, clash with the Athanasians on the treatment of those changelings that are found.



Someone's missing

What about The Order of St Longinius? Simply put, they're not here because for the most part they don't care about the Fae. They're vampire hunters, not goblin killers. Some have petitioned their leaders to start widening the scope of their abilities, but Baudolino has set his foot down. The Order will continue to stake and bring in vampires, no matter the cost.

Story Seeds

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me." It's written in stone, for God's sake, and yet you've seen them everywhere in your town. A bunch of pagan idolaters preaching of the beauty of nature's perfection, and their nature god who is to be worshiped in the forest. Frankly, you could care less, and went about protecting the area. A weird cult springs up, fine, at least it's not killing anyone. Until the dead pets start turning up, with a strange language carved into their fur. The parental groups are crying Satanists, but you've seen real Satanists before, and this isn't their work, it's too amateur.

Maybe it's time to find out why these cultists are going out in the woods.

The boy died young, and you were there saying the rites as he was laid in the ground. You thought that he would find peace in heaven, but then the newspaper reported a grave robbery the other night, and that his coffin had been opened along with others. You comforted the parents and went to see things for yourself, but the police said the body had been replaced with a few loose bits of garbage and rocks, when all the other coffins were empty. They also said the boy's coffin was also the last one to be dug up, which means whoever it was found what they were looking for. Maybe it's time to look around for anyone who would have need for the body of a boy who died so young.

Task Force: VALKYRIE

"Colonel, would you mind explaining to us why you felt it necessary to commandeer several Abrams tanks for this latest mission? We're still fighting off inquires from the base commander."

"Sir, the issue was concerned with a large extra-dimensional breach in the vicinity of Fort Indiantown Gap, sir," Wilkins said, standing at attention. "I deemed it necessary to commandeer the tanks to prevent the forces from the gap spilling onto the base and into the surrounding area."

"So there was complete containment?" the official said. His face was just out of the bright light of the room, obscured by shadows, but Wilkins could see the smoke from his cigarette wafting into the light.

"All subjects sighted were either eliminated or sent to China Lake for further study," Wilkins said. "We're currently investigating what caused the breach, but we're not going to hold our breath."

"Satisfactory," the official said, taking a drag on the cigarette. "Return to your cell for you, Colonel, we'll call you when needed."

"Sir," Wilkins said, snapping to attention. Quickly he left the room, and met his adjutant, Cpl. Jens. "Let's just get out of here, we've got some trouble to fix."

"I just got a text from Helkowski, she said there's cops in the area reporting weird graffiti popping up in the towns around the base."

"I figured as much," Wilkins said, checking his pistol. "Let's get ready for a long night, Jens."

VALKYRIE knows there's more out in the world than just vamps and wolves, that sometimes those things don't even obey any kind of basic biology. They are creatures not meant to be in this world, things that, if revealed, could upset every basic tenet of human existence as man knows it. So VALKYRIE holds it's Vigil with as much conviction as it can, damn the torpedoes and monsters from another dimension.

Until 1947, TFV's mandate was to handle simply the monsters and madness that lurked in the darkness, but something happened. Of course, everyone knows about New Mexico and Roswell and the like, but that was the cover up, of course. VALKYRIE just got lucky when that weather balloon went down and the farmer who found it didn't know a thing about what he saw. The real bodies turned up a few miles east of his property, and the government went to work on obfuscating the truth. They drummed up false stories about aliens and flying saucers and metal sheets that couldn't bend so everyone would be busy focusing elsewhere. They even went the whole route of making a secret base to draw attention away from the real work on Extra-Dimensional Entities at Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake.

Despite the suicides and rates of defection that were quickly handled, VALKYRIE realized they were facing a possible invasion force. Creatures that could hop back and forth between dimensions and steal whoever they wanted, change them into what they needed, or even whatever whim there was. And that there were more than the few that VALKYRIE had captured in this "Arcadia", enough to overwhelm the world if they weren't careful. So VALKYRIE eliminated the captives and moved on, constantly on the lookout for faeries, looking over local legends and folklore, since the qualities of the prisoners eerily fit quite a few urban legends that TFV had been looking into.

So how does VALKYRIE handle the faeries? How they handle domestic terrorists of every stripe; observations, report, and containment. Ever hear about Van Eck Phreaking? TFV has. Hell, they practically pioneered the technique. Cell phones have become a boon to TFV, and not just because of the Patriot Act. DCSNet? It wasn't all VALKYRIE. But that black budget was a big bonus. Fairies have never had it worse. Laser microphones bounced off windows, drones over American airspace, it's all there. They only keep the black vans because of tradition, but those vans are still packed full of observation equipment.

That's the hard part, though. Once they find the faeries with certainty, TFV finally gets to break out their tools and get to the real work. Thanks to FORT research into trans-dimensional capabilities, they've found out ways to block faeries from jumping between dimensions. Materials that would normally be wasted is finding new use on the front against faeries. Maybe it's not as direct as certain cells would like it to be, but just because you can't always shoot a problem doesn't mean it can't be solved with good old fashioned intelligence and paper-trails.

So why go through all this trouble for what are essentially a group of abused refugees? They're subversive, they're manipulative. They use and abuse patsies and enslaved, draining America dry in a way the conventional authorities can't handle. So it's up to VALKYRIE agents to move in and take out the faeries before the lampreys drain the nation dry.

Project: TWILIGHT

TWILIGHT is the closest thing TFV has to "ground pounders", the go-to faction when it comes to the heavy lifting. TWILIGHT agents are called up for every kind of problem imaginable, including the fae. So TWILIGHT is constantly observing, tracking, and eliminating fae hideouts. There have been casualties, but the agents of TWILIGHT have seen little difficulty with the situation, since they actually feel something is being done against this threat. Busting markets, breaking up fae gatherings, it's the one thing a TWILIGHT agent feels is a success.

Operation: ADAMSKI

ADAMSKI almost finds the fae laughable. No one believes in them anymore, or if they do, that they're just little women flitting about, little gnomes working mountains for gems and singing. So ADAMSKI rolls them together with other abduction stories, creating tales of aliens and flying saucers in areas where the abductions are heavy. For now it's worked, but the Network Zero idiots are trying to bring them up more often, so ADAMSKI's been working on doing what the NetZos hate; claiming it's all a marketing tool. So far it's worked. How long it can keep up for is anyone's guess.

Project: FORT

FORT, however, knows the fae aren't something to laugh at. Combing through tales of abductions, strange phenomena and the like, FORT investigators have encountered enough EDE's (Extra-Dimensional Entities, "Eddies") to know that they're too dangerous for people to be around. So FORT agents have advised all VALKYRIE cells to start carrying some kind of iron weapon on their person, if only as a last resort. They've also been to the Hedge. It seems using the Gatekeeper in areas of high faerie activity trigger the agent not to enter the Shadow or Underworld, but the Hedge, the barrier between the fae dimension and the one mankind inhabits. What worries FORT agents is that the barrier is weaker in areas of fae activity, meaning that something is possibly weakening the border between worlds. Until they figure out what that weakening is caused by, though, they're going to keep trying to educate the conspiracy's other hunters on just exactly how the fae can change a man without even trying.

Story Seeds

TFV keeps track of various abduction support groups, knowing that for every ten crackpots, there's probably one legitimate story in the group. So you constantly listen to the droning tales of new life and inner beings, until one story clicks. The abducted mentioned being taken to a kind of forest, through thorns and wild woods, experimented on by bizarre rock-things and then dropped back in his car without any time having been passed. He even gave a location of where it happened. Looking back, more than a few people have disappeared from that lonely stretch of highway. Maybe it's time to take a little road trip.

Your cell's been tasked with cleaning faeries from the area you've been posted in, and so far it's gone well enough. By giving the cops the psychological profiles of the freaks, you've managed to keep a lid on things. Then one night you woke up with a knife at your throat and one of the freaks over your bed. "Don't try to fight our war." With that, it ran from your hotel and out into the dawn. The threat didn't

get to you, what did was the word “war”. If someone is going to war, that could make the people see the truth. You’ve got to head this trouble off at the pass before it’s too late.

THE BONS OF CÚCHULAINN

The Hounds

"In the name of St. Patrick, the glorious apostle of Ireland, and invoking our patron, the warrior Cú Chulainn, I hereby declare this meeting to begin," Jonesy said, sitting down with the other officers. "Now, any new business?"

"Yeah, the charity food drive has to be moved to next week, the high school is having a basketball game that day." Kenny shrugged. "They had to reschedule everything thanks to that pipe bursting."

"That's acceptable," Jonesy said. "Do they still need us to fix that pipe?" Kenny nodded. "Paul, you're still doing the job right?"

"Yeah, I can try," Paul said, speaking up from the other club members. "But you're gonna need to give me all the time I can to fix that."

"That's fine, just keep us up to speed," Jonesy said. "Now, is there anything else? No? Okay, James, what's the status of the unseelie on Corson street?"

"The faeries are using a cover of an ordinary family," James said, getting up, walking to the front. "Mother, father, two smaller ones as children, one even acts like the family dog, for what that's worth."

"Dangerous?" Paul asked.

"I saw three kids in the past week get taken into that house, and all of them were reported missing later that night." James shook his head. "They don't appear to be armed, but I've seen small shapes running around their garden at night; little yellow eyes and such."

"When is the best time to prepare the trap?" Jonesy said.

"During the day, they all either have day jobs or go to school, looking for victims." Paul turned to Lenny. "Lenny, can you get inside without your boss getting suspicious?"

"I have a job in the area, yeah," Lenny said, his job as a utility worker perfect for such missions. "Gas line explosion, or just a spark and raging inferno during dinner?"

"Dinner, and don't give 'em a chance to get out, break all the doorframes you can and jet." Satisfied, Jonesy nodded for James to sit. "Alright, now that the unseelie are handled, the softball season is coming up."

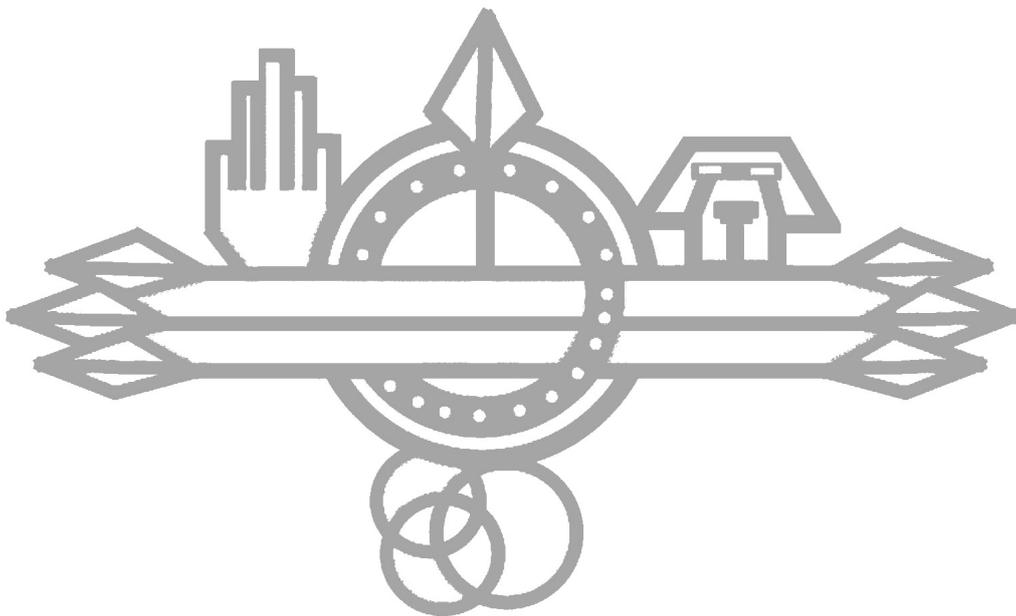
Cú Chulainn was an ancient hero of the Ulster Cycle of Irish mythology, a mighty hero known for his great deeds in protecting the kings and people of Ulster from their enemies. Like the ancient heroes of the great epics, he too dealt with great gods and creatures from beyond man's understanding, and faeries were part of it. Despite Cú Chulainn's love for the faerie Fand, following her to her lands would destroy the faeries totally, and so Cú Chulainn and his wife drank a potion made to help them forget they had ever encountered faeries.

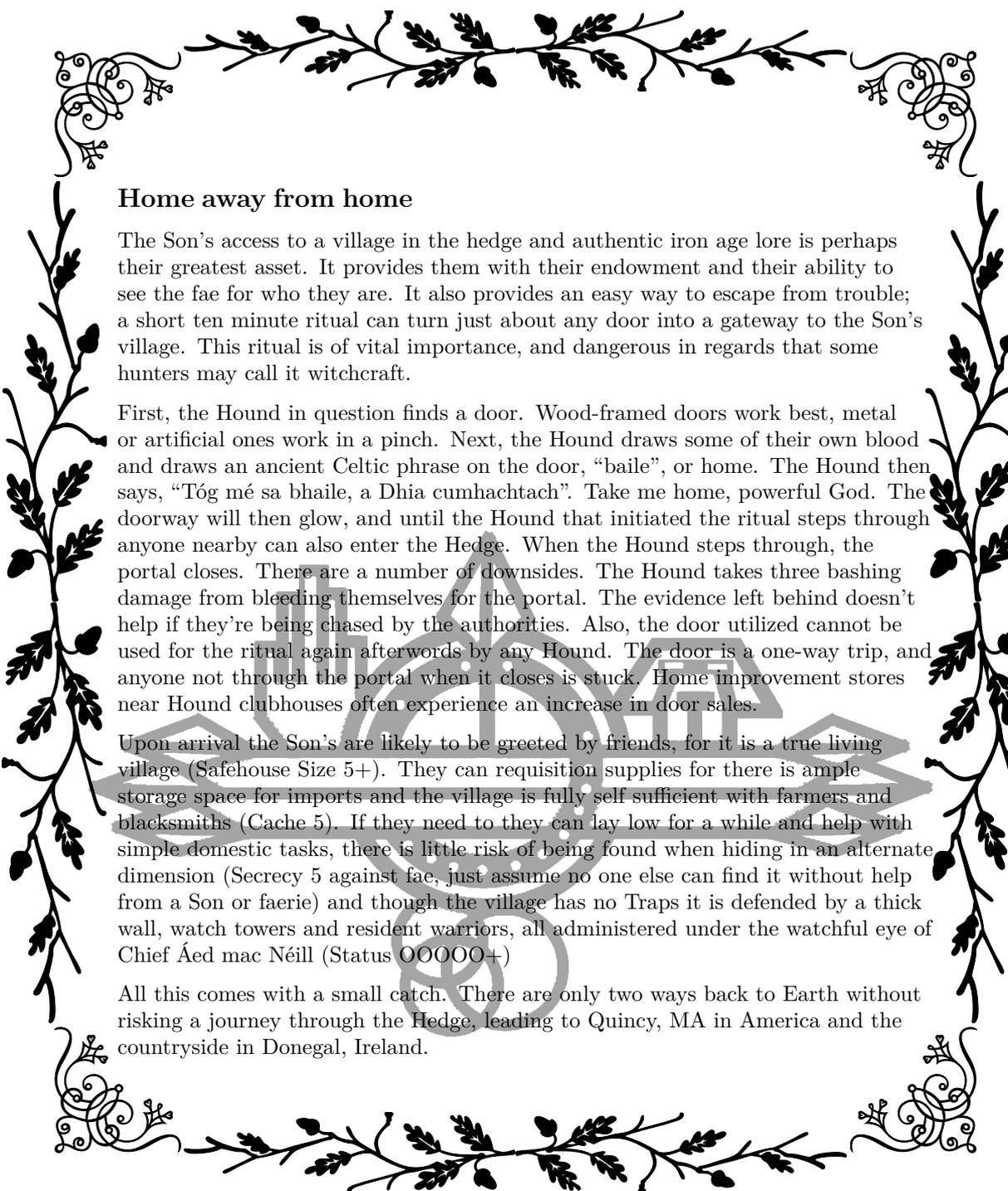
Of course, the Irish immigrants to America had bigger things to worry about than a few old stories, with hatred and suspicion weighing against them. Many banded together, forming fraternal orders to protect themselves and their communities, insular groups who fiercely stood against the outsiders that would push them back to famine and hatred. One such group called itself the Sons of Cú Chulainn, a force of ex-soldiers from the Civil War, recent immigrants, and children of immigrant parents that was created to protect Irish communities along the East Coast. Theirs was not a Vigil against the darkness of the unknown, but the darkness of human evil, of man's cruelty towards his fellow man.

In fact, until 1957, the larger organization had known nothing of the darkness lurking behind mankind. As prejudice against the Irish fell away, they became a force of charity and kindness to their communities,

though some of the more monetary members would aid certain connections in the homeland with certain goods. Then, in September 1957, a group of them left on a trip to see their ancestral homeland for themselves, traveling through the four provinces up to Ulster. It was in Donegal, on the shores of the Poisoned Glen in Dunlewey, that the men made a discovery.

Walking along the shores of the lake, the men noticed that the woods became thicker and thicker, thorns impossible to avoid along the way. Then, a growl from behind them alerted them to the presence of a wolf-thing, which they knew were supposed to be extinct in Ireland. The wolf things closed on them, but then a mighty roar erupted from the thorns, and a group of men came from the forest and killed the wolf things, the men covered in ancient clothes and tattoos. If it weren't for the fact that one of the Sons knew Gaelic, they might have been killed as well. As it was, they managed to make their way back to where the men came from, and from there, they realized just what was going on in the world. The chief of the village explained what they were, a small community sent to live in the area by their lord, as a buffer against the unseelie, fairies that were evil and hurtful towards men. There they had lived for only a short time, it seemed, and had thought that their land had been overrun by the unseelie months ago. After weeks of discussion and trading knowledge, the chief of the village made the decision to let a small group of warriors leave with the Sons, to learn about this new world they found themselves in.



A decorative border of black ink-drawn leaves and vines surrounds the text. The border is composed of several horizontal and vertical sections, with ornate scrollwork at the corners. The leaves are simple, oval-shaped, and arranged along thin, branching stems.

Home away from home

The Son's access to a village in the hedge and authentic iron age lore is perhaps their greatest asset. It provides them with their endowment and their ability to see the fae for who they are. It also provides an easy way to escape from trouble; a short ten minute ritual can turn just about any door into a gateway to the Son's village. This ritual is of vital importance, and dangerous in regards that some hunters may call it witchcraft.

First, the Hound in question finds a door. Wood-framed doors work best, metal or artificial ones work in a pinch. Next, the Hound draws some of their own blood and draws an ancient Celtic phrase on the door, "baile", or home. The Hound then says, "Tóg mé sa bhaile, a Dhia cumhachtach". Take me home, powerful God. The doorway will then glow, and until the Hound that initiated the ritual steps through anyone nearby can also enter the Hedge. When the Hound steps through, the portal closes. There are a number of downsides. The Hound takes three bashing damage from bleeding themselves for the portal. The evidence left behind doesn't help if they're being chased by the authorities. Also, the door utilized cannot be used for the ritual again afterwards by any Hound. The door is a one-way trip, and anyone not through the portal when it closes is stuck. Home improvement stores near Hound clubhouses often experience an increase in door sales.

Upon arrival the Son's are likely to be greeted by friends, for it is a true living village (Safehouse Size 5+). They can requisition supplies for there is ample storage space for imports and the village is fully self sufficient with farmers and blacksmiths (Cache 5). If they need to they can lay low for a while and help with simple domestic tasks, there is little risk of being found when hiding in an alternate dimension (Secrecy 5 against fae, just assume no one else can find it without help from a Son or faerie) and though the village has no Traps it is defended by a thick wall, watch towers and resident warriors, all administered under the watchful eye of Chief Áed mac Néill (Status OOOOO+)

All this comes with a small catch. There are only two ways back to Earth without risking a journey through the Hedge, leading to Quincy, MA in America and the countryside in Donegal, Ireland.

Once out of the thorns, both the Sons and the villagers saw faeries and monsters everywhere, and by some miracle they managed to find their way to America, a few well placed bribes and favors helping them. It was tricky, wrangling the forged passports and papers for the villagers, and a few times they had to make up admittedly thin explanations to the authorities as to why their friends only spoke the Irish. They wouldn't have made it past a border patrol if one of the villagers hadn't been wise enough to bring with them some gold from the Hedge. They all agreed that the British lust for riches for once worked out in their favor. Finally, they were able to make it to America.

At first, no one at the Sons clubhouse the men came from believed the tale, until the village warriors decided to show the proof by dragging three mutated bodies into the clubhouse. Seeing these bodies, the Sons membership decided their legacy needed to be carried out. There was a lengthy discussion that night, trying to decide whether or not the membership needed to tell anyone what had happened. In a

battle of words that carried on long into the night, and right through the morning, the officers of the club asked the members to vote on the proper course of action; cover it all up and pretend it never happened, or contact their other clubhouses. Arguments were given for both sides, and the entire house nearly came to blows. But in the end, the vote swung in favor of informing the other divisions. The possibility that the creatures their grandparents warned them about could be preying on their community, their own families, and were even more dangerous than they had been led to believe, was all the reason they needed to return to the brotherhood's founding purpose.

They contacted the other clubhouses in the East Coast, and presented the evidence in the forms of the bodies of the faeries. With the knowledge of the villagers in their possession and modern arms and tactics at their fingertips, the Sons started to seek out the faeries in their cities. They had connections in the police to protect them, the Church to guide them, and their families to support them, or at least not question why their husbands and fathers were coming back at one in the morning with strange stains on their clothes. They even managed to find a way back and forth into the village, though at times it was nearly closed off by thorns. Still, the village sends its young men out into the world to combat the fae, seeing it as the duty given to them by their lord. Eventually, the club went international. A few houses have started in Canada and at the request of Chief Áed the Son's are making a special effort to reforge ties to their ancestral homeland, giving them a steady base to draw on manpower and support should the need arise.

Since then, the Sons have constantly been guarding their communities, under the guise of their charitable fraternal actions, making food banks for the needy and community renewal projects to prevent decay in their towns. They use their connections to the needy to gauge what is happening in their areas, and when they do, their true selves show. They drop their kindness and generosity and pick up their iron, the ancient bane of their faerie enemies. They cover themselves with ancient Celtic war paint and tattoos, along with donning modern bulletproof vests and rifles, setting out to find and destroy their ancient enemies.

To even become a member of the organization, a prospective member must prove first that they have Irish roots in their family, mother's side preferred. Once these traces are confirmed, the prospects are looked over to see if they can be counted as members who will hold good standing. If they have no major criminal charges, and if no one in the house brings to light any unsavory business, they member is sworn in at the next possible meeting. Induction into this battle is another matter. Not every Son knows about their connection to hunting faeries, and to even be allowed to know, they must have either seen the monsters in their true form, or become an officer in the organization. Thanks to the incidents of faeries attacking clubhouses and gatherings, though, most of the organization knows the truth by accident rather than design.

The Enemy

It's the faeries, plain and simple. The Hounds have gathered up files over the decades of their various enemies, and each clubhouse sends its representatives and files to the national meeting held in Quincy, Massachusetts, to compare notes with other clubhouses and cells in the compact. Their current national president, Kenneth McCullugh (Status: 00000+), has been dedicated to turning his organization into the top faerie hunters in the world, because they're the only ones who seem to be dedicated to doing any real fighting. What they have found has raised eyebrows.

The ancient Celts divided their faeries into two distinct courts, the Seelie and Unseelie courts, the Seelie generally benevolent and merciful, the Unseelie cruel and malicious. It has been these two distinctions that have guided the actions of the Hounds since 1957, particularly in a strange diplomacy. The Sons often attempt to meet Seelie faeries halfway, knowing they generally help mankind. These "changelings", as they call themselves, generally respond with suspicion, and the Sons are cautious when meeting them. They make no contracts or agreements. When they do meet, they merely give an ultimatum. "Do not harm any man, woman, child, or other in this town, and you shall be left alone." They emphasize the point by killing any faerie who decides to ignore the warning, and take a stand against the faeries.

The Unseelie are worse off, and hunted like dogs. Fetches, goblins, the "True Fae", they're all hunted and destroyed, with each clubhouse storing a small stash of hand forged iron weapons, taken directly from

the smiths of the village, along with an arms cache and medical supplies. They lure the Unseelie into battles they cannot win, using booby traps and even mundane law enforcement to combat the Unseelie. Because the monsters don't want the truth to be found, and so they usually force themselves to go along with the police, if only to save their own hides. They never realize that their hideouts are bombed until it's too late.



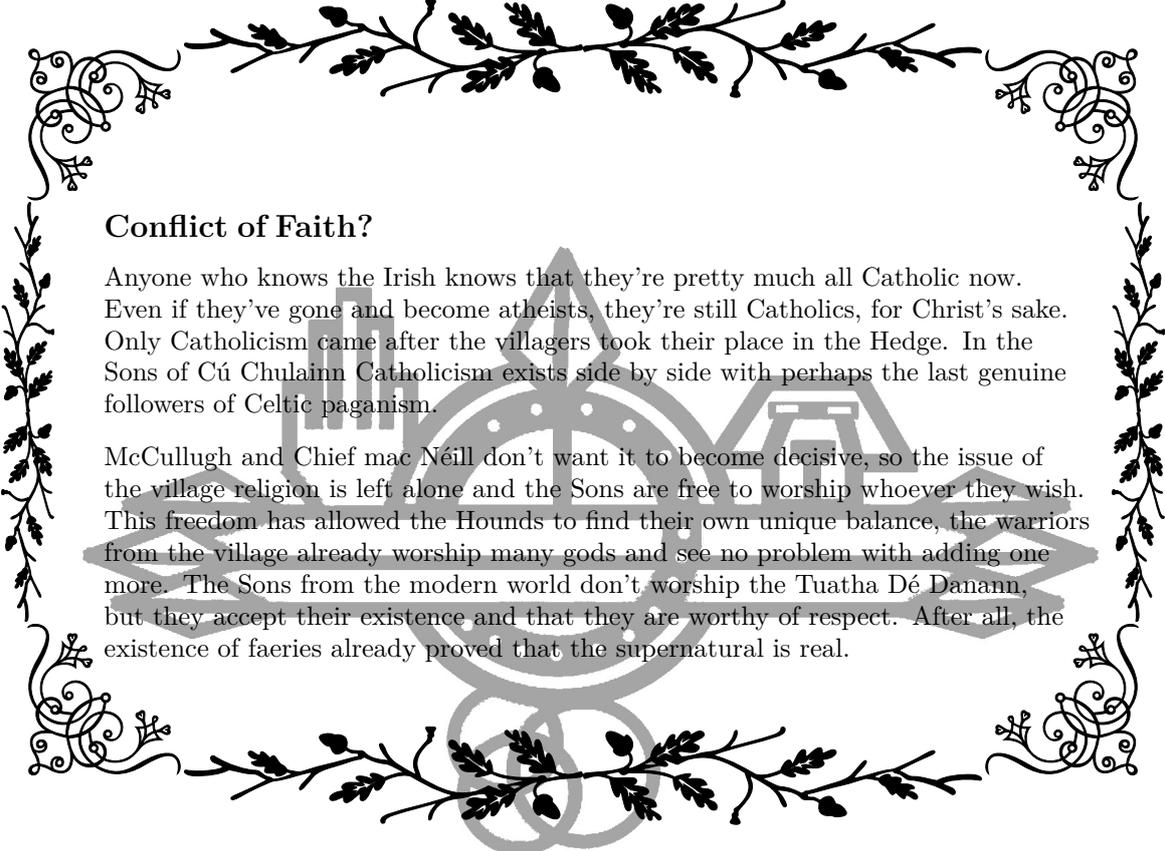
Neart i bráithreachas
Strength in brotherhood

They know that there are different types of faeries too, from ones that can manipulate water to bird-men to skeletons draped in tight fitting skin. Their abilities are usually documented, and when the time comes to battle, the cells in the compact usually know what to expect. They also know of goblin markets, and take every chance they can to break them up with fire and lead, scavenging the wreckage

for anything useful.

In battle the Sons of Cú Chulainn show a unique mixture of modern and iron age. They go into battle with a iron sword in one hand and a gun in the other, wearing Kevlar and camouflage above blue war paint. Sometimes they fight fairly or even arrange a duel of champions against the Fae. Other times it's an ambush or a bomb. Like any true warrior the Sons are practical and favour what works, and against an enemy as tricky as the Fae what work's isn't always the weapon that makes the biggest explosion.

As for the other monsters in the world, the Sons do combat them, but without the fervor they battle faeries with. Vampires are shot, werewolves are shot, it doesn't matter. Witches, however, earn a strange place in the group. While not trusted fully with the secrets of the Hounds, they are consulted, especially if they have the knowledge of faeries the Hounds seek. This may put them at odds with more militant witch hunters, but the Hounds have learned to take every advantage they can. The faeries sure do.

A decorative border made of black ink, featuring a central horizontal branch with leaves and berries, and four ornate, swirling floral corner pieces that connect to the central branch.

Conflict of Faith?

Anyone who knows the Irish knows that they're pretty much all Catholic now. Even if they've gone and become atheists, they're still Catholics, for Christ's sake. Only Catholicism came after the villagers took their place in the Hedge. In the Sons of Cú Chulainn Catholicism exists side by side with perhaps the last genuine followers of Celtic paganism.

McCullough and Chief mac Néill don't want it to become decisive, so the issue of the village religion is left alone and the Sons are free to worship whoever they wish. This freedom has allowed the Hounds to find their own unique balance, the warriors from the village already worship many gods and see no problem with adding one more. The Sons from the modern world don't worship the Tuatha Dé Danann, but they accept their existence and that they are worthy of respect. After all, the existence of faeries already proved that the supernatural is real.

Hunters

Your father was a member. The teachers in your high school were too, along with a few of your neighbors. When you took your oath to get in, your chest was nearly bursting with pride. You went to help with the kitchens, you took up the toy drives outside the local stores, you felt like you were doing something good. Then your Dad came to you one night asking for your help with some club business. Since then you feel even prouder of what you've done. You've never once felt guilt.

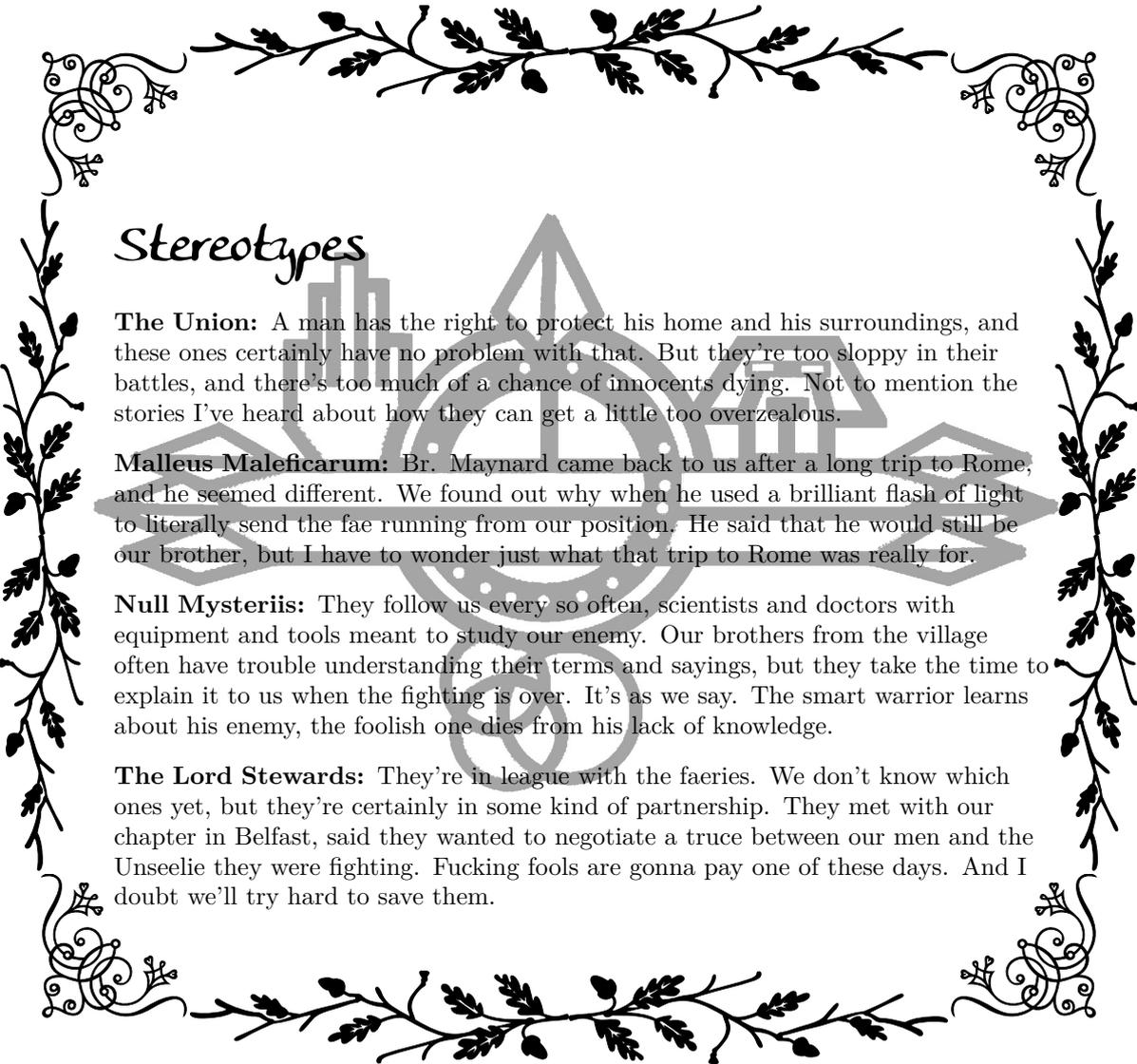
You lost your son to a monster with scales and fangs. Your brother died when he got dragged away through one of their doors, and your cousins have all either gone nutty or died in the fight. Whatever the case, you're the last male in your family that still knows the truth, and the truth is starting to weigh on you whenever you see your grandkids, nieces and nephews.

You were born in the village in the Hedge, and your first encounters with the modern world took some getting used to. You still don't quite understand how the "television" works, and the giant metal boxes called cars frighten you a little. But you understand fighting just fine, and you smiled when your brothers introduced you to the "flamethrower". It feels comfortable using fire against the monsters.

You've been a police officer, and before that a soldier. You've used a gun for more years than you can remember, so when they put a sword in your hand you were skeptical. Then they showed you how to swear a geasa. Sometimes you still need the last two thousand years of weapon development on your side, but you've never had a weapon feel so right in your hand.

You're one of the women in the auxiliary, and you know that it's mostly a "boys club". You've had to fight to prove yourself every step of the way, including proving that you could take down a giant ogre like the rest of the men. It actually seemed easier to get respect from the men from the village than the guys you knew from the club, but either way, they always listen when you start telling them what to do. Little surprise, you're also still single.

You're the lead singer/bassist in a regional Celtic Punk band. You also handle all the scheduling and managing. You always keep your brothers informed on where the faeries are moving in the local music scene, and sometimes you still pick up your sword and protect the lingering fans after the show.

A decorative border of black ink-drawn leaves and vines surrounds the central text. The border is composed of several horizontal and vertical segments that meet at ornate, swirling corners.

Stereotypes

The Union: A man has the right to protect his home and his surroundings, and these ones certainly have no problem with that. But they're too sloppy in their battles, and there's too much of a chance of innocents dying. Not to mention the stories I've heard about how they can get a little too overzealous.

Malleus Maleficarum: Br. Maynard came back to us after a long trip to Rome, and he seemed different. We found out why when he used a brilliant flash of light to literally send the fae running from our position. He said that he would still be our brother, but I have to wonder just what that trip to Rome was really for.

Null Mysteriis: They follow us every so often, scientists and doctors with equipment and tools meant to study our enemy. Our brothers from the village often have trouble understanding their terms and sayings, but they take the time to explain it to us when the fighting is over. It's as we say. The smart warrior learns about his enemy, the foolish one dies from his lack of knowledge.

The Lord Stewards: They're in league with the faeries. We don't know which ones yet, but they're certainly in some kind of partnership. They met with our chapter in Belfast, said they wanted to negotiate a truce between our men and the Unseelie they were fighting. Fucking fools are gonna pay one of these days. And I doubt we'll try hard to save them.

Divisions

The Hounds usually divide themselves up in accordance to their specialty within the group.

The Song of Erin (Amhrán na hÉireann), are the record keepers and directors of the compact, ensuring that the many encounters their cells have are taken down and studied: so that their victories

might inspire the Hounds to further victory, so that their fallen are properly honored, and so that they're able to combat similar enemies effectively and without loss. Membership in the Song of Erin is disproportionately drawn from the village, due to their knowledge of faeries from the ancient times.

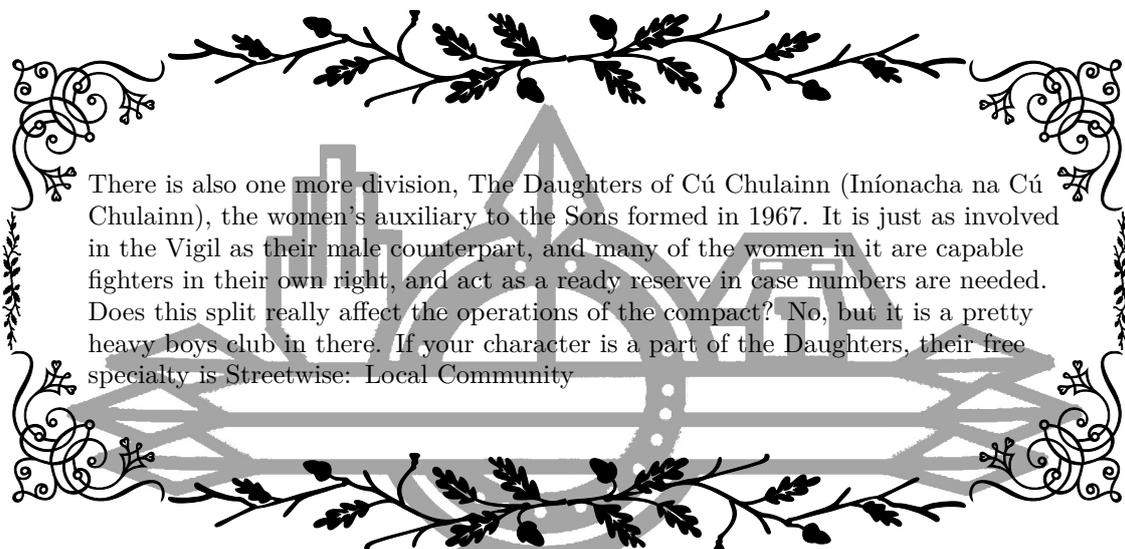
Free Specialty: Occult (Fairy Lore) or Expression (Heroic Tales)

The Hand of Ulster (Hand Uladh) are the charitable members of the organization, organizing soup kitchens, food drives and clothing distribution, keeping an ear to the ground for unusual activity. Often, the homeless are the first ones to notice something off, and their intelligence is invaluable when proven true.

Free Specialty: Streetwise (Homeless)

The Red Branch Knights (Laochra Brainse Dearg) are the greatest numbers in the group, handling the hunting and elimination of faeries on a cell's territory. They are mixed of both those born in the modern world and those warriors the village sends out to learn about the world.

Free Specialty: Weaponry (Iron Broadsword)



Status

Status in the Hounds is easy enough to earn. As long as a member is in good standing, and is either capable as a planner or fighter, they are accorded the respect they deserve, though only officers can rise past three dots. Becoming an officer is a process attending specific classes that teach members on the finer points of the organization and faeries themselves. Losing status is just as easy, though. Harming civilians purposefully in pursuit of a faerie enemy, or betraying club secrets can often mean severe reprimands and even expulsion and arrest by the police. One thing the Sons are not short of are police able to produce the evidence of a person's wrongdoings.

Status 1: Freshly inducted into the organization, you gain access to the clubhouse in your area, which equals two dots in the safehouse merit, the dots to be spent as you wish.

Status 3: You're seasoned well enough to figure out a few things about faeries, but you've also trained in the village and gained a "sixth sense" to see the faeries for what they really are. You gain the Merit: The Sight. If your character already has this, take Unseen Sense: Fairies. If you already have this, you may instead use Unseen Sense: Wyrd. If you actually have both, apply whatever specialty you see fit, as long as it applies to the hunting of faeries.

Status 5: You're a big dog now, and you've got the attention of everyone in your house. Treat this as the Inspiring merit, regardless of the prerequisites.

Storytelling The Sons

The Sons are warriors, that's essential. Some of them keep the lore, some of them keep an ear out, but at the end of the day, when you compare a Hound to a first tier hunter, the first tier would be lucky to make half the hits a Hound would in one turn of combat.

If you're telling a story with the Sons, play up their connections with each other. Show them with their families when they aren't on the hunt, and compare that with when they're with their brothers on the Vigil. Contrast their usual natures with how they are in battle. Show the men they are to the world, versus the men they are towards the fae and other monsters.

A Hound isn't against teaming up with other hunters in a temporary alliance, but don't count on that being long term if they have the same morals as a drug dealer, or the lack of concern for the innocent shown by throwing the supernatural in people's faces. They will, however, show a great deal of respect to those who protect their own, who seek to understand what they're fighting, and the members of the Catholic Church.

The Potion: Legend says that since Cu Chulainn would have destroyed the lands of the fair folk, he could not go with his love Fand to her lands, and he and his wife drank a potion made by the druids to make them forget the whole affair ever happened. Mostly, it's one of the first cases of a *deus ex machina* in storytelling. But you're not so sure anymore. After running into the potions of some "Cult of the Phoenix", you think that the druids sold some of their secrets. If you can find it, maybe you could have a way to help everyone who's ever had their lives ruined by the fair folk once and for all.

Brother From A Fairy Mother: You couldn't believe it. You have a member who knows his mother isn't his real mother. Only it's all Norman Bates like. He willingly brings his mother people to sell to the Unseelie. He says that they're just the dredges of society, dealers and abusers of the worst kind. This guy's trying to play vigilante in a way not many in the house feel comfortable with. Only turning him over would not only mean breaking the geasa of every member of the house, it would also implicate everyone in a string of murders that a few police officers who are also members have helpfully kept concealed.

Conscription: Sometimes, it's not enough for the house to accidentally find out about faeries. If the leadership of a house feels they need to, they'll orchestrate a faerie encounter that will bring in a trusted member to the Vigil. But one house in the Southwest is taking things too far. They're forcing faeries to attack the entire clubhouse every few years, and drafting the members into battle. McCullugh's pissed, and he's tasked your cell to take care of things. Can you really fight your own brothers?

Antagonists

Despite their usually boisterous and kind natures, the Sons are quite easy to show as antagonists. Their admittedly ancient knowledge of their enemies has so heavily colored their perceptions to the point that the second they see a fairy messing with a person's head, they're liable to break out the broadswords and call it a night, even when the fairy was helping that person break an addiction or work out some memories they wanted to deal with. Add in their codes and rules of behavior, and you have a person with a cell who'll die for them, and possible connections to the local police that will make life a living hell for their enemies. Enemies who can include Hunters working with the "wrong" faeries.

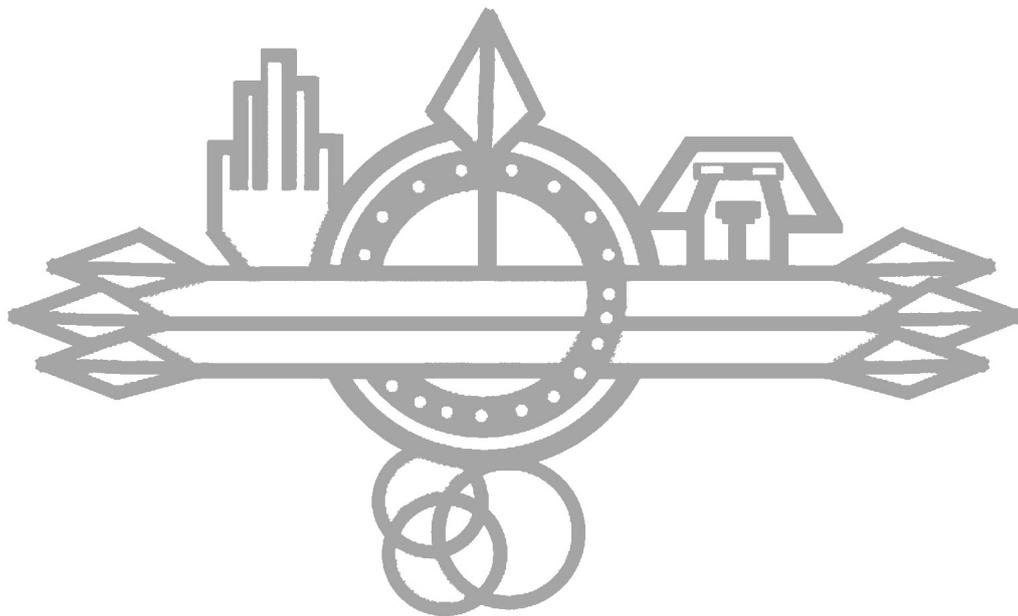
There's also the fact that constant war is not healthy for the warrior, or his mind. If a Hound is lucky, their brothers and sisters will catch them before they fall, but too often, the only warning sign is when they march right into the middle of town and start killing faeries one by one.

The Riastrad: Some crazy bastard is running around your town killing people. A slum downtown lost five of it's residents, and later that week, a high-class McMansion was found caked in blood. The

police say they found the guy, but a month later, they were at it again, tearing through the forest and a popular campground nearby. One of the few survivors took a picture, and thanks to the net, you recognize the markings on the killer's arms as Celtic war tattoos. The cops lied about having this guy under control. Time to find out why.

Sean Finn Brothers: You prefer to fight monsters, but there's word that a terrorist group in Europe is getting supplies from your area, and after 9/11, your cell promised that it was going to fight those monsters as well. So you've staked yourselves out where you hear the deals are going down, in a nearby stone quarry. Well, you found the deal, but saw your area's police making the deal, not to mention some local priests, and some weirdos who were wearing kilts and nothing else. They were all carrying swords too. What the hell?

Looks Deceiving: You were out the other night when you thought you saw these guys ganging up on some homeless with swords. You thought you were gonna call the police, but then they started shouting in some weird language and opening doors that led to some kind of forest. You've got some looking in to do now. Why attack the homeless? Where'd that door lead? And who were those nuts?



The Wilde Society

The Bohemians

The click of the tape recorder cut through the silence.

"This interview is being tape recorded and may be given in evidence if your case is brought to trial. The time is 2100 hours on Monday 12th May 2008. Location is the Sandford Sheriff's office."

"Interviewer is Sheriff Mike Target, chief of the Sandford Police Department. My role today is to interview you in relation to the offences you've been arrested for, and I will be making notes during the interview purely for reference. Also present is Deputy Joan McCollins."

"Can you give your full name, your date of birth and can you confirm for the tape there are no other persons present in the room please."

Across the desk sat the archetypal tall dark stranger. He looked at Mike silently with an expression of disinterest, or as the Sheriff thought bitterly, he might just be on drugs. Eventually he answered the air somewhere above Mike's head.

"My name is Lauren Philip Willem Abraham's, there are only three people in this room."

Joan passed her boss one of Lauren's portfolios.

"Rather impressive work here: Trolls and bums warming themselves by a barrel fire. A blind knight with a crown of dead leaves, a sword and an apple. A terrified little girl being dragged underground by unseen monsters."

He leaned closer

"I used to fancy myself a bit of an artist, until it turned out I couldn't draw for shit. Maybe you could give me some pointers. Like where do you get your inspiration?"

At the word inspiration Lauren's expression became even more vague. He took a pen from his sleeve and his portfolio from the desk and began sketching.

The click of the tape recorder cut through the silence. "Maybe you'll feel more comfortable talking about that off the record?"

"Can you do that? I thought the real equipment was part of the room."

For a moment Mike was stunned into silence, it wasn't that Lauren knew how police interrogation rooms were built. It was that he seemed to have missed a blindingly obvious fact.

"That's why we're having this interview in the cafeteria, dipshit!"

Lauren looked up, even as he continued to sketch, after a moment he seemed to conclude that they really were in the cafeteria, then he went back to his sketching.

"Let's not beat about the bush Lauren. You know this town has a problem with faeries, hell you probably know that better than anyone. I need your help, I need your help to save lives. Human lives, aren't they more important than art?"

Lauren replied without even looking up. "They don't last as long."

With a huge sigh of frustration Mike got up and walked around the desk, but then he paused. "I need a coffee, be a dear will you Joan."

As soon as Joan left for the kitchen Mike ran as hard as he could through the other door. A few minutes later Lauren decided he had been forgotten entirely, he collected his portfolio and walked away. All he left behind was a sketch of Mike looking exhausted in his uniform, standing next to Joan who had a look of cruel cunning, a dress of dewdrops, icicles adorning her antlers and one hand possessively upon Mike's eldest daughter.

Two nights later the first shot was fired in the war between Sandford's hunters and fae. Much blood would be spilled on both sides, but Lauren was not among them. He was enjoying an opera in Sydney at

the time.

In the middle years of the reign of Queen Victoria a young impoverished artist encountered a mad beggar woman. To her delight she learned the man was an artist – for in truth she had not suspected such a thing existed so far from the Brugh – and to his horror she immediately accosted him with all sorts of promises if only he were to marry her: That she would be a dutiful wife, they would live well and never want for money or comforts and that she would inspire him to greater art.

This was the last anyone heard from either the artist or the beggar until a solicitor arrived at the Albemarle Club some thirty years later. He politely informed the porters that he was an executor of a last will and testament which stated the club had been bequeathed a large body of artwork and a set of personal journals. The news caused quite a stir among the artistically minded patrons for the bequest was indeed large and included many pieces of the finest qualities.

In his journals the deceased artist spoke at length about his wife; describing her as a fire in his breast that burst forth onto canvas and a madness he preferred to all sanity. He spoke about the times they shared together, seeking out the fair folk who inspired him more than anything else. Enchanted by tales of adventure and the beauty of the bequeathed artwork three members of the Albemarle Club dedicated themselves to the search for the Fae.

The first artist followed accounts from the journals to find the hidden faerie courts within London. He demonstrated his skills and petitioned for membership but unaware of the faeries subtlety in words he was soon bound to serve as poet and consort to the faerie queen for the rest of his days.

The second artist travelled north to find a hidden door mentioned within the journals. On the night of the full moon he crawled into a barrow. He opened a hidden door with a glass key and entered an endless maze of thorns from which he never returned.

The third artist studied the paintings themselves for many years. Aided by laudanum and opium he began to discover secrets of the brush no others had seen. He saw how the portraits of a comely woman revealed the truth of her faerie nature in the most subtle details and he interpreted the meanings of faerie ceremonies captured on canvas. With what he learned the artist went out into the city. He set out his canvas and his paints and with opened eyes he could see the faeries for what they were.

He was inspired and that very day he promised to teach all who wished how to see the world as he did so.

The Subjects

The Wilde Society considers the fae not enemies, but subjects. Paintings, poems, even dramatic plays. It's not about protecting people, it's about finding inspiration. The fae are the greatest inspiration an artist could hope for, and the Society would only be too willing to help others find this inspiration too.

Yet for all that they might delight in the affliction of beautiful madness the Wilde Society are no dumber than the next man. They know that the fae can be capricious, fickle and deadly. Overcoming these dangers is the reason the Society can be called a hunter compact rather than an art circle. The Society exists to help its member's gain their fix safely.

Experienced members guide the beginners through their introduction to the faerie courts; helping them gain a stable position before they're eaten, cursed, sold or tricked into a pledge so tight they're practically slaves. Others know the secret ways into the Hedge, and how to survive long enough to return with strange fruits who's unearthly flavour is the subject of many poems.

When the fae become more threatening and dangerous than usual, when mad ogres kill and eat those who trespass upon their bridge or goblins steal people's shadows and courage during the night, the Society's usual response is to take a holiday. They stop making new art and start getting their old art into a gallery, they travel and see the exhibitions they've read about but never had a chance to enjoy or just seek safer pickings elsewhere.

All this frustrates and occasionally disgusts the other compacts, and even some conspiracies to no end, for the Wilde Society have a unique advantage: Intuition. While other hunters must scrape and struggle for the least bit of faerie lore the Society understands their subject through an impossible mad insight. Other hunters know the Society has the knowledge they need to uphold the Vigil. They try to cajole, appeal, bribe and occasionally strong-arm members of the Society into lending their talents.

Hunters

You were a hack who lucked onto one masterpiece of poetry. Your fans and publisher were hounding you for an encore and you didn't have one in you. But you'd heard of the Wilde Society in your literature class, who hadn't. They could give you the edge you needed. You knew it was risky, but you could quit if it ever got dangerous. The only thing is, you're not sure you can any more.

You didn't know it, but your boyfriend all through art collage was a changeling. He was your muse, your inspiration and then he was your ex. Only after the breakup did you realise how much you needed him for your art. The Wilde Society told you the truth, and helped you find a new muse.



We're mad

bad

and dangerous to know

You still love him, even though you know you should hate him. If he never brought you into the society you wouldn't be... this. Living in a condemned one bedroom squat on what few paintings you can bare to sell, what you can steal and what you can beg from your parents. Using heroin to get through the patches without glamour and glamour to get through the times without heroin. You still want to see him again, even though you know it will be three months of passion ending with you waving guns and getting committed to an asylum again. You should hate him, but this is who you are and you'll always be grateful he showed you that.

You spent most of your life bouncing between psychiatrists and asylums. Nothing would make the delusions go away. Just as your family gave up hope you met a member of the Society on the Internet. They showed you how to channel your madness into art. You're mostly functional now.

You were a hunter. An independent hunter without a cell. You joined the vigil when a changeling tricked your friends and neighbours into signing away their lives. You tried to fight back but it was always one step ahead of you. A rumor led you to the Wilde Society, you heard they could teach you to understand it, predict it, think like it. They could, the job is done and now you can go back to your life. Only the things you understood, they were so beautiful, and terrible, you're not sure you want to go back.

You're living the high life. You're paintings are displayed in the most fashionable galleries. Your days

are spent mingling in the garden parties and dinner parties of high society, debating form and meaning over french champagne and hard drugs. When you work you slip some cash and invitations to your friends in the society, in return they introduce you to faeries happy to model.



Stereotypes

Null Mysteriis

A gentleman of science, and reason too
Will have questions for a man like me or you
What is the natural philosophy of the fair folk?
But he did not hear, when of beauty I spoke.

Ashwood Abbey

The poet and the painter must all confess
That sometimes his work is not his best
Yet men of great wealth may impress
A yearning to line his decadent nest
Not for art, nor substance nor beauty
But for, the subject was a faerie

Ascending Ones

The muse is beloved tyrant
And the silvered needle
A friend when she is silent

I met a man of mystery
a goodly Arab fair
who promised that two
would become sisterly

He spoke plain and true
of that wondrous love
I told him all I knew
Then, away he flew.

The Office of the Lord Stewards

Once whilst waiting upon a faerie glade
By some chance I did meet a ministerial aid
Grey all through, grey man, grey suit, grey hair
How could he not see the beauty there?

Status

Status in the Wilde Society is a simple thing based entirely on your reputation with your peers. Producing good artwork and providing access to “inspiration” for your fellows both increase your reputation. However Status is also very easy to lose in this compact. A series of poor quality works, or if your inspiring trip into the Hedge gets someone killed, well then you can expect to lose some Status.

Status 1: As a member of the Wilde Society you have access to their galleries of past artwork. This counts as a dot in Library applied to faeries. The information is not stored in books but in paintings, poems, sculptures and all manner of artwork. This means that while members of the Society benefit from an exceptionally high quality Library about the Fae, anyone unable to see through the lense of Beautiful Madness can only benefit from it's artistic beauty and not it's practical information.

Status 3: Your involvement in the Wilde Society has paid dividends to your art career. You get a dot of Fame and a dot of Resources. Not to exceed 3 and 5 respectively.

Status 5: Long term exposure to the fae and their topsy turvy way of thinking has given you a peerless knack for knowing when you're under an enchantment. This works like the Merit Second Thoughts except that it comes from experience and intuition, not logic and introspection.

Flocks

The Wilde Society is far too loose an organisation to formally divide itself into groups, but there are several methodologies that have become prominent. Artistically minded members of the society, which is to say all of them, often give members affectionate pet names based on their style. Naming fellow members after birds is common.

Cookoos try their best to join faerie society. As the court artist, the human liaison, the rich person who bankrolls the new identities or even just the person who sweeps up after the spring dance. More than that, they try to make introductions and ease other members into making their own links to the faerie community.

Free Speciality: Socialise (Faeries)

Magpies track down faerie glades and rumours of fae activities to find the best places to watch the fae from a distance. Their investigations often lead to Hedge gates and their number includes most of the dedicated “Hedge tour guides”.

Free Speciality: Investigation (Faeries)

Nightingales are mostly dependent on other members of the society to provide access to their fix of Beautiful Madness. This limits their Status within the compact to the quality of their art. They must prove it's worth spending time and danger on them with results.

Free Speciality: Pick any art.

Storytelling The Wilde Society

The Society are artists, not fighters. They look for great art and the fae who can make that art happen. If a faerie is messing with people's heads and controlling their actions, the Society would exclaim that they are artists not fighters and let someone else deal with the problem while they peruse their art elsewhere.

With the Society, it's important to remember that, yeah, they're certifiable. Even when they're starting out a member of the Society is clearly a little odd in the head. The most experienced members don't even think like most people anymore, since their minds are so warped by Beautiful Madness that to try and think like a regular person again would be like trying not to breathe. They're experts on knowing how fae think, but not on what humans do.

Despite all that, if the Wilde Society eventually do get involved in the Vigil they can make incredibly effective hunters. The Society possess knowledge, intuition and The Sight. If one member joins a mixed cell their talents can multiply the effectiveness of the other members. Some of the most effective anti-faerie cells have had a member of the Society serving as the brains of the group. If you missed it, this is an invitation to play members of the Society as the brains of an external Cell.

Frankly, a lot of hunters who know about the Society strong arm them, bribe them, or just plain drag them along when hunting fairies. The Society might not like going into battle, but as intuition for all things fae is an invaluable asset to the Vigil others might not give them a choice. Mainly, it's those hunters with a federal or governmental background, with the Society's tendency towards drug use a focus point for hunters with access to that information.

A Group Portrait: Your club got a very special gift the other week; a portrait of the founding members of the Society in the early days of the Victorian era. At first, it became the focal point of the club, members and visitors looking at the massive work with awe and respect. Unfortunately, something appears to have taken up residence in the picture. The members in the portrait decided to leap off the canvas one moonlit night and flee into the city, replacing themselves with a group of random people, including one or two apparently influential city players. If there is a way to put everything back, you have to find it before the police find your club.

Drama Therapy: A respected member of the society pays a social call. She is a particular fan of your group's work and believes you can help her with a rather unusual project. A favoured nephew of hers is suffering from a mental disorder, and not one of the fun ones. He is suffering from severe anxieties and she believes dream therapy is the answer. She's already contracted a faerie to do the dreamweaving, but she needs somebody with a more thespian background to write a plot and play the characters. That's where you come in, a whole world as your canvas plus a sizable commission fee.

Star Crossed: Your mentor in the society taught you that the safest way to seek inspiration was to remain hidden and watch from a distance. That was before you realised it, after a month of watching the same Faerie you were shocked to realise you'd fallen in love. It's time to come out of the shadows.

Antagonists

Let's be frank, the Society aren't antagonists you would expect. They're peaceable drug addicts who would rather paint than take on a fairy who's using their abilities to do unspeakable evil to innocent people. But that's what makes them good antagonists as well. During a string of disappearances where the only clues are twigs, trash and rocks, it doesn't matter if the Society are peaceful. They're still the only ones with a clue what's going on, and their pacifism is costing lives. It's time to show them what happens when pacifism costs lives.

The Match Girl and other Paintings: A common trope in Victorian stories is the idea of the pure innocent maiden who dies before she could be corrupted by the world's sin. When the Society paints "dying" maidens you don't mind, but now somebody has gone right off the deep end and is killing people as a work of art. For once the Society are being somewhat responsible, they've given you his name, address, and told you which faerie is commissioning these macabre works of art. But if you want any real help from them, you're going to have to make them see reason.

The Prophecy: Since you weren't able to strong arm any of the Society into helping your cell you kept them under surveillance instead. The precautions paid off. You were attending a public gallery opening held by the society, a series of paintings commemorating the history of your town. The Society was at first fascinated by a reoccurring motif, but then someone pointed out it should be reoccurring again soon. Now the entire Society has skipped town, can you bring one back in time to find out what

they know? Or maybe, their clubhouse is deserted. Perhaps you could steal their mad techniques to put to better use?

Art Installations: It took a while but you've tracked down the cause of the sudden increase in the local faerie population. A member of the Wilde Society has been creating a series of artwork "each perfectly capturing the spirit of a generation in our town". It turns out that each one is a beacon to guide changelings home. You're talking about an artist, not a fighter but making a famous artist disappear is a whole different question to a fae with no legal identity.



Searchlight

The Loved Ones of the Lost

Little Plumb ran as hard as he could through the streets behind the warehouses. The gunfire was still ringing in his ears as he rounded the corner on Franklin. They shot up the privateers, the people in the trenchcoats.

It was sheer luck that Little Plumb was already making his escape that night, the attack was just the diversion he needed. Sure, he'd learned a long time ago that his hands were able to unlock almost any door, but the privateers hadn't been stupid. They'd bound his hands and broke his fingers. If not for the attack, he'd have been found for sure.

But the trenchcoats hadn't stopped shooting. They just stormed the building, beating the captives into submission. Anyone who fought or panicked was beat down. "Who were they?" Little Plumb thought, tears starting to form in his eyes.

Grizalda, the seer, she'd started screaming at the sight of them, and they'd beat her. Ridgeback had punched one of them, and got tasered. Fear for what had happened to those who'd helped him escape forced him to look back.

That was when he collapsed to the ground crying.

The warehouse was in flames, black smoke climbing into the early morning sky. He couldn't hear any sirens, but it didn't matter. If the smoke was that big...

"Peter," a soft voice said behind him. Spinning around, he saw a woman, wearing a trenchcoat, staring at him, her shotgun falling to the ground.

"Get away!" Little Plumb shouted, scurrying away, flattening himself on the wall of one of the buildings that formed the alley. "Please, don't kill me!"

"Peter, it's me," the woman said, taking off her trenchcoat, slowly moving towards him. "Don't you remember?"

"I'm not Peter!" Little Plumb whimpered, but then memories started to come through. His favorite toys. His school. A house with a shed behind it...

"Oh Peter, you're so dirty," the woman whispered, doing her best to wipe the blood off his face, licking her thumb and rubbing it on his cheek.

Little Plumb froze. "Mom?" The woman nodded, smiling through her tears.

Peter wasted no time hugging his mother again.

There's nothing in life more painful than losing someone you love, especially when you're left without answers to what happened to them. Hope is a source of strength, but it's also a source of pain. Closure - however painful - comes with the chance for healing to begin and the opportunity to rebuild a life. Around the world, advocacy groups fight for the families of those disappeared by faceless thugs in the night, and even in stable democracies families organize to relentlessly push the police and media to keep the cases of their loved ones open. The drive for answers is a powerful thing. Meanwhile the pained turn to one another for support, trapped in a cycle of grief that can never reach acceptance without the closure of answers or their loved ones' return.

Searchlight was founded in Newark by Bernard Anderson as just another such organization, a support group mobilized to keep pressure on media and police and even branch into their own neighborhood watch search-operations. They even had some significant victories in those early days, finding lost children working the streets or living in drug dens. It was one of those wins though that would change everything. His name was Kevin Telby, and after over a year in Searchlight, his mother Cassandra tracked him down. She found her son near frozen to death, unconscious in an alley, and in desperate terror and relief she grabbed him, thinking she'd never let go. That was the last moment of peace she'd

know. When Kevin came home he was different. It wasn't addiction, it wasn't trauma, it wasn't any of the things that the counseling had prepared her for. He was perfect. He was the son she'd always wanted. And it was wrong. The fear crept on slowly. Asked later, she wouldn't be able to put her finger on when exactly she knew, but eventually she was certain. He wasn't her son. The question of her own sanity occurred to her of course, but she knew on a fundamental level that he was wrong. He wasn't who she had spent the most painful year of her life looking for, and somewhere her real son was out there, and this thing was standing in her way.

Even when the blood was on her hands she still didn't doubt. She called the only people she knew she could trust. Of course her Searchlight group-members were initially horrified to find a woman who they'd helped reunite with her son standing over his bloody corpse, but that didn't compare to their horror when before all of their eyes his remains collapsed into foil and twigs.

And that's how it began.

Word spread slowly. Many not believing at first, of course, but the word is that it was Professor Everett in Boston, who had for years been silently certain that he had been mad when he saw his sister dancing away with beautiful mad-eyed stranger that night, so long ago - who put the pieces together. He was the first to utter the "f" word, and turn to the stories for answers. He began to publish his theories, discreetly of course, in the hope that someone else had experienced what he had.

Meanwhile, another Searchlight group in New York, which had no knowledge of otherworldly creatures had had their own battles wrestling lost friends away from a blood cult that worshipped a member of the gentry. They noticed Prof. Everett's theories slowly making their way across victim support groups and missing people discussion lists, and they saw how his ideas matched the practices of the cult they fought. Cautiously they sent out feelers, inviting Everett to explain his ideas in person.

Professor Everett had the knowledge. Searchlight had the organization and the experience to put that knowledge into action. Together they executed a plan to attack the faerie when it was at its weakest and drive it away before it could renew its deals for another season. The result was Searchlight's biggest success so far and made Professor Everett's theories of faerie abductions into Searchlight's bible. And so, slowly but surely, up and down the Atlantic seaboard, Searchlight transformed from mere support and advocacy group into one of the most fanatical compacts of hunters the world had ever seen.

Perhaps Rumpelstiltskin was lucky he didn't see what would have befallen him if he'd gotten away with the princess's baby.

The Enemy

Searchlight has been on the trail of the fae since Cassandra's fateful night, even if they didn't realize it till Professor Everett put it into words. They want answers about what happened to those the Fae take and their not going to stop until they get them. Until then, anyone or anything that might provide them a lead to those they love is a potential target. They don't yet realize the potential scale of the power of the beings they're setting themselves against, but that's not going to slow them down. They know enough at this point for wrought iron to be a popular material of choice for adornment in their searches, and faerie tales to be an important source of research.

In their search the compact is ruthless and even fanatical. They favour a hands on approach, walking the street - often armed - talking to informants and shadowing suspected faeries. So long as they're doing something the grief is that little bit easier to bear. Many members don't object to leaving fae corpses in their footsteps, but Searchlight draws a distinction between the abducted and "born fae". They kill to find their loved ones, and spare the loved ones of others. Killing is not revenge or hatred, so they tell themselves, but every dead faerie is one less place their loved one could be kept hidden. One more family who will not have to go through what they do.

If there is anything in this world they hate more than the fae, it's the fetch. Any rediscovered loved one is now subjected to rigorous testing, often over the objection of the connected Searchlight member, but just as often under their own administration. The thought that there could be countless other families out there who don't even know that someone they love was even missing to begin with is something that keeps Cassandra up at night.

Following leads from the New York chapter, Professor Everett has discovered sub-cultures of those touched by the fae who may be able to provide answers. However these communities seem more than a

little terrified to talk with outsiders. On at least two occasions, a Searchlight member has discovered a lost loved one hiding amongst these groups. On one occasion it was a joyous reunion between Mooncalf and her father. The other time, the lost boy - Jack Candlelight - fled and the secret community rallied to prevent him from being brought home. The conflict was vicious - in the end the entire local sub-culture seemed to vanish without a trace.

Things fae are not the only forces in the night that Searchlight throws itself into conflict against. The Baltimore chapter's first Vigil was a conflict with the blood cult of an undead succubus. There are many supernatural horrors that claim human beings, especially children, for their own ends. Or who recruit them into their ranks. Witches and lycanthropes may believe they are doing someone a favor by separating them from the human beings who love them to bring them into the fold of their "own kind". Whatever excuses these things may use, Searchlight will never give up.



I am looking for
My Children

Hunters

Ever since your husband disappeared only one thing matters, getting him back. The network helps of course but at the end of the day there's just four things in your world. You, your husband, your gun and anyone standing in your way.

It was hard, but after two decades you've had to accept that you're not getting your wife back. To thank Searchlight for all its help you remain a member to support the new generation in their search. Mostly you provide counselling and help keep the infrastructure running but when there's a lead you're the first to get your coat on.

You've told the network that you're here because faeries took your siblings, two older brothers, and it's true but it's not the whole truth. The faeries took you too and you made it back, you're still human too. Perhaps you're immune, maybe you escaped before you were transformed. It doesn't matter. Survivors guilt is eating you alive, so long as you're on the hunt you can ignore the little voice saying you abandoned your brothers and sister.

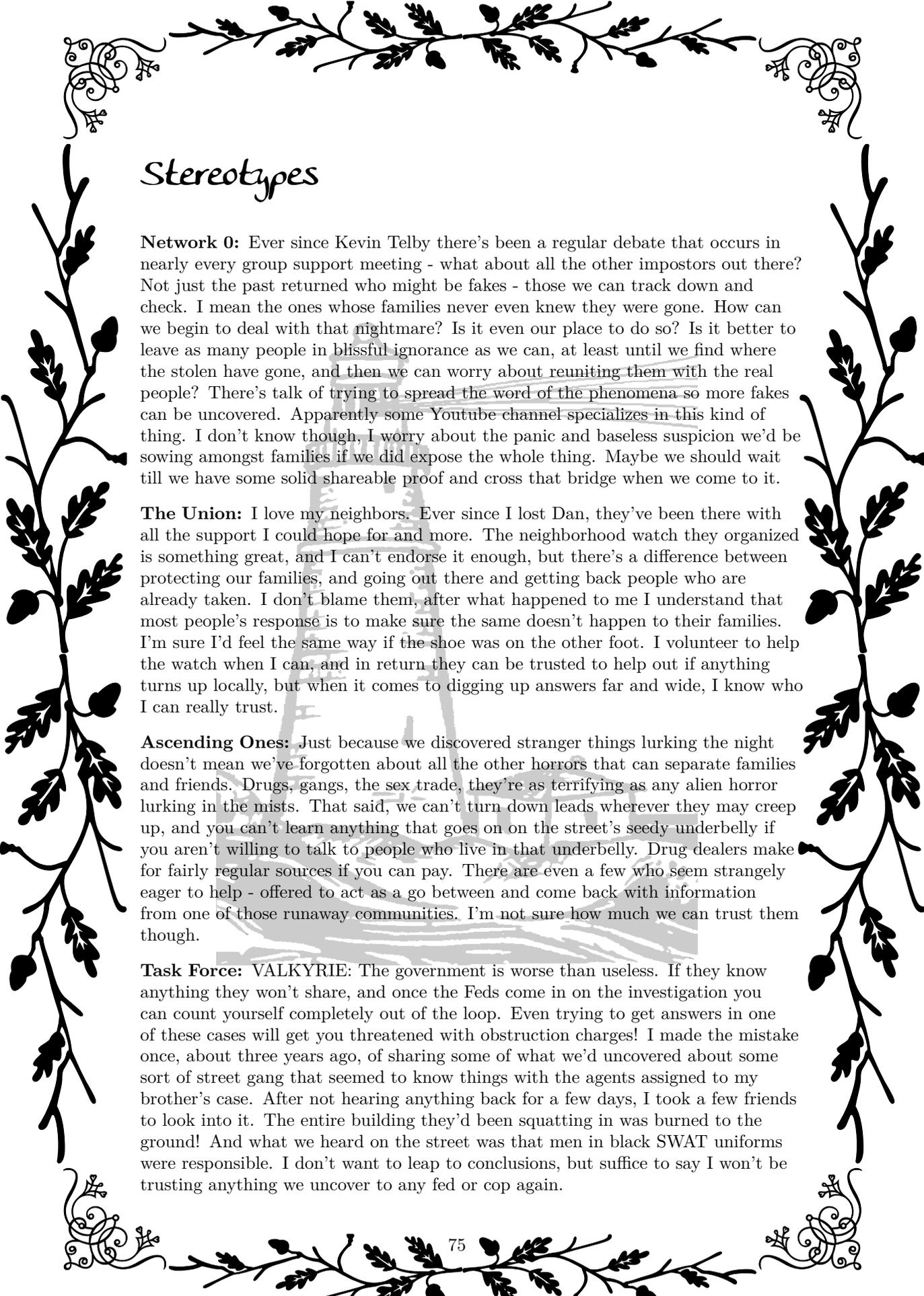
To everyone in town you're a single mother and a full time carer for a severely autistic daughter. You're on the parent-teacher association, contribute to every bake sale and manage the local kids soccer team. They don't know about the secret compartment under your kitchen filled with guns, that most of your income comes from mail in contests; you never lose after a little promise with your daughter. They don't know that your daughter wasn't autistic before the fae got her, and they certainly don't know you spend your nights killing any fae you can get your hands on. You say you want to make sure no body else has to go through what you went did. Keep telling yourself that.

When your wife vanished after just a moment alone in the dining room didn't suspect anything supernatural. Why would you? Then you began dreaming of her, she said she was kidnapped by the fae and how to rescue her. Your tale reached Searchlight and you're something of a golden boy within the compact under the direct tutelage of Everett himself. The professor can name exactly which faerie tale you seem to be living and thinks you might be the key to, well everything. You just want your wife back.

You're one half of a husband and wife team and you have all the advantages. You're both in public relations, your daughter is beautiful, pre-teen, blond, blue eyed and caucasian. You've kept her disappearance on the front pages for half a year now, made finding her a hot political issue. You've even helped finance your search with million dollar book deals and exclusive interviews but so far it's come to nothing. You didn't believe it could be faeries at first, but now you're starting to think it's the only explanation.

You're the worst kind of coward scum imaginable. If the others in Searchlight knew you sold your own husband to the fae to cure yourself of cancer they'd kill you, slowly. You still go to the meetings and help the network on their searches because every night you're pointing a gun at some confused Changeling for taking your husband is a night you don't have to confront the real monster. With Searchlight's emotional training you're starting to believe your own lies.





Stereotypes

Network 0: Ever since Kevin Telby there's been a regular debate that occurs in nearly every group support meeting - what about all the other impostors out there? Not just the past returned who might be fakes - those we can track down and check. I mean the ones whose families never even knew they were gone. How can we begin to deal with that nightmare? Is it even our place to do so? Is it better to leave as many people in blissful ignorance as we can, at least until we find where the stolen have gone, and then we can worry about reuniting them with the real people? There's talk of trying to spread the word of the phenomena so more fakes can be uncovered. Apparently some Youtube channel specializes in this kind of thing. I don't know though, I worry about the panic and baseless suspicion we'd be sowing amongst families if we did expose the whole thing. Maybe we should wait till we have some solid shareable proof and cross that bridge when we come to it.

The Union: I love my neighbors. Ever since I lost Dan, they've been there with all the support I could hope for and more. The neighborhood watch they organized is something great, and I can't endorse it enough, but there's a difference between protecting our families, and going out there and getting back people who are already taken. I don't blame them, after what happened to me I understand that most people's response is to make sure the same doesn't happen to their families. I'm sure I'd feel the same way if the shoe was on the other foot. I volunteer to help the watch when I can, and in return they can be trusted to help out if anything turns up locally, but when it comes to digging up answers far and wide, I know who I can really trust.

Ascending Ones: Just because we discovered stranger things lurking the night doesn't mean we've forgotten about all the other horrors that can separate families and friends. Drugs, gangs, the sex trade, they're as terrifying as any alien horror lurking in the mists. That said, we can't turn down leads wherever they may creep up, and you can't learn anything that goes on on the street's seedy underbelly if you aren't willing to talk to people who live in that underbelly. Drug dealers make for fairly regular sources if you can pay. There are even a few who seem strangely eager to help - offered to act as a go between and come back with information from one of those runaway communities. I'm not sure how much we can trust them though.

Task Force: VALKYRIE: The government is worse than useless. If they know anything they won't share, and once the Feds come in on the investigation you can count yourself completely out of the loop. Even trying to get answers in one of these cases will get you threatened with obstruction charges! I made the mistake once, about three years ago, of sharing some of what we'd uncovered about some sort of street gang that seemed to know things with the agents assigned to my brother's case. After not hearing anything back for a few days, I took a few friends to look into it. The entire building they'd been squatting in was burned to the ground! And what we heard on the street was that men in black SWAT uniforms were responsible. I don't want to leap to conclusions, but suffice to say I won't be trusting anything we uncover to any fed or cop again.

Status

Formally speaking, there is no hierarchy in Searchlight at all. It is still organized as a series of support groups in major metropolitan areas up and down the American East Coast (and they're expanding, making contact with others who have lost loved ones without answers to the night across America, and there's even some chatter in Europe and Australia via online support groups, but there's still only a half dozen to a dozen or so members in any major city where they organize a group). All organizational work is done by members who volunteer for the job. There's generally no "policy" decisions being made other than scheduling meetings - the few cases where there's actually been a question of whether to exclude anyone or not it is generally put to a vote of the present members. Still, there are members who have risen to prominence like Cassandra Telby and Professor Everett. Status is generally earned by making connections or providing resources that are put to the disposal of other members in their own searches. Those who give the most are the most trusted with the help of others.

Status 1: The people in the support group you started attending are able to give you more answers to what may have happened to your loved one than the police will ever be willing to. Your desire to find your loved ones has been reinforced in the group sessions, perhaps to an unhealthy level. Whenever you risk Willpower to gain a clue or further your own search, if you succeed you gain one additional Willpower from knowing you're on the right path (in addition to the usual bonus, for a net gain of two willpower) - even if this pushes you beyond what your Willpower pool will normally allow.

Status 3: You can be trusted to regularly go out and support other members in their searches, and as such are more likely to gain the same support. Gain 2 points worth of Allies in Searchlight.

Status 5: You have proven yourself, uncovering major information to help others, or reuniting a member with a lost loved one. You are something of a minor hero in Searchlight. You can be trusted with virtually any information that Searchlight members can provide for you. This is the equivalent of 3 new dots of the Contacts merit applied wherever you wish.

Agendas

While all Searchlight chapters and hunters are united in their struggle, there are different tactical agendas that guide their vigils.

Most search on a case by case basis - driven primarily by the search for their own loved one, but organized together to support each other in their respective hunts. Cassandra Telby is something of a defacto organizer of these **Stalwarts**, helping unite people with the right knowledge and resources with the fellow Searchlight members they can best help, and vice versa. All the decisions of which of course are still defined by her own search for her son.

Free speciality: Streetwise (Missing People)

Other members take a broader view, hoping that answers will be more effective in helping them achieve their reunion, or at least bring them closure - or revenge. Professor Everett was the first of the **Priers**. Understanding the nature of what is taking people, where they are being taken, and what happens to them forms an overarching goal independent of any individual case.

Free Speciality: Occult (Abductions)

Finally, there are those members who have achieved some form of closure or another (or at least come to terms with their own lack of it) and focus on providing support for other members still struggling with their what happened or their vigil. Bearnard Anderson is a teacher and an unofficial leader for the **Councilors**. They also work to help those who returned with overcoming their trauma - there's a lot of good research toward this end coming out of an organization on the West Coast that is becoming required reading for Councilors. This also gives them the role of uncovering the Fetch and other imposters

wherever they may lurk.

Free Speciality: Empathy (Trauma)

Storytelling Searchlight

Searchlight's motives are refreshingly simple. A faerie (or a vampire, a witch, a mortal criminal, or something else) has taken somebody they love, and they're going to get them back. Telling a story about Searchlight can be simple as deciding who has taken their loved ones, and what obstacles must be overcome before they can be rescued.

Yet there is another side to Searchlight. The delicate balancing act between the Vigil, employment and family life has always been a part of Hunter: the Vigil. Searchlight puts extra effort into walking the razor edge, for many members feel that they didn't choose to take up the Vigil. They never chose to sacrifice their comfortable existence for the greater good. Their chance for an ordinary life was stolen from them along with their loved ones, and they believe they can take it back. Searchlight's Endowment allows them to protect their normal life from the stresses of the Vigil, keeping it pure until they hopefully can return to it one day.

When portraying Searchlight take time to show the duality of member's lives. On the vigil they're driven, even fanatical hunters. At other times they're regular people, seemingly free from (or at least less affected by) the Tells and stresses hunters get on the job. The occasional scene at work, home or volunteering in the community can help show what was stolen and why Searchlight fights so hard to get it back. Searchlight's use of contacts and informants to look for leads provides a way to include glimpses of mundane life without putting the plot on hold, but be careful not to let the Vigil intrude into a scene that's supposed to be about the mundane. Using mundane scenes to acquire dots in Allies or Contacts and Vigil scenes to make use of them is always a safe option.

The light, the rock, and the hard place: Ever since that faerie crime lord threatened your son into a pledge of servitude you've been tearing his organisation down piece by piece, until he realized who you were. Faeries like to make bargains, and he's holding all the cards for this one. He'll let your son go, he'll simply stop giving him orders under the pledge. In return he wants a pledge of servitude from you, since you've clearly shown yourself to be a far more valuable resource. Just to make sure you agree you're son's sitting with a gun pointed to his head. You don't have a choice, but you don't intend give up now. It will take all your daylight social skills to arrange your own rescue beneath your new boss' notice, and all the skills you learned on the vigil to survive for long enough.

In the Public Eye: The worst day of your life was when your son vanished, and the best day was when the police returned him alive and well. Yet you couldn't shake the feeling that your son was not your son. The police don't believe you. Your family don't believe you. Even the DNA tests do not believe you. But Searchlight does. It all made so much sense when they explain that the boy living in your home is a fetch. You know you have to get your son back, but until you do you're going to have to pretend all is well. With your family concerned, the police eager to protect a much needed boost in public approval and the media eagerly reporting every moment, there's just no way you can get rid of the fetch until you're son's ready to take his, its, place.

Playing Politics: Your town has always been blessed with peace and prosperity. Imagine your surprise when you realised it was literally blessed, by a powerful faerie. All that good fortune comes at a price, one teenager per year. This year it was your daughter and no body wanted to believe she was abducted, everyone insisted that she was with her father or that she had run off seeking fame and fortune. You knew better of course, and when you started investigating other so called "teenage runaways" you saw how deep the rabbit hole went. Enough of the parents just waiting to join something like Searchlight, all they needed was someone to believe them. Now you're going to get your kids back, but to get your kids you need to get to the faerie, and to get to the faerie you have to go through the town council and a town too guilty to face the truth.

Antagonists

Searchlight's goals are so understandable and sympathetic that it can be hard to see them as antagonists, but that is the very reason why using Searchlight as antagonists can add so much depth and drama to a story. Searchlight has a good justification for anger, that's undeniable, but how far can they push things before even rescuing a loved one isn't enough of a justification?

When portraying Searchlight as antagonists play up the way members will go to any length to rescue their loved ones and give a little extra focus to members motivated to "make sure no one else has to go through what I do", or revenge in less polite language. Most members will at least ask if a faerie was once human or a "born faerie" because the last thing they want is to kill somebody else's stolen loved ones. If you focus on members who don't care you have an effective antagonist who's motives are sympathetic but who's methods are suspect.

Searchlight's Endowment can be very useful to a storyteller using Searchlight as antagonists. Members are protected from the drawbacks of The Code: For a member of Searchlight it is possible to have a large personal Code yet still function normally in mundane society. Seeing members of Searchlight as ordinary, kind people while off the Vigil can help players see them as a character rather than just an antagonist. More directly, a member of Searchlight can be a pillar of the community while carrying around a Code large enough to socially isolate other hunters. When Searchlight is able to break the rules of society without repercussion and the protagonists are not, interesting drama is sure to follow.

Searchlight vs Searchlight: You were so close, you almost found your brother. If you were one week earlier you would be having a joyous reunion, not a funeral. Then you heard what killed him. Another member of Searchlight put a bullet through him for not revealing information. Searchlight is still young enough and small enough that this problem hasn't happened before, how will the Compact react? Will it be civil war? Will people start taking a stricter line on when violence is accepted? Or will Searchlight turn on you to protect the integrity of the compact?

The Good Woman: Social workers are telling a story they've been hearing from kids up and down the country. It's about The Good Woman who protects abused and neglected kids. If a child hides under their blanket and calls for The Good Woman with tears in her eyes then she'll come and take them to a better place, leaving the abusive or neglectful adults torn to pieces. Stories, abductions and supernatural activity. It sounded like a faerie to you, but then you discovered the missing kids alive and well at an orphanage run by a member of Searchlight. Has the matron perfected Searchlight's Emotional Compartmentalisation to the point where part of her is a Slasher without her knowledge? Even when they seem justified Slashers always end up broadening their targets until the innocent die, this one already kills on no more justification than a child's say-so, but if you take care of her what will happen to the kids?

Missing White Woman Syndrome: Every monster who isn't lucky enough to have a supernatural solution to remaining secret learns at least something of understanding the media. That includes the golden rule: Avoid the mysterious disappearance of a pretty, white, well off woman at all costs. However it seems somebody didn't get the memo. When the opportunity presents itself Searchlight makes as much use of the media as they are able, so far they've kept things hush about the supernatural. Who wants to look crazy? But you know what they say about desperate times. You've gotten word that the parents of this years high profile disappearance are planning to go public on prime time TV. However the media spins this one it's going to be big and that is something your Conspiracy cannot allow. Now, how to silence an international celebrity with nothing to lose? Without creating an even bigger story?

The Office of the Lord Stewards

Keepers of the Queen's peace

"Look at the Birds" said Oliver "and tell me what they are saying."

Harry listened for a moment, trying to understand. "Nothing, all I hear is crowing".

"I said look, not listen boy. You saw the contract, hold it in your mind, remind the birds of their promise. They'll let you understand".

Harry looked again, and this time he saw. "The way they're moving. It almost looks like writing... They're hungry, and demanding, I think they're saying we owe them."

Oliver gave a laugh, it was warm with pride. "That's it my boy, that's it. We do owe them, this very spot was a battlefield, 1182 if I recall. Two barons, one of them promised to leave the dead for the birds if he was granted victory. That's why we're standing out here in the wind, and will be every year until the thousand's anniversary."

Harry had stopped listening earlier. "Did you say the dead?"

"Yes I did" he pointed his cane at a car in the distance "here they come now".

The car was driven by a nervous neat looking man dressed in a trendy tracksuit, clearly trying to look as little like himself as possible. Oliver handed the driver a thick brown envelope while Harry unhitched the trailer.

"Take a look."

Harry took a look, on a bed of ice were a dozen dead bodies. Men and women, mostly old, all ethnically oriental.

"What are we doing?"

"Have you heard of Tibetan Sky Burial? Illegal in this country of course, it's always best find two people who have what the other wants. Don't think of the phrase, you might offend the birds."

"What are we doing here?" repeated Harry, suddenly uneasy.

"Us, we're just waiting. The funeral party will be here soon. We watch and make sure the treaty is fulfilled for another year, shake a few hands say some solemn words. By my reckoning we'll have just enough time for tea before the next job."

There is something living inbetween each second and within the forests of Essex. A grotesque squirmous grub, grown fat on human life. Once she was called a goddess. Now she has many titles: Goddess, spirit, great power. Under any name she is dangerous, cruel, and enormously powerful. Yet she is a slave to her nature, and through her nature she was bound in chains of treaties, promises and agreements. Who forged these chains?

For generations a family of farmers had leased their lands to a freehold of changelings, they kept visitors and rambler away from the secretive fair folk. For honoring their contract they were rewarded with good health and bountiful harvests. When the farm and burghs alike were to be flooded for a new reservoir, and when honest workmen were struck down by curses and ill fortune, who was brought in to mediate, and who forged a new agreement that was beneficial to all?

When a senseless act of murder and a witch's dying curse blanketed a Lancaster town with ill fortune until the jobs closed and the dole lines stretched for streets, who noticed the signs, who learned the names and natures of each power supporting the curse, and who appeased those powers one by one until the curse was lifted?

Near the border between England and Wales lies a garden. It is a peaceful and tranquil place, hidden from the world by a rough hewn stone wall that rests in a perpetual dew dusted dawn. At its very heart a natural spring feeds a series of wells that were built before the Romans. Magic flows into

and from these wells, their health governing the balance of magic for much of the region. Who could be trusted to keep this garden for the public good, unswayed by greed or favouritism.

Every seven years a faerie queen steals a man from Selkirk to tithe to Hell. She favours her victims young, with musical talent and a name that sounds like Tom. It is an old story, and one often told. The narrative is strict and the rules are clear: Tom can be saved. So who is it that trains brave women to play the other role, to rescue this cycle's sacrifice from the faerie queen before he is condemned to Hell?

If you look behind the comfortably mundane, the world is a far stranger place than people realise. The trees we walk by every day, the clouds we hope won't rain on us, even the buildings we live in, they're all alive. It's not life as we would recognise it, but it is life. If you look into the shadows we share the world with more than we realize. There are vampires infecting society, werewolves in the forests, faeries living under the hill.

It would be nice to pretend that they didn't exist, that humanity sat alone and unchallenged gazing over his dominion of the Earth. It would be nice, but foolish. Somebody has to sit down and discuss how we're all, human, monster and the land itself, going to live together because if we don't. In war nobody ever wins.

The Lord Stewards take this task upon themselves. Their job is simple: Keep the peace. Originally they kept the peace between the land and its inhabitants: They bribed the rivers not to flood, paid the fields for the bounty of the harvest and negotiated with the hills. Now their remit has expanded and the Stewards must keep the peace between people of all species. There is an outrageous amount of champagne and vol-au-vents involved.

And if you were to ask what gives the Stewards the right to negotiate on behalf of the public they'll tell you that they are public servants. They are part of Her Majesty's democratically elected government and that gives them the right, and duty, to govern the nation's supernatural affairs.

History

Who pays the fields? Who bargains with the great powers? Who talks peace with the monsters?

If you asked long ago the answer would have been everyone. Long before man claimed dominion over the lands, before electricity and gunpowder, before effective transportation or communication, the world was much more dangerous than the one we know today. Danger lurked in every shadow, and not just from monsters. Famine and diseases were an ever present threat. To survive these threats, kings, villages and families formed pacts and alliances with the lands they lived upon. They paid the fields for bountiful harvests, they sought allies to guard against pestilence and against the monsters lurking in the shadows.

In return the people held festivals in honor of their allies, they offered gifts and followed codes of behaviour. Payment for services rendered. Families, village councils and even kings knew the treaties and pacts that protected them, and what was needed to uphold and preserve those treaties.

Times changed, and as the years turned old threats ended and the protections against them faded into irrelevance. Pacts turned from well understood contracts into folklore and superstitions. Once honored treaties were only casually upheld or broken entirely. The consequences were subtle, but severe as broken pacts resulted in penalty clauses. The rats were gone, but the piper must still be paid.

It was Doctor John Dee, court magician, philosopher and spy to Queen Elizabeth I who noticed the problem, and foresaw the potential catastrophe. In the year 1560 He advised his liege to bestow upon him a royal charter, naming him the steward entrusted to manage the royal affairs on matters relating to treaties with the land. Before it was too late.

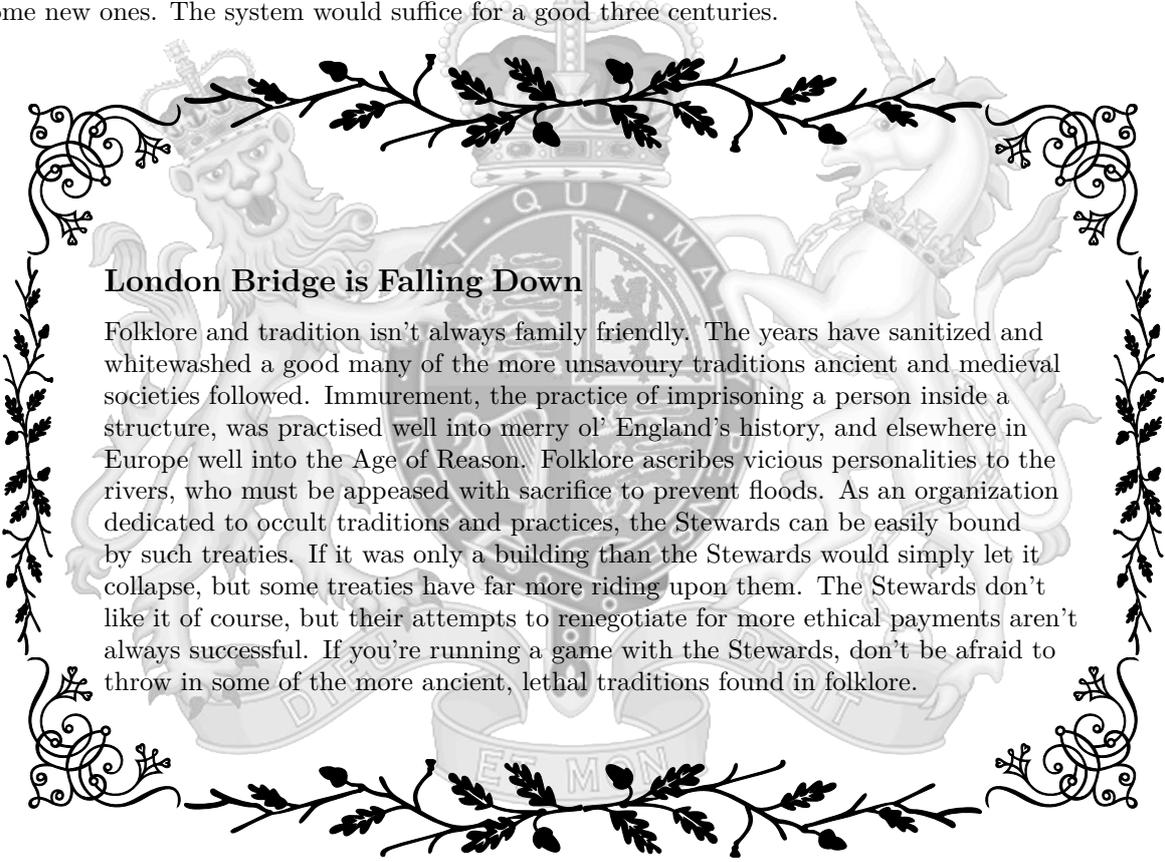
The proposition was accepted. With his new charter and position John Dee toured the land. Wherever he travelled he questioned the people about their folklore and he observed their customs and superstitions. As a skilled magician John Dee was eminently qualified to sift through folklore looking for forgotten occult bargains and contracts. His personal library at Mortlake was soon filled with the records of his discoveries.

Everywhere he uncovered old pacts John Dee selected trustworthy local men and invested them with the Queen's authority, and the duty to uphold the pacts in Her Majesty's name. But he also made a second discovery. He was far from the only magician working to preserve the treaties. Most of John Dee's counterparts were very different in character from himself, born far from wealth and the royal

court and using a practical earthy tradition of magic which centred on their community and the land around them. Through these bonds they had seen the threats of broken pacts and had taken it upon themselves to uphold the bargains for the good of their local communities. Many of these witches and warlocks were fiercely independent, but enough saw that their talents were desperately needed and so they agreed to join in service to the crown.

The practitioners recruited by John Dee took on his work: travelling, recording treaties, and appointing stewards to maintain the pacts. By the weight of royal authority and good old fashioned hard work the basic structure of the Lord Stewards was formed: Local residents employed by the crown to uphold the pacts, supported by travelling magicians who went where their talents were needed, all managed from a central location which archived the old treaties.

Dr John Dee did his work well, under his leadership the Stewards thrived. They fulfilled their royal duties admirably, but his tenure eventually came to an end. And though John Dee's successor ran the Stewards competently he lacked the genius of the Steward's founder. To compensate for the lack of John Dee's leadership the Stewards turned to what they knew best; pacts and alliances. The Stewards had always made casual use of any benefits they qualified for, but now they made it official policy. They searched through their libraries for useful treaties and spread the methods of their use across the organization. When they couldn't get what they needed from existing arrangements they simply signed some new ones. The system would suffice for a good three centuries.



London Bridge is Falling Down

Folklore and tradition isn't always family friendly. The years have sanitized and whitewashed a good many of the more unsavoury traditions ancient and medieval societies followed. Immurement, the practice of imprisoning a person inside a structure, was practised well into merry ol' England's history, and elsewhere in Europe well into the Age of Reason. Folklore ascribes vicious personalities to the rivers, who must be appeased with sacrifice to prevent floods. As an organization dedicated to occult traditions and practices, the Stewards can be easily bound by such treaties. If it was only a building than the Stewards would simply let it collapse, but some treaties have far more riding upon them. The Stewards don't like it of course, but their attempts to renegotiate for more ethical payments aren't always successful. If you're running a game with the Stewards, don't be afraid to throw in some of the more ancient, lethal traditions found in folklore.

Joining the Service

The industrial revolution hit the Stewards hard, an organisation that by it's very nature focuses upon the past will always have trouble adapting to a changing environment. A minority of Stewards believed that they were truly living in the last days of magic, and they should allow themselves to fade gracefully as science and technology rose. Most felt that abandoning the pacts now would be just as dangerous as it would have been during the reign of Queen Elizabeth but even they were divided into those who believed they could, must, adapt and those who felt a successor would arise. Central to the argument

was the fact that the Stewards own royal charter was soon to expire. Though the charter was not in itself magical, for a group who's lives revolved around treaties this was a grave omen indeed.

Though the Stewards debated their future, the decision was to come from far outside their organisation. In 1860, three hundred years after their founding, representatives of the Lord Stewards were summoned before Parliament to explain the nature of their work. There they met with a nearly empty chamber, only a few backbenchers were in attendance. It was hardly a sight to inspire hope, but barely a month had passed before the Stewards were called back and presented with an updated charter attached to a wide reaching plan to modernise the organisation.

In an era of social upheaval, relying on local citizens across the realm was no longer feasible. Instead the Stewards were to reassign their magical practitioners from a support and oversight role onto the front line. A campaign of aggressive recruitment and training would be implemented to build the necessary numbers. Modern transport would allow a members to cover a larger area than ever before, personally seeing to each treaty.

If the plans to modernise were ambitious, the plans to expand the Stewards' remit were nothing short of radical. Urbanisation had an enormous impact on the monsters living in the shadows, as faeries, werewolves, witches and who knew what else were forced into closer proximity tensions were building. The threat of all out supernatural war was looming and the consequences would be dire for everyone. War had to be prevented, and Sir Robert Peel had shown that heavy handed tactics could only go so far. If a lasting peace was to be obtained somebody would have to talk to the monsters and remind them why it was in their best interests to play by civilised rules. As the only officers of the crown who had experience at negotiating with the uncanny, the Stewards were just the people to do it.

Modernising and expanding a, to put it politely, traditionalist organisation would require skilled organisation and management. To that end the Stewards were to be brought into the recently formed Civil Service. There they would benefit from working with people who had experience in governance, and the government would benefit from being able to negotiate with the land for assistance in implementing their latest policies.

Even to this day the Stewards wonder who was behind this radical plan. There is some evidence that a trusted advisor to Queen Victoria was responsible, but the evidence is contradictory and can't even agree which advisor it was. The Stewards did have their supporters in parliament, mostly from rural constituencies, but none of them have claimed credit. The Office's continued existence is protected by subtle enchantments, though the Stewards know very well that those arrangements were created after the reforms some wonder if John Dee might have had the same idea all those years ago. There's no record of him doing so but the Stewards have to admit, it does sound like the sort of thing he would do.

Personnel

A Lord Steward needs to possess two skills. She must be educated in occult principles and she must know the give and take of diplomacy and law, whether she is to negotiate with members of the occult community, in the courtroom, or with the land itself. The Stewards are always glad to offer a position to an occultist who has been trained to bargain with otherworldly beings or Oxbridge graduates with the proper extra-curricular education (it's amazing what you can learn in the right drinking clubs at the really old universities).

The problem is, there just simply aren't enough people with the necessary skills. The Stewards have to settle for hiring people who are trained occultists or qualified civil servants and train them up. Aside from the odd subject matter the Stewards training looks begins like any other government or corporate training program. However there is really no substitute for experience, so after completing their formal training a Steward can expect to be partnered with an experienced member for a period of apprenticeship. There they will supported as they learn what can only be taught by experience; how to navigate the tangle of supernatural politics and how to make use of the arrangements outside the safe and stable classroom environment.

With recruitment looking for one of two very different skillsets it is unsurprising that Stewards tend to come from one of two very different backgrounds. On the one hand you have the trained civil servants, professionals who grew up in a suit and read serious, weighty subjects like law, politics or classics. They were often only dimly aware of the Stewards at best before they were offered a job or transferred.

Learning what their job entails is often quite a shock, but they wouldn't have been given a place if somebody didn't think they'd adapt.

Now on the other hand you have the occultists. A hodgepodge of everybody: Tweed wearing academics and gentleman scholars who took the classes not advertised on the university curriculum, urban shaman, people who grew up with not-so-imaginary friends, and of course lots of hedge witches, some of whom have family ties to the Lord Stewards dating back to John Dee himself.

Most occultists who join the Stewards tend to have skills or natural talents that focus on the land itself. Many of them have an even larger culture shock than the civil servants when they start their employment, but the Stewards are patient. The supply of skilled occultists is smaller than the supply of qualified civil servants and they are far more likely to have rare or unique specialities. Taking the time to help them adjust properly is a worthwhile investment.



So I Can Play a Magician?

Well yes. Sir Harold Langley, gentleman magician, is a perfectly valid character concept for a Lord Steward. Playing a magic practitioner is nothing new for a Hunter conspiracy: The Ascending Ones have alchemists, Les Mysteries are full of witch-doctors, bokor and just about everything else.

The Lord Stewards usually draw from traditions that have a strong tie to the land: Shamans, aristocratic magicians who know the land and it's ruler really are linked, but mostly hedge witches who not only have magic ties to the land, but who also come from the same thematic root of superstitions and folklore that underlies the Lord Stewards.

However the assumption is that whatever background you play, your abilities will be represented by Arrangements, the Occult Skill and some of the more esoteric Merits available to hunters. With the favour of the land a Steward rarely needs to rely on a long cumbersome ritual (Witch Finders p140) and we recommend not giving Stewards access to Gnosis.

Instead a hedge witch's familiar would be a Retainer combined with Loquere Animalibus. Vox Loci can be used to represent a Shaman's natural connection to the land. A gentleman magician is distinguished by his personal Library and if he's old school nobility then maybe Allies or Retainers representing his connection to the family land.

When it comes to the division of labor there is less of a split between the occultists and the civil servants than one might imagine. Most of the non-routine duties performed by the Lord Stewards require both skills: An occultist might know something about what changelings care about, but a trained diplomat is the one who knows how to leverage those desires during negotiations. It's common to see Stewards of both backgrounds working together. As a Steward gains experience they often begin to acquire traits typical to both backgrounds. A warlock learns how to talk to politicians and look good in a suit. A civil servant is initially shocked to learn that magic exists, but after a few years she's proud to have learned a new skill and adopts habits that come naturally from her knowledge: Once you know that it actually is bad luck to walk under a ladder you stop doing so.

Ever since the office was modernized in 1860 the Lord Stewards have been a part of Her Majesty's Civil Service. During their tenure they have been moved around and reclassified, as has nearly every other department. Today they are part of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport – a rather minor department for what many in the supernatural community consider to be the most, or only, relevant part of government – and have been since 1995 (when it was known as the Department for National Heritage).

Despite their official location the Stewards' responsibility to keep the peace between the nation's supernatural population and occult societies is unofficially part of the Home Office (Unless something goes badly wrong, then it's usually DCMS' fault.) Maintaining the old pacts does fall under the DCMS, or it at least fits there better than anywhere else, with the exception of those Arrangements that were created on the request of another department.

The difficulty of classifying the Stewards into the divisions of regular governance – and their immunity to being divided until they fit – has long since ceased to be frustrating, and is now an accepted eccentricity of the Civil Service. This does not prevent the occasional skirmish over budget, control or assigning blame. Shielding the rank and file from getting sucked into turf wars is an important job for high ranking Stewards. Many managers in the Office find that after negotiating with faeries, dealing with Whitehall politics is refreshingly straight forward. To them the Stewards' ambiguous position only makes it easier to avoid red tape.

In general the rest of the Service treats the Stewards as an I.T. department or a similar highly technical department. Mostly the other civil servants agree that the Stewards are necessary but have no real idea how their job actually works and don't make much effort to find out. They are prone to underestimate the work required and assume that the Stewards are overstating any problems. When a new government initiative, civil service policy or budget cut rolls around it is often extended onto the Stewards without anyone asking if the Office's unique role should be treated as a special case. Since the answer is quite often "yes" the Stewards management have lots of experience at arguing against inappropriate changes or finding clever ways to work around them.

The Stewards' unique expertise may well be enough to keep them safe in the turbulent seas of politics, but with the stakes so high and their job so poorly understood they're glad to have an ace up their sleeve: When the Stewards were restructured during the Victorian Era they put quite a bit of thought into remaking the Office into something sustainable for the long term. To this end crafted subtle enchantments to protect their continued existence.

Simply put the Stewards are essentially impossible to get rid of. When no one's looking they seep into the cracks of the civil service and take root. Their names appear in human resources' files by magic (literally). ID cards and keys arrive in unmarked envelopes. There's nothing so vulgar as mind control but coincidences conspire to prevent anyone questioning their continued existence or implement any policies that would cause too much damage – there's a reason no one managed to split maintaining the Arrangements and diplomacy with the supernatural into separate departments. If anyone asks the Stewards are happy to show the documents that entitle them to do this.

The General Public

Stewards don't think of anyone as the enemy. As they see it everyone's on the same side; everyone wants the same thing and for the most part they're correct. Human, inhuman or true monster; nobody wants to see the country – or just it's supernatural underworld – burnt down in the fires of civil war. The Stewards have kept those fires at bay for centuries; their name gets around, their word carries a lot of weight.

When faced with a threat to the peace the Office relies on diplomacy, negotiations, compromise and when necessary, shameless bribery. The Stewards tend to be utilitarian, impartial and non-confrontational. They have to be, with so many hunters, occult societies, and all manner of monsters crammed into a tiny island, a single spark of conflict capable of spreading like wildfire across interwoven social networks and through shared resources. Anyone could be that spark: It could be one of the great powers slighted by an unfortunate insult, it could be a single vampire who just wants more opportunities to feed, or just as easily the father of that same vampire's latest victim. In the middle of this are the Stewards, trying to keep the peace.

There is a simple principle that guides everything the Lord Stewards do: The peaceful status quo survives only as long as everyone prefers it to the risk of war. Why would the hunters agree to a treaty that only protects the monsters and their abuses? Why would the monsters follow the rules of a country that denies their right to exist? Sacrifice one person for the greater good, and you have one person with nothing to lose and everything to gain by sounding the call to arms.

The Fair Folk

The Office has known about the fae almost since their founding. Pacts with and protecting against the Gentry, often the same pact, were among the most common treaties that the Stewards uncovered. This suggests that the true fae have been a problem with no answer for a very long time. For the most part the Stewards feel the same as anyone else does about the gentry: They're powerful, dangerous and a threat to any decent person. Since the early days the Stewards have opposed the gentry in their own manner, at first they made real progress at slowing the tide by repairing treaties with the True Fae and ending penalty clauses but now the low hanging fruit has been picked, and the Gentry remain.

In their archives the Lord Stewards keep records of all manner of alliances and treaties forged for protection against the True Fae's hunts, and as they admit, The Gentry come despite them all. The Stewards believe, well hope really, that these treaties at least slow the number of abductions but there is no proof, and for obvious reasons no body has suggested ending the pacts to see what happens. As a consequence, when the Stewards come across a threat from the Gentry they are more likely to attempt to try and negotiate a contract forbidding it's return then to create wards and alliances. It's much riskier, but when it works the results are clear.

The pursuit of a long term solution to the True Fae remains the domain of a small minority of self appointed Stewards, nicknamed "Grail Knights" (because they are searching for something nigh unfindable, and because by the time they have enough status to get away with spending all their time on a quixotic quest they've usually been knighted). The Grail Knights, and indeed most of the Stewards, believe that the true fae would be unable to take slaves unless they had made some sort of contract with humanity. If this contract could be found it might point the way to the banishing the gentry forever. As the name implies, they've had no luck finding the holy grail of ancient contracts.

In contrast to their keepers, the Stewards quite like changelings. Indeed they feel a connection to them that goes beyond any other kind of supernatural being. They both live lives that revolve around contracts and pledges. Though a changeling will twist and warp an agreement they rarely break them, which is more than the Stewards can say about most of the monsters they deal with. What's more, the Stewards and the fae both perceive a world where everything is living and draw their powers from pacts with the world around them.

Over the years the Stewards have won the trust of enough changelings to be fairly certain about their origins as human abductees, and like most people they feel sympathy for the horrors changelings endure in Arcadia. As part of the government the Stewards are uniquely positioned to help changelings return to normal life after their escape. Creating a proper legal identity for changelings is a small part of the Stewards' duties. The office also maintains a list of therapists and mediators who are willing to help changelings heal and reconnect with their friends and family.

This does not by any means imply that the Lord Stewards and changelings have each other on speedial. Like many who have gone through terrible ordeals changelings carry emotional scars and often find it hard to trust, with only a small minority taking up the Stewards' offer. For their part the Lord Stewards must remain impartial, and they know that changelings are crafty and often dangerous. Feelings of companionship must be put aside, for changelings are always willing to use their shared connection or their tragic backstories to score points in negotiations.

The fetch occupies a unique place within the thoughts of the Stewards. On the one hand the average fetch is no where near as bad as some of the monsters a Steward is likely to see across the negotiating table. On the other hand the fetches were directly created by the true fae, who are both sinister and incredibly powerful. Mostly though, the Stewards don't think about fetches at all. Fetches rarely organize, and unless you are a changeling it is hard to notice a fetch as anything other than human. When the Stewards do encounter a fetch they tend to judge it on it's individual merits, as they do with most monsters. The Stewards' offer of referring changelings and their fetch to mediators is rarely accepted, and even considered distasteful by most changelings.

Other Monsters

The Lord Stewards don't limit their vigil to faeries, in fact it's quite the opposite. Officially the Stewards remit covers any monster that can be negotiated with, and the Stewards' opinion on what can be negotiated with is much broader than most peoples. Unofficially the Stewards do keep note of who simply isn't worth negotiating with: Monsters too alien to reason with, who simply won't keep to their agreements and of course monsters willing to kill the Stewards. Sometimes they oppose these monsters in their own way, invoking or creating pacts and alliances to imprison or ward against the monster. More often, monsters who cannot be negotiated with are left to hunters among the police, army, and in desperate cases, those sick fucks at MI18.

Vampires are inherently political creatures who stalk the negotiating table like a wolf eyeing up the weakest deer. A vampire's natural food source is humans, this causes some slight problems for the prospects of peaceful vampire-human relations. The Stewards' history with vampires can be seen as a long running battle over who the vampires get to bite. The Stewards would ideally like some system of willing paid blood donors, while the vampires want a free reign. The compromise between these positions shifts over time as the two sides battle it out, but for now both are content to have their battles across the negotiating table. Ironically the vampires' traditions of, and need for, secrecy makes the vampires strong supporters of the Stewards when it comes to keeping the peace. The Stewards avoid accepting their help if they can, for when things are settled you can be sure a vampire will call in the favour.

In contrast werewolves could be described as savage. If they are political, it is the violent insular politics of the animal kingdom: Protect your territory and trust no one but your pack. In many ways werewolves have very different concerns to humans and the two species could coexist just fine by mostly ignoring each other. The problem is that there just isn't enough space on the island. There's always somebody trying to develop property on a spot sacred to a pack of werewolves, or a coven of witches competing for a pack's supernatural resources. The Stewards would like to try and work something out, but there is no "council of elder werewolves" to negotiate with. Most of the Office's official dealings with werewolves is damage control when the Stewards are brought in as impartial negotiators after someone's created a conflict.

The Lord Stewards don't think of witches as a group. Because the Stewards are concerned with the misuse of magic and not the mere use of magic, the Stewards just think of witches as people who happen to know magic. Much like themselves for that matter. So when a Stewards sees a witch, he's more likely to base his assumptions on what magical tradition she practices, or what occult society she belongs to rather than the simple fact that she is a witch. A lot of witches are independent practitioners who simply live their lives, the Stewards rarely need to negotiate and compromise with individual witches. Instead they simply get the present themselves as representatives of the government and ask the witch to agree not to do anything criminal with magic. Larger occult societies are more likely to take a seat at the negotiation table and range from model citizens to hubris blinded sorcerers as bad as any monster.

The Stewards also consider hunter groups, as well as occult societies in general to fall under their remit. At least they do if the group knows enough to be a genuine part of the supernatural community. As with witches, occult societies and hunters are just too varied to be described in broad strokes, and the Stewards usually think of them on the level of the individual organisation.

The Land Itself

Since long before they concerned themselves with monsters the Stewards held vigil over ancient treaties with Briton. The land isn't exactly what you'd call tame but it has been inhabited for a long time. Like two neighbours who can't see eye to eye but forced to live with each other the land and it's inhabitants have learned to co-exist.

The Lord Stewards spend just as much time maintaining this peaceful coexistence as they spend maintaining the peace. They perform rituals to honor old alliances, they pay the land for services rendered, and they build relationships. A trained Steward can talk to just about anything, including animals, trees, buildings, even the wind. In the grand scheme of things most of these are no more important than any individual human. It will surprise no one to learn that a typical rabbit or potted plant is not a font of occult power. But like people, even if an individual tree is unimportant, collectively they are important indeed. A network of contacts or allies among the trees and forests is a very valuable asset. Some features of the land are individually important: Personages such as the four winds, major rivers, and some that seem deceptively unimportant, wield enormous power and influence.

Much of the Office's remit to maintain peaceful relations with the land are routine; the treaties were signed long ago and the payments are the same year after year. As for the rest, there's always something that keeps the job interesting. Some property development or cultural shift that interferes with a pact, or a request from above to negotiate some new advantage on behalf of the government. It is for this reason that the Stewards build relationships with the land around them. It keeps their fingers on the pulse, and ready to deal with whatever their duties require.

Treaties with the land are more than a duty to the Lord Stewards. They are the source of the Office's magical power, and a great boon to any who keeps the peace. Friendship with the land keeps the air clear, benefits the mortal public, helps ensure there is enough supernatural resources to go around and as they admit only in low voices, the land is even more dangerous than a war.

Hunters

You've had three things in your adult life: Your family, your garden and your service to the Lord Stewards. After a long and distinguished career you're running the department and you take great pride in your position and your accomplishments. However mandatory retirement approaches and in your sunset years you have turned your attention to training a successor.

You were born to a family of werewolves, and you were not a werewolf. You were treated worse than dirt, so when the Stewards were invited to witness some contracts you took your chance and stowed away. It turns out you always had the right to leave if you asked, a compromise agreed to on the assumption no one would get the chance to ask. Your family filed suit, several hunter groups filed counter suit claiming the werewolves were acting in bad faith. Just before violence erupted it ended with a couple of token cousins being freed and everyone being bribed large amounts to drop the matter. Since you had no where else to go you stayed with the Stewards, now how can you get the rest of your family to safety?

Your grandmother was a hedge witch and determined that you wouldn't grow up wilfully ignorant like your parents. Your parents were equally determined you'd grow up to be a lawyer and a proper member of society like themselves. After you'd graduated the Lord Stewards seemed like a natural career for your skills.

Your ancestors once signed a deal with a vicious faerie queen, and the consequences falls upon your head. Ever since you were a child your parents taught you how to uphold your family's end of the bargain or else you would be snatched away in an instant. Living by a pact became so normal to you that when a casual acquaintance was taken by the fae you were shocked to learn he hadn't broken any pact, he didn't even believe in magic. Ever since that day you made it your mission to teach people how to use the traditional protections. When your application to the Stewards went through, it was your job as well.

You were a regional manager at Tesco and you thought this court case was just the usual hippies, anti-capitalists and local groups protesting against a new supermarket. You were surprised to see the civil-service among the plaintiffs but you won the case anyway. The Stewards tried a different angle, they scheduled a meeting and told it to you straight. They needed regular access to the new store so they could get a virgin to dance naked and satisfy an ancient treaty with the hill you were building on. Of course they only said that after introducing you to the hill personally. In for a penny, in for a pound. You were looking for a more challenging career anyway.

You graduated with a double first from Oxford in language and history. When you joined the Civil Service you had hoped to become a diplomat, see the world a little. Unfortunately for you there was an open position with the Lord Stewards and your degree pushed you right into it. When you first saw your new department you thought it was either madness, a joke or possibly a racist sub to keep you from the proper jobs. You don't think that at all any more, but you're still trying to transfer to the Foreign Office.

You were raised by the street and you learned to survive. You weren't tough or dangerous so instead you learned to be smart, to read the signs and to feel danger coming. The street had never felt nearly as dangerous as it did all last week, just as you were thinking of skipping town the Stewards found you. It sounded like a whole lot of mumbo jumbo "natural sensitive", "especially in-tune with the local area". What mattered was that they were paying. Cash, half up-front. Afterwards you asked if they might have more where that came from. Turns out they did.

You're a professional administrator, your job is identify and take care of all the logistical and political problems getting in-between the Stewards and doing their job, then remove them. You're a practical sensible woman, the sort of person who always gives the impression of wearing a business suit no matter what you're actually wearing. Which is why your friends outside the Stewards still find it odd that you casually obey all sorts of superstitions, and they would find it really odd if they knew after coming home from the office you relax by talking about your day with your husband, kids, and the family dog.

You have blue blood, not literally of course, but you are nobility. You have a title, ancestral lands and a genealogy that stretches back to Charlemagne. When other treaties were fading into folklore your ancestors never forgot, your family always honored their deals and you are no exception: Your father taught you magic and your obligations ever since you were a boy. Technically you're not a Steward, but there's been an informal arrangement between your family and the Stewards dating back to John Dee himself. You take care of the treaties on your lands and if you ever need help the Stewards will be happy to offer assistance. In return the Stewards can call you if they ever get a little short handed.



Stereotypes

Aegis Kai Doru: We have dealings with many occult traditions. The Aegis Kai Doru were always willing to negotiate so long as we had artifacts to offer. In truth we had allowed ourselves to become complacent, as we discovered when a representative arrived to request assistance as per an ancient treaty we had no record of. Quite vexing, but the treaty was legitimate and our hands were tied. In truth the failure of our records worries me far more than the Aegis Kai Doru. Who else do we owe unpaid debts too, and who owes us?

The Union: In this country we are no strangers to firebrand shop-floor activism. When the unions turned their eyes to the Vigil we feared the worst. I admit the Callaghan and Thatcher years were... stressful. Fortunately things have settled down. What they want is to keep their own neighbourhoods safe, and when you know what someone wants you can come to an arrangement.

Cainite Heresy: We know that various groups have been slipping information on vampire's they want killed to the Cainites. We suspect that some of those groups are other Vampires. That's just how things work around here, when someone breaks the treaties the first thing they do is pin the blame on someone else. Of course who's desk does it all arrive on the next morning?

Long Night: That's the third complaint this week! We told them before, The Racial and Religious Hatred Act forbids harassing: Pagans, Wiccians, Hindus, Druids, Witches, abortion clinics, neo-pagans, Muslims, us, Kemetics, Jews and even Satanists! How did this even end up on my desk? Shouldn't religious hatred be with the Home Office?

Offices

The Office of the Lord Stewards is subdivided into further offices. Each office serves a separate purpose and all work together to preserve the Queen's peace.

The Office of the Wardens de L'île deals directly with the land. They maintain a library of treaties, pledges and agreements made between Britain and its inhabitants. It is their job to ensure those agreements are honored whenever it coincides with the public good, and whenever the pledge was made by the Stewards personally. If they lose the respect of the land, they lose the ability to serve. The Wardens de L'île are also in charge of making new Arrangements for the Conspiracy and bargaining for the lands assistance to assist the mundane government.

Free speciality: Occult (Folklore)

Meanwhile **The Office of the Marshal of Ceremonies** handles diplomacy between people. They try to keep the various factions of hunters, monsters, and occult societies from descending into war or preying on innocent civilians.

Free Speciality: Persuasion (Negotiations)

The smallest Office is **The Office of the Crown's Justice**. Officer's of the Crown's Justice work pro bono as lawyers and advocates. While most of the established players are quite happy representing themselves the smallest parties and individuals – especially individuals who were previously ignorant of the supernatural – have no such recourse. The Stewards know that if the smallest parties were considered “too poor for justice” they would lose all stake in fitting into the system and so they assign them advocates.

Free Speciality: Empathy (Clients)

Status

Officially Status within the Office is done on according to purely objective measurements of a Stewards performance assisted by regular career development meetings between a Steward and her manager. Unofficially the idea that there can be an objective measure for performance in such an unusual job is laughable. So the Stewards unofficially-officially supplement the official systems with a mixture of reputation and personal relationships that defines who's really the person to go to for certain topics. Gaining the right reputation increases Status as surely as a promotion. To limit confusion the managers try to game the paperwork to promote the right people, it's helpful but not without problems of its own.

As part of the government membership of the Stewards grants several advantages such as access to government databases. An ID badge to flash around. Cooperation (but not obedience) from police, local and even national government, most of the time anyway. Higher Status members often have little trouble getting a chance to talk to other high ranking civil servants or government ministers. If a Stewards remembers her skills she is likely to invest in building personal relationships with the people who really get things done.

One thing Status does not do is entitle the Stewards to carry guns. If the Stewards need firepower they are expected to ask for assistance from the police or the army. Stewards who often need firepower are likely to take the time to make personal relationships with one or two squads. When they submit the requisition paperwork their Allies help ease it through their own bureaucracies, often know a useful Arrangement (like Pact of Protection) and allow the Steward to skip past convincing people that the supernatural exists. Such informal arrangements tend to work in reverse (like any use of the Allies merit) as the Steward's Allies call in for advice or help over suspected supernatural occurrences, or to ask a Stewards to facilitate a minor supernatural blessing or warding.

Status 1: As a member of the Stewards you are entrusted with keeping the peace and may claim from your accorded benefits. You may purchase the Endowment Arrangements.

Status 3: You have achieved respect and prestige for your dedicated service. If you work in the Office of the Marshal of Ceremonies or the Crown's Justice your job has given you the chance to pick up a few names and faces. You gain two dots to spend on allies or contacts in the supernatural underworld (monster or human). They must be living in the United Kingdom on this plane of reality. At this Status members of the Wardens de L'île have a slightly different benefit. They gain the Unseen Sense Merit which enables them to spot any active supernatural effect caused by the land. This includes any use of Arrangements.

Regardless of Office at this level Stewards gain some measure small of respect from the land itself for their services. Generally they are less likely to trip over loose paving stones, touch stinging nettles or get bitten by insects. This might inflict some penalty to make the land attack them but what, if anything, qualifies is up to the Storyteller.

Status 5: You're mostly in an administrative role now, but sometimes you have to negotiate personally with the political leaders of the supernatural or vast powerful forces. You can command no power, but after a lifetime of service you need only ask; the roads carry your feet swiftly. The buildings form around in your defence. The very stones rise up to crush those who threaten you.

Mechanically treat this as a dot in the trait Contract with a couple of differences. Firstly the purview is Briton, broader than what is normally aloud. Secondly when make a Contract you don't (and can't) make payments to balance the cost. Instead you have +3 to spend (at once or separately) representing the favour you've acclimated from a lifetime of service, any spent points refresh at the beginning of the next Story. Finally the Stewards don't actually gain supernatural abilities, the Dread Powers they ask for represent the land rising to their aid. The mists or shadows gathering to hide the Steward can provide Lurker in Darkness. A Steward's reflection rising from a still lake and running justifies Scarper. Tendrils will come not from the Steward's body, but from the forest around her.

Storytelling The Lord Stewards

Portraying the Lord Stewards as heroic protagonists is straightforward. Their goals are to prevent violence and maintain supernatural pacts and treaties for the public good. Their methods are diplomatic. It's not hard to justify the Stewards as having a positive effect on the average man.

The three offices of the Lord Stewards exist to let you and the players decide what sort of story do you want to tell. If you want to play a game of folklorists uncovering ancient treaties, performing rituals, and bargaining with the land itself then join the Wardens de L'île. The Marshal of Ceremonies lets you play a game of diplomats and negotiators engaging in realpolitik with the varied and often dangerous characters inhabiting the shadows of the World of Darkness. Finally playing as part of the Office of the Crown's Justice gives you supernatural courtroom drama.

Playing mixed offices is of course an option, and the Stewards frequently experience overlap between their roles. The Crown's Justice could find themselves in the courtroom opposite a monster who broke a treaty with a Marshal of Ceremonies or a property developer trying to build upon a place of power tended to by the Wardens.

No matter which office you play, when using the Lord Stewards as protagonists the most important thing is to make sure that their diplomatic methods work. They do not need to be superior to the more violent methods used by other groups, but they should not be notably inferior either. In many works of fiction diplomatic solutions fail in order to justify the action hero going in guns blazing. This is fine, but it's best avoided when the diplomats are protagonists.

If your group is playing Stewards it is always worth taking the time to read a bit of folklore. You can form an entire plot for the Wardens de L'île by reading about an interesting superstition, imagining that it points to a forgotten pact, and thinking of a payment that must be made or a problem that must be fixed to keep the pact healthy. For players any office you can use the presence of superstitious omens to foreshadow and set the theme and the mood; a theme for the Office itself and a mood for the current story. If you want to build a tension have a black cat cross the players path or draw their attention to a solitary magpie. The players of course can take part in this themselves. Carefully not walking under ladders or touching wood after tempting fate is all part of the fun.

It goes without saying that when playing with members of the Marshal of Ceremonies it is

important to create a colorful cast of supernatural beings, occult societies and hunters each with their own goals and desires to negotiate over. But remember that the Lord Stewards Endowment let them talk to just about anything. Consider describing animals, objects and even places with the sort of language used for characters. Give them moods and personalities because after a few years of using Arrangements, that's how a Steward tends to start thinking about the inanimate.

The Castle in the Forest: An ally of the players asks for a little informal favour. Three children, siblings, stopped attending school shortly after repeatedly getting into trouble by insisting that the other students protect themselves from faeries. Upon investigating the players find the children safe and well in their forest home behind some incredibly strong wards (a strength of six). If pressed the family admit they don't feel safe leaving their wards but are strangely hesitant and try to get the players to leave as fast as possible. Asking any of their possessions is useless; they're too loyal to reveal family secrets. The forest is slightly more helpful, admitting that there are faeries around but it's too scared to say more. What is going on, and why is the family unwilling to accept help freely offered?

Tree speaks to Stone; Stone speaks to Water: At almost the same time the Stewards notice two worrying facts. The first is that the land has suddenly become a lot more vocal. People up and down the country are receiving messages giving them advice and occasionally teaching Arrangements. The second is that trying to ask what's going on – with the Arrangement Vox Britannia – isn't working. The Arrangement has gone haywire, with all attempts to invoke it resulting in either nothing or a Dramatic Failure. Have the Stewards lost favor with the land? Just a temporary surge in magic? Is this the equivalent of a country shouting in panic? And if it is, what's causing it?

Pugio in Averso Pax: Several years there was a rather messy incident involving a failed PhD student who figured out a way to grow clones without any brains. He tried to sell his research to the vampires as a risk free source of blood, and get them to pay him to research ways to improve the "flavor". It all turned sour when he turned out to be planting microscopic trackers in his blood and tried to blackmail the vampires for millions. After some political manoeuvring and calling in a few favours the Lord Stewards have acquired the research notes, and they've found someone who should be able to repeat the work. The vampires were willing to talk, this looked like it could be the breakthrough in human-vampire relations that generations of Lord Stewards had been working towards. Then somebody killed everyone at the meeting, vampires and Stewards alike. Clearly somebody doesn't like the idea of peace, but who? And can you figure it out in time to salvage the talks, before a power vacuum in the vampire courts leaves unpoliced fledglings draining people dry in back alleyways?

Antagonists

For a group of diplomats portraying the Lord Stewards as antagonists is not as hard as one might think. As civil servants and lawyers there is a wealth of battle hardened tropes. From red tape and obstructive bureaucracy getting in-between a hunter and an evil monster, to lawyers more interested in winning the case than justice. If you remove any genuine concern for the public good then the concept of running a country based on informal arrangements and personal relationships can easily lead to all sorts of dark places: It's the old boys network, rife with favouritism, elitism and idolisation of the status quo.

You do not even need to twist the Lord Steward formulae into something darker to make them suitable antagonists. The Lord Stewards tendency to seek peace treaties and coexistence between humans and the supernatural could easily be enough for other hunters to dislike the Stewards. Whether that's because they are devoted to extermination or simply because they feel the Stewards offer too many concessions and breaking out the firepower would remind the monsters who's in charge of this planet.

Whatever reason makes the Lord Stewards the Antagonists it is important to remember that the Lord Stewards are part of the government. Even though your protagonists could probably prevail in direct combat, attacking government officials is a quick way to the top of the most wanted list. A more subtle approach is recommended.

And Bob's Your Uncle: You're willing to work with the Stewards as far as keeping peace in your area. They keep the monsters in line, and you police your own cell to make sure no one's stepping on any toes. Hey, it's a good deal that's worked out the past few years. But something went wrong. A

mysterious fire in the government offices, and the treaty you all signed is ash now. The Stewards think they can fix it all with a few words and tell you they'll take care of everything. That's when Traci, who works in catering, you saw one of them take a chatting merrily with a vampire at an collage reunion. The monsters have the government in their pocket. Time to work some "magic" of your own.

International Incident: A friendly hunter that your cell worked with has just sent a desperate text from Britain; the government is horribly compromised. Monsters are running free, in public even, and sometimes they're even allowed to show themselves for what they really are. People are inadvertently starting to realize the truth, and none of them see the danger inherent in getting to know a monster as a "friend". You can't believe it yourself when you step off the plane, and see a witch using their magic like it was a cheap party trick, followed by the vampire that some woman was just letting suck at her neck outside a nightclub. Your flight doesn't leave for another few days. Time to hunker down and figure out who's a friendly in this snake pit.

Against the Realm: You've served the crown for decades, and when you realized that darker things existed than rioting young fools, you stepped up and made efforts to dismantle their animal society. Only a civil servant from some frivolous department came to you, saying that your plans needed to be put on hold, and he offered you a new position. You couldn't believe that he would be peaceable with such creatures, and you knew your government was no longer of the people. This office, these "Lord Stewards", they're a threat to the continued safety of the realm if they keep these monsters alive and continue to let innocent people die at their hands. The government must always be held accountable, so you've started digging through the archives. If these "Lord Stewards" are as ancient as they claim to be, they've got as much dirty laundry on their operations as any other branch of the government.

Bonus Material: Public Superstition

The Office of the Lord Stewards were founded when John Dee realised that the subjects of Elizabethan England had forgotten many of their old alliances and remembered the rest only as superstition and traditions. The office was founded to oppose this trend, to keep the useful alliances alive. How might this have affected the public attitude to superstition?

The default assumption for the World of Darkness is that on the surface things look much the same as they do in the world outside the reader's window. In the back of her mind the average person may well be aware of the supernatural dangers hiding in the shadows but she still wont be carrying around a bit of Rowan wood for protection. That would make the world look different to our own. This could be because only the Stewards (and maybe a few of their allies, some isolated hedge witches and a handful of occult groups) can use arrangements. The public benefits could have long since expired leaving nothing but debts to be paid or else, and a few smaller arrangements the Stewards made for their own use.

This could be played neutrally; technology has in many cases replaced the need for pacts. It could be played for Götterdämmerung, the loss of the wonders from a more magical age. It could be played for tragedy, with loss and heartache that could have easily been prevented. It could of course be played for horror; the ancient pacts are the only thing protecting the public from a deadly threat and the Stewards are powerless to reverse their decline in everyday life.

Alternatively the Stewards could have steadily been centralizing, anticipating the cultural shift and renegotiating allegiances to compensate. The public doesn't have to acknowledge the supernatural to benefit. For a story focusing on the Lord Stewards having an effective centralized set of pacts could make a nice justification for why the Vigil is diplomatic affair, and of course centralising the arrangements around themselves means more work for the Lord Stewards which should keep any players from the Wardens de L'île busy.

Or maybe the public is far more likely to keep to the traditions, and why wouldn't they? They have objectively provable benefits (which may be represented by Situational Modifiers or giving average people some Arrangements that help in everyday tasks). This doesn't automatically make the Stewards job easier, any more than computers becoming common household objects gave IT workers an easier time explaining things to their bosses.

Depending on how far you choose to take things this could be as little as people observing the forms but pretending they are doing it for a non supernatural reason. "My grandmother believed in this stuff, I do it to remember her.", "The horseshoe? It came with the house." If you prefer public acceptance could

go all the way to the top, with safety inspectors checking for horseshoes above every door and children taught to always wear daisy chains and never to pick Cuckoo Flowers in school (and depending on how things work in other countries, a lot of extremely baffled foreigners).



Red Blood and Royal Brit

The Queen looked into her mirror. Such a lowly hovel she thought. Bare floors and wooden walls with nothing but an iron range for warmth, the moon for light and the woman within. It pained the Queen to talk with one so low, but talk she must.

“The Child has eaten from my table, she is mine by right”

The Grandmother stood at her table listening to the Queen’s words come from an steel knife wrapped with red ribbon struck into the wood. She thought to herself that it was such a horrid voice. So full of pride and vanity without a shred of warmth. How could such a voice care for a child? The grandmother had raised six herself, and over twenty grandkids so she knew what she was talking about.

“By right of your words. Feh. I don’t have with words, never did. Words are like lovers, they say only what they think you want to hear. The Child is ours by blood. That meant something before words was words and you know it.”

The Queen wiped a imaginary spot of dirt from her sapphire lips. Who was this peasant to speak to her of blood, her who had a thousand generations of royalty flowing through her veins. She walked around to the second mirror: A pool of crystal clear water. It made a slow music not quite unlike a wineglass as she ran her fingers through.

“You are old and all your sons and daughter have grown. A boy must learn a trade. A girl must debut and find a husband. The Child may be of your blood, but blood is not so fair. All children leave their blood behind, this Child sooner than most. You must be reasonable about this, after the fruits of my table what could you provide for her?” For a moment the Grandmother was still, then she took a bag of sugar from the cupboard, poured it on the windowpane and opened the shutters. The sweet smell draw in her bees. Satisfied she turned back and answered the Queen. “Children, they’re all the same. Cover it with salt and ketchup and they’ll eat anything. I can raise the Child, but can you. You’ve got fruits and jewellery but can you give her what she really needs. Can you love her or have you spent too long in front of your mirrors and forgot how to see any heart but your own?”

The Queen drew herself and went to her third mirror. A polished sheet of obsidian with delicate silver filigree.

“And what of yourself? Do you claim to keep her heart? Do you Protect it from all, even the child herself?”

“Of course” replied the Grandmother.

“Oh dear” said the Queen with a smile that did not reach her eyes. “That was the wrong answer”.

The Grandmother froze for just a moment. Then she calmly rested her palm atop the point of an iron nail and brought her hammer down on the back of her hand.

Chapter 3: Gold Iron

“But when the fairy sang the whole world listened to him. Stephen felt clouds pause in their passing; he felt sleeping hills shift and murmur; he felt cold mists dance. He understood for the first time that the world is not dumb at all, but merely waiting for someone to speak to it in a language it understands. In the fairy’s song the earth recognized the names by which it called itself.”

– Susanna Clarke, Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell

In the ancient folklore of fairies, the key was always iron. Why? Who knows for sure. Maybe iron is symbolic of Man’s never-ending quest to find reason and knowledge. Maybe there’s a chemical reason, the makeup of iron an alien element to the home of the fae. Maybe it just doesn’t matter. What does is that when iron came into the picture, fairies die.

New Tactics

Fate’s Champion

Prerequisites: All: Presence 2, Expression 2. Partial (1): Presence 3, Brawl 2 or Weaponry 2 (Primary). Partial (1): Academics 3 or Academics 2 with an appropriate speciality like Faerie Tales or Occult 3 or Occult 2 with a speciality in Fate.

Requires: 3, up to 5

Dice Pool: Primary none. Secondary: Wits + Expression.

Action: Instant

Description: In a hunter’s Vigil he is unlikely to meet any monster with a stronger connection to Fate than the Fae. This can add a whole new dimension to the Vigil, but one which can be turned to the hunter’s advantage.

To perform Fate’s Champion the hunter’s try to attract Fate’s attention and convince Fate that the primary actor is a mighty heroic champion. They take on the roles classic archetypes: The King who names the hunter a Champion and offers his own sword and shield for battle. The Fair Maiden, worried for her love. Wise Mentor giving one last bit of advice. Should the Hunters attract the attention of Fate and convince it that their man is one of the Champions of old he will step into the battlefield with Fate itself on his side.

Hunters can’t just call on Fate any time they wish. If winning the favour of Fate itself was as easy as a bit of improvised theatre everyone would be doing it. This tactic only works when something has already drawn Fate’s eye. The presence of a faerie is sure to do it, but perhaps the fae are not the only thing Fate keeps it’s eye on. What if the hunters were in the presence of a legendary artifact like Excalibur?

Organizations: The Sons of Cú Chulainn know about the Fae and about Fate, with ties to a martial culture they have no shortage of stories about great champions to reenact. The Ageis Kai Doru have the arms of actual legendary heroes in their vaults and their studies into these Relics have revealed key insights into the workings of Fate.

Potential Modifiers: Primary Actor has dots in Fame (+1 per dot); props and costumes (+2); cell are using generic archetypes (-2); cell are enacting a specific story where the details match their current circumstances (+3); Tactic performed in a formal challenge of champions (+3); Hunters look appropriate

to their roles, such as Striking Looks for the Fair Maiden, or the Wise Mentor has a long grey beard (+2); Hunters don't look like their role (-2)

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The Hunter's do attract Fate's attention, but they give it the wrong impression. Perhaps they convince Fate that the champion will rescue the fair maiden, which means she's got to get captured first. Perhaps the Wise Mentor is going to find himself fighting instead of the champion, even if he doesn't know how to fight. A Dramatic Failure doesn't guarantee any outcome, but the Storyteller can apply dice penalties and bonuses to push Fate's Agenda.

Failure: Fate doesn't even notice the Hunter's efforts.

Success: The secondary actors step back as their Champion takes the field, backed by Fate itself. Pool the secondary actors' Successes and divide them into bonuses. These bonuses last until combat ends, or until the combat is no longer the domain of a single champion. A Success may:

- Be added to the primary actor's attack pool.
- Be added to the primary actor's Defence.
- Grant the primary actor a defence against any supernatural effects. Each success becomes +1 to the roll to resist any supernatural effect, including supernatural Endowments and Dread Powers.

Exceptional Success: With the might of Fate behind the Hunter he cannot lose. He may reroll one roll of his choosing. The second roll stands.

To Purchase: 14 Practical Experience. 11 for the Sons of Cú Chulainn. 9 for the Aegis Kai Doru.

Legal Analysis

Prerequisites: All: Intelligence 2, Academics 2, Academics Speciality in Law, Contracts or similar.

Requires: 2; up to 4.

Dice Pool: All, Intelligence + Academics.

Action: Primary: Instant; Secondary: Extended, no target successes necessary. Secondary actors may continue to accumulate Successes for the primary actors roll up until the usual limits for Extended Actions.

Description: It's all well and good wanting to get justice, or revenge, upon the faerie who cursed your first born child, but veteran hunters know a simple truth. The easiest way to permanently deal with a faerie is simply to sign a contract with it.

Perhaps the Hunter only wishes that the faerie would leave "his people" alone, and is willing to turn a blind eye if the faerie plays his tricks somewhere else. Perhaps the Hunter will settle for nothing less than the faerie returning to whence it came and never return.

Regardless of what the Hunter asks for, he can count on the faerie delighting in every single loophole in the contract. It pays to have someone well read in contract law read the contract before signing your name.

Organizations: The Loyalists of Thule often make bargains and deals using the occult secrets they uncover and when they do they make a point of doing it right. The Office of the Lord Stewards are an organization founded around esoteric contracts and arrangements with the supernatural, with centuries of records and case law to train their members

Potential Modifiers: Professional Training as a Professional lawyer (+1 per dot of Professional Training). Professional Training as an Occultist with a focus on contracts, must include Academics as an asset skill (+1 per dot of Professional Training). The faerie is also skilled at law (-1 per target's Academics). The faerie has an intimate connection to the underlying force of bargains (-1 per target's Wyrd).

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The hunters begin patting each other upon the back for crafting an ironclad contract. Regardless of how many loopholes they actually are.

Failure: Though the hunters make some amendments they aren't confident that a better lawman than they couldn't find a loophole.

Success: The hunters add sub-clauses, clarifications and rewords passages to prevent loopholes. Now they just need to get the blighter to sign. If a faerie signs a contract successfully written by this tactic

they are at a penalty to wriggle out of it. Whenever the faerie identifies a potential loophole they must beat the Primary Actor's successes on a Wyrd + Wits + Academics or Occult roll. On a failure that potential loophole turns out to have been legally sealed. The target is capped at the Primary Actor's Intelligence + Academics, add one with an appropriate Speciality.

Exceptional Success: Extra Successes are their own reward.

To Purchase: 15 Practical Experience. 12 for the Loyalists of Thule. 10 for the Office of Lord Stewards.

Offer of Refuge

Perquisites: All: Manipulation 3, Empathy 2. Partial (1): Persuasion 2 (Primary)

Requires: 2; up to 4.

Dice Pool: Primary, Manipulation + Persuasion. Secondary, Manipulation + Empathy.

Action: Instant.

Description: The fae are infamous for leaving emotional scars as well as the more physical sort. Hunters on the trail of the "Fair Folk" often find that their best witnesses and left in the thrall of madness and delusion.

It takes time and care to heal a damaged mind, far too much time when the next victim could come at any moment. Most hunters simply patch witness together for long enough to get their information and leave the long term care to whichever doctor ends up with the case.

The most common method is to construct a safe space. Thick walls, strong doors and hand-forged iron can all help convince someone that they are inside and the faeries and the madness are outside.

Organizations: The Long Night practice the merciful teachings of Jesus and are used to lending a friendly hand. The Ascending Ones also follow the merciful teachings of Mohammad and the practice of Sulha requires trust and empathy, and occasionally some of the good anti-anxiety medication.

Potential Modifiers: The target feels safe and hidden from the fae. (+1 per Safehouse Secrecy). The target feels like a prisoner (-1 per Safehouse Secrecy). The hunters do not know the details of the target's history with the fae (-3). Convincing anti-fae defences like Cold Iron (+2).

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The hunters convince the target that they are either working for the fae, or going to incompetently bring the Fair Folk down on everyone. They are probably very confused as to why they gave such an impression.

Failure: The target fails to see any strong difference between here and anywhere else.

Success: For the duration of the Scene the target does not have to roll to resist one mild Derangement per Success. Not every Derangement can qualify, only those routed in an encounter with some sort of external threat safely outside the refuge may be suppressed.

Exceptional Success: The target may spend three Successes to suppress a Severe Derangement.

To Purchase: 15 Practical Experience. 12 for the Long Night. 10 for the Ascending Ones.

Search Party

Perquisites: Primary: All: Survival 2. Partial (1): Intelligence 2, Socialise 1 (Primary Actor). Partial (1+) Wits 2 (Secondary Actors).

Requires: 1 + 1 person for every 20 volunteers.

Dice Pool: Primary, Intelligence + Survival. Secondary, Wits + Survival.

Action: Primary: Extended; Secondary: Extended, the hunters keep looking until they find the missing person, their remains, or give up.

Description: The fae steal people away. It's perhaps the biggest reason hunters pursue them. Any hunter who deals with the fae over time will soon find themselves getting experience with tracking down missing people.

Sometimes you have to track them down to find clues or evidence to the culprit. Sometimes you have a chance of rescue, and sometimes you get lucky. There was no monster, just a bit of bad navigation.

A lucky few hunters have an endowment that can track down a missing person, the rest have to do it the old fashioned way: Rounding up friends and neighbours to form a search party.

Organizations: Every time someone goes missing Searchlight can be counted on to dedicate their time and effort, and their prayers that it is just a missing person and not a faerie abduction. The

Ascending Ones guard the inner cities where the monsters look for people who “won’t be missed”, their eyes are everywhere and honed to perfection with subtle elixirs.

Potential Modifiers: Good knowledge of the local area (+2), clear area with few hiding spots (+4), area with lots of hiding spots (-4), poor morale (-1 to -5), bad weather (-1 to -3), night time (-2).

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: Poor planing hinders the group as they waste time sorting out communication difficulties or duplicate each others efforts.

Failure: The hunters fail to turn the collection of concerned individuals into a team greater than the sum of it’s parts

Success: Successes for this Tactic work differently. The Primary Actor uses maps and reports to keep a strategic command of the search. The Secondary actors each take a team of volunteers and keep things organised on the ground.

This Tactic functions like an inverse of a normal Teamwork action. The Primary Actor adds their Successes to each of the Secondary Actors. The Secondary Actors each add their Successes to their team (For simplicity when dealing with large groups of people, assume that the entire team has a dicepool equal to the number of NPCs + the Secondary Actor’s Successes). As with any teamwork action a Dramatic Failure inflicts a -4 penalty to the team.

The NPC search teams Successes are what covers the ground. The Storyteller should set a required number of Successes to find the missing person (and may increase it if the searchers take a break for the night). When the target is reached the searchers find the person, a Fetch, a corpse or some other evidence that clearly shows the search has done it’s work. However if there is nothing to be found, or everyone is searching in the wrong place the Storyteller should not set a threshold. The parties will continue searching until they give up.

Exceptional Success: Extra Successes are their own reward.

To Purchase: 12 Practical Experience. 9 for Searchlight. 7 for the Ascending Ones.

Surveillance

Prerequisites: All: Intelligence 2. Partial (1): Investigation 2 (Primary). Partial (2): Larceny 2 (Secondary Actors).

Requires: 3, up to 6

Dice Pool: Primary, Intelligence + Investigation. Secondary, Wits + Larceny or Intelligence + Computer.

Action: Primary: Extended, target of six Successes; Secondary, Extended, target of 3 Successes per dot of Safehouse Size targeted.

Description: 'To defeat the fae you must first find the fae. Hunting faeries is a different challenge to many other threats. You might need to step back and plan if you want win a fight with a werewolf, or if you want to kill a vampire without her catspaws coming for you the next night, but you always have the option of grabbing a gun and risking it all. Not so with the fae, they are called the Hidden Folk for a reason and against hunters the fae’s primary defence is their invisibility.

When a cell or organisation isn’t privileged to have access to The Sight they must find the fae without the benefit of any tell tell signs like a vampire’s cold flesh. A common method among experienced hunters is to learn the psychology and culture of the fae, then keep watch on anyone suspicious and hope they say or do something incriminating. Are they irrationally obsessed about never breaking a promise? Do they show signs of post traumatic stress with no likely cause? Did they actually start talking about true fae, courts or freeholds? Individually any bit of evidence can easily be a false lead pointing to obsessive compulsion or a fan of fantasy novels. This can cause no end of trouble to hunters who pounce on bad evidence but the more traits the more the possibility adds up until the hunters have found the fae. This task gets easier every year as new espionage tools arrive in the grasping hands of the Vigil.

The Secondary Actors’ task consists of setting up surveillance on the target. This can include hiding cameras or microphones using Wits to find good viewpoints and Larceny to hide the gear. Another option is to install keyloggers or steal computer passwords and data to look for incriminating evidence. The roll is Intelligence + Computer. When the info comes in the Primary Actor has the thankless task of going through the data looking for evidence of the supernatural.

Organizations: Network Zero know how to use all manner of recording equipment and often favour using hidden cameras to film the supernatural without exposing themselves to danger. Task Force:

VALKYRIE have the best surveillance gear and they don't need to break into your computer to read your e-mails.

Potential Modifiers: Potential Modifiers:''' Good equipment, the stuff the police might be expected to use (+3). Top quality equipment, the stuff used by intelligence agencies and Task Force: Valkyrie (+5). Specialist equipment that can detect the supernatural, such as an infra red camera for Vampires or a Kirlian camera to spot a witch's unusual aura, for the fae this means someone with The Sight looking over captured footage and recordings (+5). Target area is defended against surveillance (-1 per dot of Safehouse Secrecy or equivalent)

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The hunters completely make a mess of things, getting results that are widely misleading

Failure: The hunters perform an incompetent surveillance operation and get little useful data.

Success:The hunters do a through job, recording the majority of goings on in the target building and identifying most of the suspicious material.

Exceptional Success: If anything suspicious happened at all, the hunters probably heard about it.

Surveillance can only find evidence that's already there. However even the tricky fae often let their guard down in their homes. A faerie who obsessively avoids speaking about faerie matters should roll to avoid letting anything slip rather than automatically escaping the hunter's notice.

When all is said and done the Storyteller should tell the player how confident they are that the target is supernatural:

- Not at all: No one did or said anything even remotely fae like.
- Unlikely: There's some suspicious traits, but there's plenty of mundane explanations that are just as plausible.
- Modestly confident: Nothing proves the target is a faerie, but it's a rare human who has this many faerie behaviour traits.
- Very confident: The hunters observe both faerie like behaviour and insider knowledge usually limited to the fae.
- Certain: The hunters observe their query entering the hedge, debating faerie topics in depth or someone with The Sight checked the surveillance footage and saw the faerie for what she is.
- Uncategorised: The hunters are certain something's up, because nobody talks in a mixture of Navajo and Victorian dockworker's slang. However they're not sure what it implies, because they don't speak Navajo or Victorian dockworker's slang.

One final point. If you leave cameras lying around somebody's house you want to make sure they don't find out. Searching for cameras usually involves a Wits + Investigation - the lowest Wits + Larceny roll among the hunters (a Dramatic Failure gives a +4 bonus to the searcher). Monsters with supernatural senses may have a different roll. Again a search can only find what's present. If the hunters are bouncing a laser of the window from a tower in the distance looking for bugs under your desk isn't going to work.

To Purchase: 12 Practical Experience. 9 for Network 0. 7 for Task Force Valkyrie

New Traits

High Iron Content (•••)

Studying those affected by the ruling beings of the other dimension known as "Arcadia", certain groups have discovered that those taken, or claiming to be taken, suffer from iron deficiency, a lack of iron in the body. As iron is essential to organic life, a few have theorized that the force of the Wyrd makes up for this deficiency. Conversely, those with high iron content have been shown to negatively affect the workings of this force.

Effect: Any attack made by a fairy using their Dread Powers results in -2 dice.

Only available during character creation. Character cannot take The Sight, Wyrd Image, or Fated Path.

Fae-Touched (•••)

Prerequisite: Mortal (non-Supernatural)

Your character was abducted and taken to the realm of Arcadia but has returned and with their humanity intact, mostly. Hunters debate how this is possible. Some hunters claim that some trait can protect a person's mortality, be it a quirk of genetics, moral purity or faith in God. Other believe if you escape fast enough you will be unchanged. The most common theory however is that the faerie captor simply never got around to changing their victim before they escaped.

Fae-Touched mortals have many benefits. They can see the fae, The Sight is part of the Fae-Touched "package". They also have access to the Hedge, by knocking on any portal or mirror they can open a gateway to the Hedge. This costs one Willpower. Like the Fae a Fae-Touched is able to navigate the Hedge, and many seek out the Hedge's strange fruits. Finally Fae-Touched mortals live longer and are healthier than most people, they have +1 to resist the effects of age and diseases, along with roughly an extra ten years to their lifespan. Fae-Touched do not have a fetch, if they did have one it crumbled into its component parts when they returned.

Being Fae-Touched does not directly imply any particular lifeplan, but the need to make sense of half remembered moments in Arcadia can push them towards joining either the Vigil or fairy life

Faerie Favour (•••)

Whether you tracked down dark rites of summoning and offerings in tomes written upon human flesh or just gave your sandwich to a beggar woman, one of the gentry owes you a favour, one single use of it's godlike power to your own ends. The best part is, the faerie's debt binds it to grant the spirit of your request.

At any time the hunter can call in their favour for one single task; they could request that the faerie unleashes it's magic upon one person, friend or foe, even driving a (weaker) member of the gentry back to Arcadia. They could ask for a blessing which halves the exp on one single purchase, and this can even include endowments. After being offered a favour by a godlike being what self respecting member of the Aegis Kai Doru wouldn't ask for a powerful relic? The hunter could also ask for information, or perhaps the simplest favour of all: "Save me!"

One thing that this favour does not cover is returning someone stolen to Arcadia. That's two favours, one to free them from captivity, and one to bring them home safely. You might however be able to cut a deal for that second task.

Not available during character creation.

Library (• – •••••)

There is no weapon more potent in the Vigil than knowledge. If they have a choice no cell would go against the darkness without knowing what they're up against, and many collect lore from any source they can: Old leather bound books, Universal Studios monster flicks, granny's superstitions.

Over time a cell's collection of info may become an organised and indexed Library of knowledge. Each dot in this Merit represents one topic on which the Hunter has accumulated a solid collection of reference materials. Be it carefully preserved ancient books of arcane lore or a modern indexed database of monsters seen in action. A Hunter with Library (•••) could have books on King Arthur, magical artifacts and medieval history. A Library does not have to concern itself with the supernatural, but let's be frank, when knowledge of the supernatural is a matter of life and death it probably will.

One set of topics deserves special mention. A hunter can place dots in a specific kind of monster for a broad overview, or something like vampire politics or faerie magic for specific details, however they may only do so if they can justify where they got this rare and guarded information from. If they are members of a compact or conspiracy who has that kind of knowledge then it's fine, otherwise they will probably

have to make do with something like faerie tales or medieval superstitions until they can acquire more accurate material during play.

Putting a Library to use works just like any other Research Task (see WoD core. P55-56) except that the hunter only takes fifteen minutes per roll as they know their way around their own material. Hunters can of course give others access to their Library, but guests take the full 30 minutes per roll. A Successful Research action either finds the desired information, or conclusively discovers that the desired information is not present within the Library. As with any collection of material, information is not guaranteed to be correct and a single Library may have the works of several authors with contradictory points of view.

If a hunter has a Library some thought must be placed into where he's going to keep it. Sure he could just keep it in his home, but a good Library can be both valuable and suspicious. That blood and thunder baptist preacher might have a Library on demonology for the sole purpose of combating Satan's legions, but would he really want to be caught with instruction manuals for virgin sacrifices after young women have been vanishing? Therefore most hunters keep their Library in their Safehouse, protected by Secrecy and any Traps put in place. The Hunters may even dedicate dots in Safehouse Cache to keep the rarest and/or most suspicious books safe. Each dot of Cache can protect one dot of Library.

Special: Multiple hunters can contribute to a Library, pooling resources for the common good. If the hunters part ways the Cell will have to decide how the Library dots are split as each member takes their share of the books.

Lucid Dreaming (••)

Perquisite: Resolve 3, not Fae

Your character has the ability to know that she is dreaming, and can shape her dreams. Perhaps more importantly she can defend herself from faerie (and other) dream travellers, morphing the dream into dangerous attacks of manifesting within to do battle.

The fae cannot take this merit, because they do not need to. Lucid Dreaming is an innate trait of the fair folk.

Second Thoughts (••••)

Perquisite: Composure 4

Your character has a knack for second guessing himself and seeing past his own self deceptions. When against the fae this self doubt can help piece the enchantments that the fae like to weave upon the mind. Whenever the character is the target of a power that affects his emotions or perceptions he may roll Wits + Composure. On a Success the hunter knows that these emotions are unnatural. This does not automatically mean he can resist a powerful artificial fear, but it means he knows he should try to resist the fear. Second Thoughts can also be used to doubt the truth of illusions, however it does not require a Merit to doubt a power that simply bends light into images. Doubting illusions that enchant the mind to become more convincing does require this merit.

The Sight (••)

A person with The Sight is naturally able to see past fairy illusions. The Sight is rare and no one is quite sure what causes it, it is known that certain people are more likely to have The Sight including: The insane, the seventh son of a seventh son, very young children, people who grew up in proximity to the fae and people with The Sight in their family. Possible triggers that might grant The Sight (especially to one of the likely people above) include exposure to faerie magic, a trip to the Hedge, psychological trauma, drug use (especially hallucinogenics), losing your virginity (especially to a fae) or physical head trauma. A trip to Arcadia always grants The Sight, if not deeper effects.

The Sight can also be lost, though anyone who encounters the fae at least occasionally is practically guaranteed to retain The Sight. Possible triggers that can remove The Sight include: Puberty, taking psychiatric medicine, losing your virginity, recovering from mental illness, consistent stress for an extended period.

Wyrd Image (•)

Creatures of the fae seem to jump to conclusions about you, and usually the same conclusion. Choose a one or two word description like “wise teacher”, “chivalrous knight” or “sorceress”. Creatures of the fae will naturally treat you according to your image. The fae aren’t the only ones who jump to conclusion, it seems your life agrees. The opportunity to fulfil your roll comes around surprisingly frequently. A wise mentor will meet students (regardless of if she can help them), the chivalrous knight will constantly bump into damsels in distress (even if they just need directions). Once per story (and the opportunity is likely to occur at least once per story) you may regain a point of Willpower by acting as appropriate to your image.

The fae may take Wyrd Image (in fact they have it far more often than Hunters).

Drawback: It’s hard to break your role. If you act outside of character you suffer a -1 environmental penalty to all actions for the scene from a whole host of random coincidences. Acting directly opposed to your image, such as an innocent maiden making the first romantic move, increases the penalty to -2. It can also get very confusing, the captain of the football team won’t be surprised when people assume he’s physically fit, but why on earth do people keep assuming he can wield a sword? If you dramatically and publicly break character, or if you deny it in minor ways for an extended period of time, your Image vanishes.

Fated Path (• – •••••)

Perquisite: an appropriate Wyrd Image. This Merit may also be given to the fae (in fact they have it more often than Hunters).

The Wyrd is a force of Fate and narrative, over the years several well told stories have become thick reoccurring threads in the tapestry. The hunter’s life resonates with one of these stories, in essence his path has fallen into a well worn grove in the Wyrd. One which is easy to follow to it’s traditional conclusion, and hard to escape. Not all Fated Path’s are good for the character, but only buy this Merit for Paths the character is glad to walk.

The player (not the character, who is probably unaware of this Merit) may spend a willpower point and roll Fated Path + 3. Every success gains the character one hint, ally, item or other benefit that helps them follow the path to it’s fated conclusion. You may do this as frequently as you wish. When the character fulfills their destiny remove this merit, any lingering supernatural effects fade while more mundane consequences such as dots of Allies formed through an unlikely fated coincidence remain or fade according to mundane fate-free logic.

Drawback: Every use of Fated Path, even if the player rolls no Successes, always comes with some sort of test. If the character fails the test then they instantly loose all use of this merit. Keep the dots on the sheet however, and add them as a bonus to all rolls made to prevent the hunter from fulfilling their formerly Fated goal. Failing a test normally moves the character onto one of the variants of the basic story, one that ends in failure and an overly dramatic ironic fate. The Wyrd loves ironic fates.

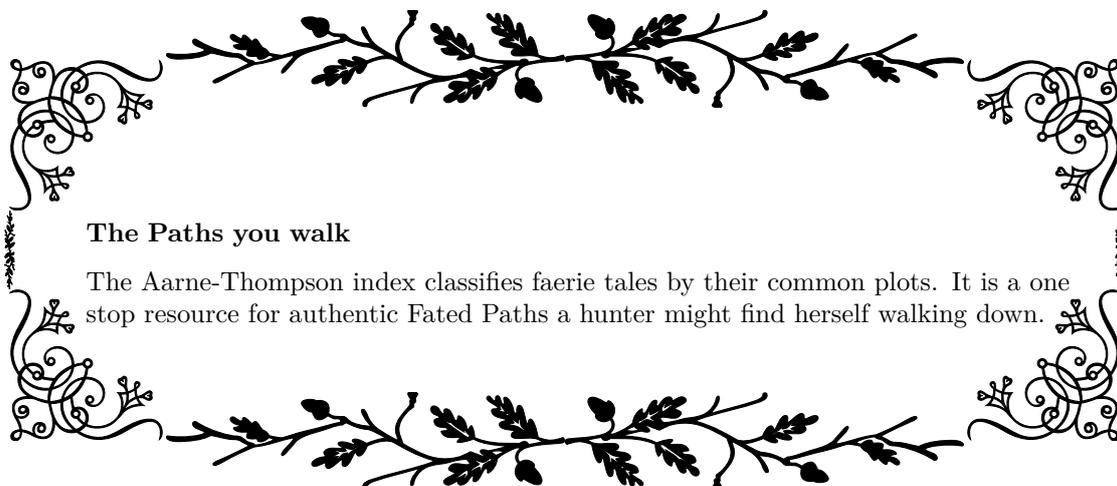
Beware of faeries, for they often seem able to recognise a Fated Path and aren’t above using their knowledge of how this merit works against ignorant mortals.

Example: Alison is recently married and has the Wyrd Image of “dutiful wife”. When she sees a horseman with the face of a stag swoop out of the sky and carry her husband off she immediately resolves to rescue her husband, before admitting she has no clue where to even begin looking.

Fortunately for Alison she has just recreated the opening of several classic faerie tales and so her player buys a dot of Fated Path with the Path ending in her rescuing her husband. Spending one Willpower she rolls 4 dice and gets 3 Successes, it must be Fate! The Storyteller declares that that night a small bird appears and says it’s her husband who managed to steal a pinch of the Faeries magic to send her a message and a magic seed. It will guide her to him, but she must never let anyone harm the tree that grows from the seed.

Planting the seed soon grows a lemon tree with three beautiful fruit. Alison eats the first fruit and tastes “If you want to learn about faeries, they hold a market at the nightclub ‘Neon Lady’ every new moon”. Alison goes to the Market and is overwhelmed by the bustle and weird sights. She needs help and decides to eat the second lemon, she tastes “One of the shoppers called Gentleman Jack will aid you”.

Unfortunately for Alison, as she discreetly inquires about Gentleman Jack, a changeling loyal to the horsemen sees her and realises what path she walks. Surely his lord will reward him for making sure nothing comes of this. Taking advantage of Alison's ignorance he introduces himself as Gentleman Jack gaining her trust. How hard could it be to find and destroy one tree?



The Paths you walk

The Aarne-Thompson index classifies faerie tales by their common plots. It is a one stop resource for authentic Fated Paths a hunter might find herself walking down.

New Endowments

Advanced Armory

The freaks love to think they're part of a story, putting themselves as princes, princesses, courtiers, etc. It's always about them, their needs, and their struggles. That's why many TFV agents love using their Advanced Armory. Sometimes nothing is better than using science to tear apart a badly written story. It's mostly experimental, a little dangerous, and under extreme scrutiny, but when the tools work, they work masterfully.

One problem, though, is that, despite constant clamoring from field agents, the methods used to track fairies cannot actually see them for what they truly look like. Despite all methods and experiments, TFV has not yet found a foolproof way to pierce the veil of secrecy around a fairy.

Urban Unmanned Reconnaissance Drone (•• – ••••)

Drones. They can go anywhere, track anything, and can even be equipped to kill a man in the time it takes for him to blink. They are the next generation of war, and TFV sees them as a God-send.

The earliest drones were, frankly, unofficial and improvised. RC cars fitted with cameras or model airplanes that would distract the target from the sniper. Now, with the advent of purpose-built drone technology, VALKYRIE has a tool on it's hands that can monitor it's targets, and never even give away it's presence.

The U.U.R.D., nicknamed "Heimdallr" by agents who seem to take a shine to TFV's Norse naming schemes, is a miniature quad-rotor drone, equipped with a fully functional video/ethereal camera. Since it only gives off a slight electrical signature thanks to it's battery, the U.U.R.D. is able to get in close, observe, and return to the controller without the enemy even knowing it was there. In situations when it is discovered, though, the Heimdallr still makes it's money worth it; a lost drone is more easily replaced than a lost agent.

The Heimdallr is a popular tool against fairies, as a drone does not have human emotions, and spells affecting the drone rarely affect the user. Due to the success of the Heimdallr, a second model has entered production, with a directional microphone as well as IR and Kirlan camera attachments. Though a larger size, it also means that the drone has expanded capabilities against the enemy.

Description: The U.U.R.D. comes in a two-part package; the drone itself, and the tablet control device. The battery life of the drone is about an hour and a half in-game. The two-dot drone and the tablet are Size 2, the four-dot drone Size 3.

Special: Some TFV ops are about combat, not surveillance, and need a little extra punch. So, they've petitioned command for mods to the drone that would enable them to secure an extra piece of tech for firepower. This means that the drone has a variable loadout, and can change its equipment if the cell has requisitioned the proper gear.

U.U.R.D. Combat Package: Video camera, SMG: Damage: 2 Range: 100/300/450 Capacity: 30+1 Strength: 2 Cost: O

U.U.R.D. Surveillance Package: Directional Microphone, IR/Video Camera Cost: O

U.U.R.D. ENE Package: Directional Microphone, IR/Kirlan Camera, C4 explosive charge: OO

U.U.R.D. P/S-ENE Package: Etheric/Kirlan/Thermal Camera, C4 explosive charge Cost: OO

Iron Dust Grenade (••, Renewable)

The fae often bring illusions and trickery to the battlefield. A simple thing such as creating an illusionary ally can turn the tide of an entire battle. In retaliation Task Force: Valkyrie has created the Iron Dust Grenade. A device specifically designed to spread tiny iron particles around a wide area, tearing faerie illusions to shreds and preventing the Fae from creating a new one across an cubic area of about thirty foot a side. Only the Mask is strong enough to be unaffected.

Iron dust isn't enough to actually hurt a faerie, though they do find it irritating. For actual combat Valkyrie uses conventional shrapnel grenades modified with chips of iron ore. While deadly, they are considered regular equipment and not an Endowment.

Electromagnetic Pylon System (•••)

When Valkyrie first fought against the fae they approached battle it like they would with any other supernatural foe. They went in heavy using shock and awe tactics to try and neutralise the fae before they could call upon their magic. It worked perhaps a little too well; the fae panicked, ran and promptly vanished into thin air.

Valkyrie scientists tasked with finding a solution failed to prevent the fae from pulling off their vanishing act, but they found a workaround. Studying the reports they discovered that to disappear the fae needed some form of portal; a door, a window, even a mirror. Keep the fae away from any doors, and they're stuck.

"Brynhildr" Pylons were the answer. A backpack containing a core of meteorite iron surrounded by powerful computer controlled electromagnets designed to create a directed magnetic field between pylons (for this reason the first purchase of this Endowment per cell comes with two Pylons). The fae find the thought of even crossing the barrier uncomfortable, changelings and hobgoblins must spend an instant action gathering their courage and succeed on a Resolve + Composure – their own Wyrd roll and more powerful fairies cannot even try for as long as the Pylons are in place (though against any being that powerful, relying on it being unable to shut down the Pylons without a plan B is a fools move). Curiously the fae who do manage to cross the barriers seem to suffer no ill effects.

After a few teething problems where cells would damage a Brynhildr Pylon by rapidly dropping the backpack in a tactically useful location Valkyrie engineers added shock absorbers and a gyroscopic self righting mechanism.

Special: While valuable, the cost for the Brynhildr assumes that there's only one route of entry and exit for the enemy. For times when the target has a multitude of exits, teams can requisition additional pairs of pylons to either run the EDEs into a cattle trap, or simply keep them contained.

Additional Pylons: Cost: OO

Benediction

The light of the Lord is the most powerful force in existence, and it was in His wisdom that he shone the light of knowledge on His children, that man would know how to fight His dark enemies with the Lord's

guidance.

The Maternity of St. Brigit

The first thing any shepherd learns is to protect their flock, and the Shadow Congregation knows the lambs in their flock need protecting the most of all. Though powerful the Maternity is a tough Benediction to invoke and the effort drains the user, for this reason it's users attempt to bless all the children among their charges in one sitting.

Only mortal children under twelve can benefit from the Maternity of St. Brigit. Children with a strong tie to faeries, such as an active Pledge or the Merit Fae-Touched, cannot benefit either.

Cost: 1 Willpower Dot which can be recovered for 8 exp. Only the first activation in a Scene requires payment, after which the hunter may continue invoking The Maternity for as long as they have the energy to continue saying payers.

Action: Instant, a roll is a single prayer about a minuet and a half long.

Dice Pool: Composure + Benediction

Dramatic Failure: The target shines like a beacon, becoming exceptionally attractive to faeries.

Failure: The protection does not take, the hunter does not need to spend Willpower.

Success: The child fades from the eye and mind of faeries. To see or remember the child a fae must exceed the hunter's Successes on a mundane Perception or memory roll. Being partially human changeling's have an easier time, they may add their Morality to the Perception roll solely for the purpose of overcoming The Maternity of St. Brigit. The effects last one year, or until the child's 12th birthday. Whatever comes first.

Exceptional Success: In addition to the bonus for many Successes the hunter may trade in five Successes to invoke The Maternity of St Brigit without spending a Willpower Dot. This does not remove the cost from further activations of The Maternity.

Suggested Modifiers:

- The Child has The Sight (-5), The Maternity of St. Brigit always removes The Sight, though the possibility remains for The Sight to return after the Benediction wears off. This is about as likely as the child acquiring The Sight as though he had never had it before.
- The child has recently broken some rule faerie tale rule associated with naughty children like sneaking into the forest, leaving "the path" or forgetting to say his prayers (-2).
- The child is well mannered and well behaved (+2).
- The child is a practicing Christian (+2).
- Benediction Performed on February 1st (Feast day of St Brigit) (+5).

The Shoulder of St. Christopher

In the service of Christ St. Christopher carried travellers across a raging river. The Malleus Malificarum rarely have that much problem crossing rivers but they rather often find they need a helping hand travelling to safety. By invoking the name of St. Christopher the hunter can know the road to safety.

This Benediction can only help the hunter find the way to safety. If they want to rescue someone, or slay a monster first they'll have to do their own navigation.

Cost: 1 Willpower.

Action: Extended, each roll represents one minuet of praying and chanting. The target number is four Successes.

Dice Pool: Composure + Benediction

Dramatic Failure: The hunter becomes exceptionally lost, incurring a -3 penalty to all navigation rolls.

Failure: The blessing fails to invoke.

Success: Successes are accumulated, when the hunter reaches four Successes they instantly know the safest path to the nearest place of safety. Be aware that the safest path is not always the quickest path and "safest" is relative. The bridge guarded by an grumpy troll is safer than the path through the

hungry dragon's home. If there is no way to travel from the hunter's present location to a safe place on foot then the Benediction fails.

Exceptional Success: In addition to activating the Benediction the hunter is given a brief idea of the dangers she might face upon the road.

Suggested Modifiers:

- Performed in a place where the usual rules of direction and travel do not apply (-5).
- Performed in another plane of existence; this does not stack with the previous penalty (-3)
- Benediction Performed on July 25th (Feast day of St Christopher) (+5).

The Vows of St Valentine

According to Catholic theology every soul has obligations to God, but God allows for free will and disobedience. The fae, however, enforce their agreements with powerful magical sanctions. When the two collide the Hammer of Witches invoke the name of St Valentine, who was martyred for worshipping Christ in defiance of the pagan priests of Rome as a blessing and absolution upon those who would honor their Catholic obligations in defiance of the magically binding pagan pledges of the Fae.

To qualify as a vow for the purposes of this Benediction it must fit three criteria: The vow must have been agreed to in word or writing, if perhaps unwittingly. Secondly the vow cannot directly control anyone's actions, they must be free to obey or not. Finally if the vow is broken there must be some magical consequences. The Vows of St Valentine will even work after the vow has been broken, whereupon it will lift any lingering magical sanctions.

The Vows of St Valentine works on any supernatural vow (except vows with heaven, obviously), not just the Fae. A witch's fate weaving spells qualify if they fit the criteria. As would a demonic pact. Even other Hunters are not immune: This Benediction can shatter the geasa that empower the Sons of Cú Chulainn and negate the arrangements made by the Lord Stewards. Few hunters would appreciate the Hammer of Witches striking at the source of their power. The Vows of St Valentine cannot permanently remove Endowments or Dread Powers from a character sheet: When the Endowment is a vow, such as an arrangement, then the power returns at the end of the scene. When the vow was merely created by a power, such as a geasa, the arrangement Sealing the Deal or a faerie Pledge, then it is destroyed permanently but it may be resworn after the scene is over.

In the case of vows that cover multiple people such as the tithe between Hell and Faerie, or the treaties between the British government and Britain, this Benediction can only exact individuals from the agreements. It cannot unmake the vow itself unless every last party is absolved one by one, and when only one party remains, the vow fades away.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Extended, each roll represents one minuet of praying and laying on hands. The target must remain still or be tied down for this time.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Benediction.

Dramatic Failure: The hunter offends the mystical forces behind the vow. They may become cursed by the force (probably with the vow's official sanctions) or draw the ire of a vengeful demon.

Failure: No successes are gained.

Success: Successes are gained, the target Successes are three times the Power Stat of whoever sealed the vow (for hunters, use their Status). When the threshold is reached the target is extracted from the vow, they are free from any obligations and loose any benefits or penalties that spring from the vow itself. Nothing prevents anyone from reaffirming their vows, but they must wait until the next scene before they may do so.

Exceptional Successes: Lots of successes are gained.

Suggested Modifiers:

- The vow is compatible with a Christian life (-5).
- The target has never been baptised or formally accepted into a Christian church (-5).
- The target has been baptised or formally accepted into a Christian church, but not a Catholic church (-2).

- The vow is obviously against Christian morals or a Christian life, such as a vow to commit murder or a vow to never enter a church (+3).
- The Benediction is performed on February 14 (Feast day of St. Valentine / Valentine's Day) (+5).

Castigation

Hellfire. Few others in the world can control this substance gained straight from the innards of the worst place in the universe. The fae aren't one of those others. With demonic familiars to fight against them, and the fires of Hell burning them, the fae won't stand a chance against the Seventh Generation.

Deal With The Devil

Demons and faeries both love a good bargain, but demon bargains aren't quite like Faerie Pledges, for the one thing the demon has to do the work itself. The Wyrd isn't quite so helpful. For another thing demons are worryingly interested in your soul.

Because demon's have to provide their side of the deal by hand a Child of the Seventh Generation can't really offer much an ordinary human couldn't, but if they really want to this forbidden Castigation lets them deal in souls. Naturally it is utterly forbidden by the Lucifuge and even knowing of it's existence implies a hunter has both status and dire need, or more likely that she been going behind the Lady's back.

To activate Deal with the Devil requires a signed contract that specifies the conditions for a soul to change hands. Most commonly as payment for goods or services rendered, or if certain contractual obligations are broken. Enforcing a monster's terms of surrender against it's soul is the closest thing to a justifiable use of this Castigation. It also must state when the transfer of souls occurs, most commonly they transfer immediately or at the point of death. The contract can be written in dense legalise, dead languages or even the dialects of Hell but it must be possible to read it with the naked eye: No microscopic fonts or invisible ink are permitted.

Once the deal is signed in blood the Lucifuge spends one point of Willpower to send a copy to Hell's "collection agency". Should all the conditions be met a demon is dispatched to retrieve the soul. This has the unfortunate side effect of meaning the legions of Hell are aware of every use of this Castigation. It also means that a Child of the Seventh Generation who sends plenty of souls Hell's way can gain status and allies among the infernal hierarchy. Another reason why the Lady of Milan has forbidden it utterly.

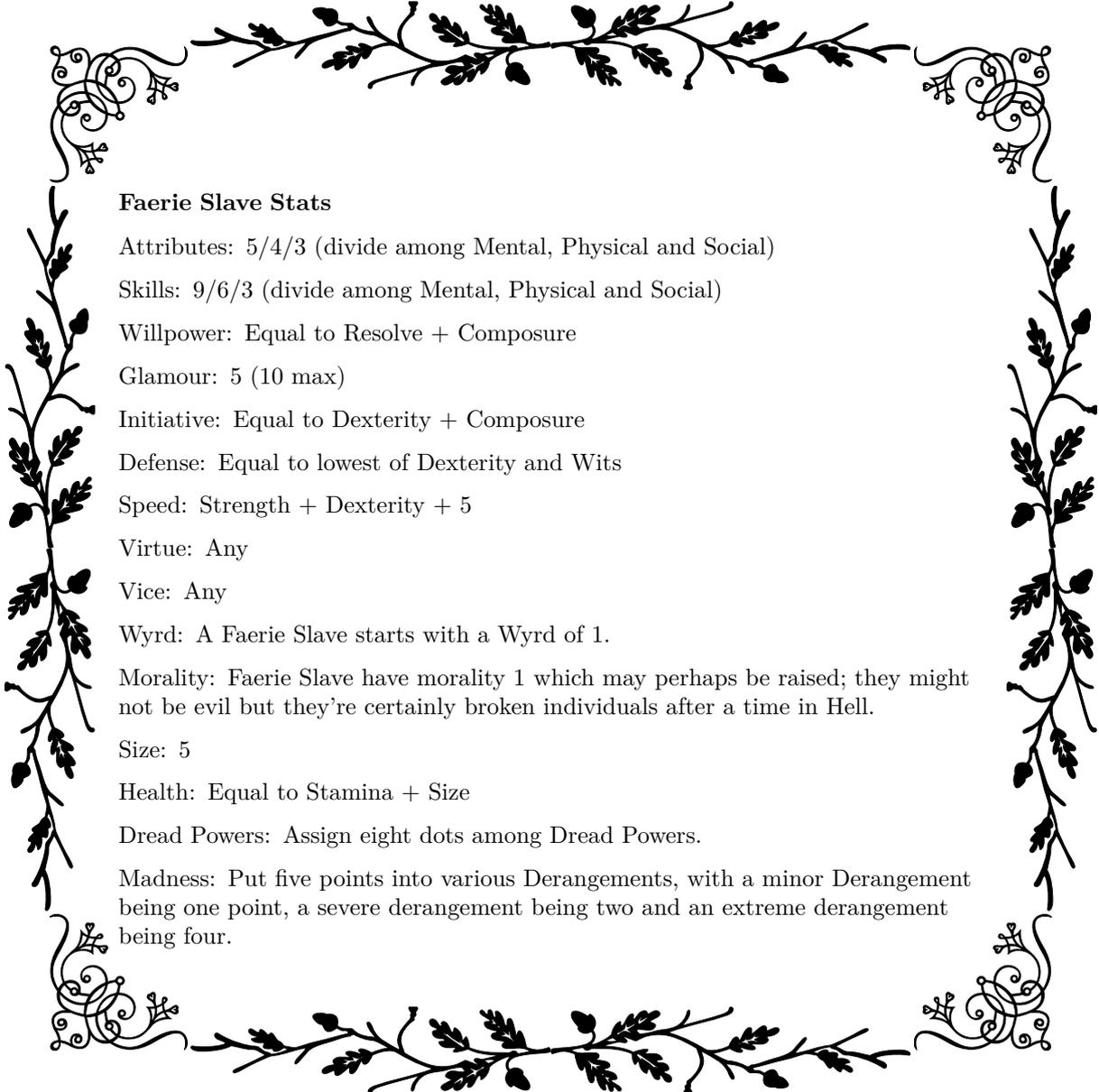
Faerie Slave

The faeries tithed to hell are a valuable commodity, a status icon traded between the archdemons and dukes of hell. Sometimes one will be given to a member of the Lucifuge as a gift from a dotting demonic ancestor (and that's pretty much the only way to get one short of breaking into Hell to steal a faerie, and that's not likely to happen).

Faerie slaves are without exception psychologically broken. All the fae are prone to madness while no one, no matter how mentally tough, gets out of Hell unscathed. Yet faerie slaves often show absolutely fanatical loyalty to their master or mistress. No matter how cruel a descendant of demons can be, it's not one thousandth of what they suffered in Hell, and probably leagues better than what they endured in Arcadia. So long as they're bound to a member of the Lucifuge (or a member of Le Enfants Diabolique) they are safe from Hell. From this flows an insane loyalty that the leave the Lucifuge complaining that their slave's constant attempts to win favor cause more trouble than a scheming fae attempting to get revenge on a cruel master.

Freeing a Faerie Slave would require finding someone able to break a Faerie Pledge. It would also require the Lucifuge to go through with something that drives their slave to near suicidal fear and hysterics. After all, if they don't belong to the Lucifuge are they "free for the taking"? An all round impossible situation that might be resolvable with promises of sanctuary from an angel, a replacement payment to Hell or some other unlikely or unethical solution.

It is important to be aware that the Faerie Slave Castigation refers exclusively to the Fae who were tithed to hell, if a Lucifuge is able to acquire the loyalty of any other Fae the Retainer Merit should be used instead.



Faerie Slave Stats

Attributes: 5/4/3 (divide among Mental, Physical and Social)

Skills: 9/6/3 (divide among Mental, Physical and Social)

Willpower: Equal to Resolve + Composure

Glamour: 5 (10 max)

Initiative: Equal to Dexterity + Composure

Defense: Equal to lowest of Dexterity and Wits

Speed: Strength + Dexterity + 5

Virtue: Any

Vice: Any

Wyrd: A Faerie Slave starts with a Wyrd of 1.

Morality: Faerie Slave have morality 1 which may perhaps be raised; they might not be evil but they're certainly broken individuals after a time in Hell.

Size: 5

Health: Equal to Stamina + Size

Dread Powers: Assign eight dots among Dread Powers.

Madness: Put five points into various Derangements, with a minor Derangement being one point, a severe derangement being two and an extreme derangement being four.

A Midnight Kiss

A succubus, and it's male equivalent, an incubus, are demons that manifests in dreams of sexual temptation. Through the act of seduction they would feed upon the life-force of their dalliances leaving them weak, and in some cases dead.

More than a few of the Lucifuge were born from such a illicit night of passion and the tricks of their infernal parentage still lie within their tainted blood. By touching a sleeping person a child of the Seventh generation can invade their dreams.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Resisted

Dicepool: Manipulation + Empathy - Resolve

Dramatic Failure: The power rebounds on the Hunter who immediately falls into a nightmare ridden sleep.

Failure: The Castigation fails to take effect.

Success: The hunter enters the targets dream. They cannot control the dream directly but they are free to interact with anything within the dream. They can communicate with, or combat any other

travellers within the dream and the dreamer herself if she has the knack of Lucid Dreaming (remember, the fae always do). Castigations work as normal but cannot interact with anything outside the Dream, so for example *Calling Forth the Pit* cannot summon a Demon, but it can create a fake demon out of raw dreamstuff. There is a drawback: Any dream entered by the Lucifuge always shifts into a nightmare based around the dreamers Vice.

Exceptional Success: As above, but the Lucifuge can also assign some broad traits to the dream. They cannot prevent it becoming a nightmare, but they could choose to set the nightmare in a frozen wasteland or decree that the dream will be full of serpents.

Elixir

Rueful Eyes (•)

Rue has long been associated with faeries. To the Ascending Ones they grant a way to brew The Sight in their alchemical laboratories. They make pills from a mixture of rue, LSD and fruit from the hedge (it rarely matters which fruit is used) which can be consumed to see past fae illusions.

Action: Instant

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: For one day the Ascending One gains a twisted, corrupted version of The Sight. They can see the Fae as monsters, but not as they truly are. Even the most innocent fae is twisted into a being of nightmare and madness. Every time the Ascending One sees a faerie must roll Resolve + Composure, on a failure they flee in panic or descend into gibbering catatonia. This is in addition to the effects of LSD (WoD Core p177).

Failure: The character suffers from mild hallucinations: A whiff of strange smells, a snatch of unearthly sound, a glimpse of a strange being. This is a -2 to composure rolls (including perception) that lasts for eight hours.

Success: For the remainder of the day the Ascending One possesses The Sight and can see the fae for what they truly are.

Exceptional Success: The Ascending One gains some mild ability to see past other illusions, gaining +1 to resist illusions.

Tutu's Grace (••)

Tutu was an Egyptian god who protected the sleeping from dangers and bad dreams. When hunting the fae this is a god you want on your side.

Tutu's Grace is formed from goblin moss cut with traces of arsenic, it must be formed into a candle or incense and left to burn where the Ascending Ones intend to sleep. Unlike many Elixirs, a single dose of Tutu's Grace can be shared with an entire room full of people.

Action: Instant

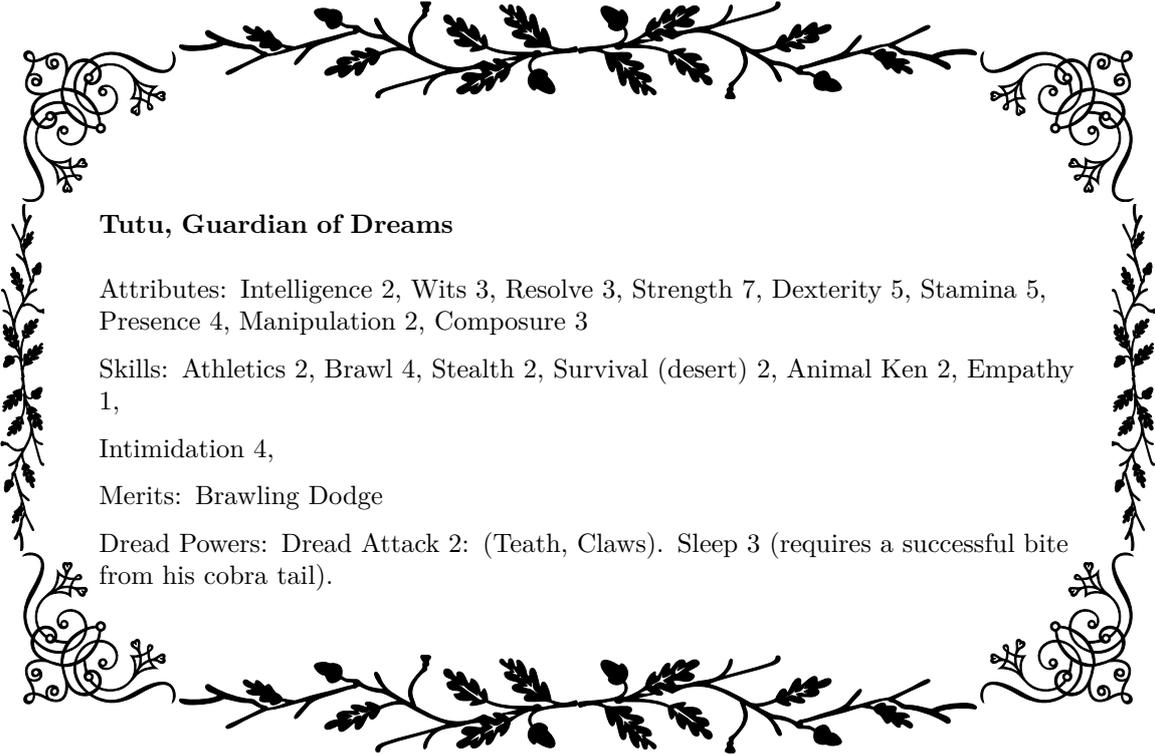
Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The Ascending One is treated as though she inhaled a Toxicity four poison. In addition, expect nightmares.

Failure: The Ascending One only has to contend with the nightmares.

Success: The Ascending One gains the Lucid Dreamer merit for the night. Curiously if multiple Ascending Ones sleep in the same room they share a communal dreamscape and any attackers must contend with the cell as a group.

Exceptional Success: The Ascending One dreams that he is in a quiet oasis in the deserts of Egypt. Tutu patrols the borders of the oasis. Tutu is probably just a figment of the Ascending One's dream, but any fairies invading the Dream still have to fight past him to reach the Ascending Ones. A single Exceptional Success grants this benefit to any Ascending Ones sharing a candle of Tutu's Grace.



Tutu, Guardian of Dreams

Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3, Strength 7, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Presence 4, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Stealth 2, Survival (desert) 2, Animal Ken 2, Empathy 1,

Intimidation 4,

Merits: Brawling Dodge

Dread Powers: Dread Attack 2: (Teath, Claws). Sleep 3 (requires a successful bite from his cobra tail).

Elixir of the Ice Cold Heart (•••)

Many of the monsters the Ascending Ones face in the night can use emotions as a weapon, the Fae use emotions most of all. To combat the Fae the Ascending Ones have created an Elixir that removes their emotions entirely.

The Elixir of the Ice Cold Heart is vial of frozen TTX droplets suspended in a 100% ethanol solution. A single draught can entirely remove all emotions turning the drinker into a paragon of Vulcan logic, though the Ascending One may retain emotionally based beliefs out of habit. This effect forces no particular goals on the Ascending One, she may apply logic to following the prophet's teachings or protecting her cell just as she may apply ruthless logic to defeating the monsters at any cost.

The Elixir of the Ice Cold Heart has a drawback, so long as the Ascending One's emotions are dead she may not spend, regain or risk Willpower. At the storyteller's discretion uses of Willpower external to the character may be permitted.

Action: Instant

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The Ascending One suffers the effects of a Toxicity 4 bashing poison. In addition they gain the full effects of the Elixir until it wears off, at which point they'll suffer weeks of violent mood swings during withdrawal. The solution is off course another draught of the Elixir, potentially leading to a lifetime's addiction to the toxic potion.

Failure: The hunter is affected as though he had taken a potent (-3 to social rolls, no bonus to Strength or Stamina) dose of cocaine. It gives the impression of distance and aloofness rather than paranoia.

Success: For the rest of the scene the Ascending One's emotions fade to nothing leaving him a paragon of icy cold logic. Only Supernatural powers can force him to feel emotions, and only if they score more successes than his Elixir rating.

Exceptional Success: The Ascending One is also instantly aware if anyone attempts to manipulate his emotions.

Serapis' Breath (••••)

The pharaoh Ptolemy united the Greeks and Egyptians in his realm by encouraging belief in the god Serapis, depicted as a Greek figure but adorned in Egyptian symbology. The Ascending Ones often feel

kinship to the Pharaoh and see his actions as a kind of fable, by spreading beliefs they can bind people together with sulha.

Serapis' Breath is an incredibly fine iridescent powder extracted from the ash of several goblin fruits, mixed with LSD and the breath of sleeping people in the midsts of a pleasant dream (collecting breath without letting it's mystical potency escape is arguably more impressive than the Elixir created from it). The roll for Serapis' Breath is somewhat unusual: The Ascending One chucks the Elixir upon a flame and everyone who breathes the vapours must make a Stamina + Elixir roll. The intent is for the targets to fail the roll (remember that without dots in Elixir all Failures are Dramatic Failures, but for once don't apply a penalty to the dicepool for missing dots). Assume that the vapours fill an ordinary sized room.

Action: Instant

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: In addition to the effects of a failure for the rest of the Scene the character becomes prone to extremely convincing hallucinations that play off suggestions. Someone only has to say they will see something and provided it is theoretically possible they will begin to hallucinate that it is true. Examples include: "This briefcase is full of cash", "you don't want to threaten me, I've got a gun under my coat", "this looks like an ordinary house, but it's decorated like the sultan's palace inside". Completely impossible statements, like "I can turn into a three story giant black dragon who's jaws are a gateway to Hell itself!" require a Manipulation + Expression vs Wits + Composure roll.

Failure: The character's vision goes a little odd, suffering a -1 penalty to all Perception rolls.

Success or Exceptional Success: The character is immune to the effects.

Anubis' Scale (•••••)

The god Anubis weighed the heart of a dead against a feather. The Ascending Ones find that they too often have cause to weigh the hearts of they need in a more metaphorical sense, and usually before anyone has died.

Anubis' Scale is brewed from a particularly' disturbing hobgoblin tree that is covered in eyeballs. The eyeballs must be harvested (without getting eaten) and killed by drowning them in a solution of vinegar and sea salt.

Action: Instant

Roll Results:

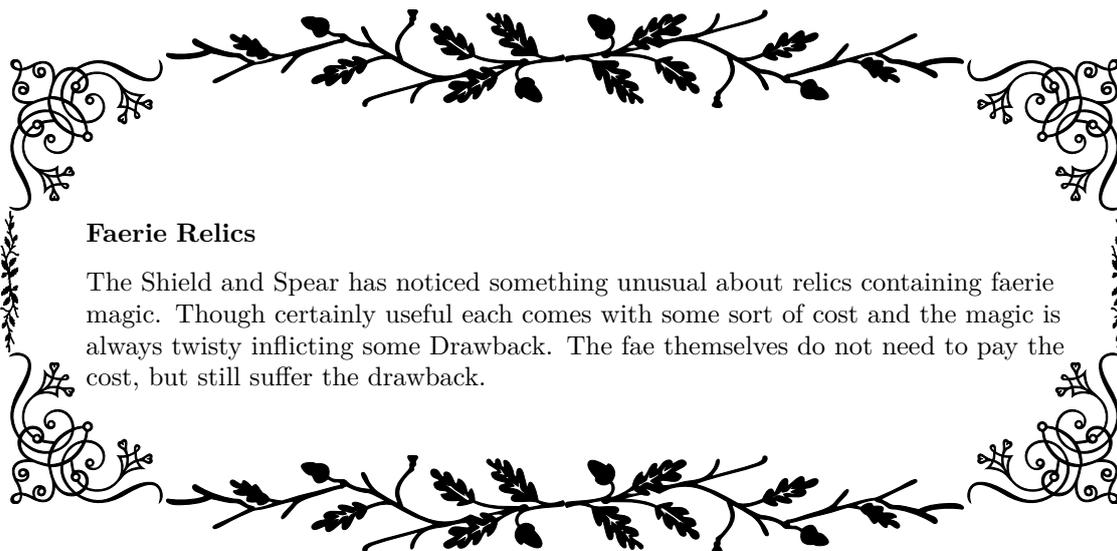
Dramatic Failure: The Ascending One vomits up the frankly disgusting elixir, bile emergens from his mouth, nose and even his tearducts. Purging his body does not prevent him from a Toxicity 5 lethal poison.

Failure: The hunter is affected as though he had taken a potent dose of hallucinogens.

Success: For the next six hours the Ascending One suffers a curious change of perception. He cannot see people, the storyteller should avoid describing faces, voices or even obvious traits like sex or ethnicity to the character. Instead the Ascending One sees people as a one sentence summery that describes their role in Fate's tapestry. If they have the Merit Wyrd Image the Ascending One sees their Image, otherwise the Storyteller is encouraged to use a character's role in her plot as the character's role in Fate's tapestry.

Exceptional Success: The Ascending One's abilities extend to inanimate objects. He can tell at a glance if an object is important to Fate, and gain a one sentence summery of it's roll. Though most things look like "not important" rather than "a chair" the Ascending One retains enough awareness to avoid walking into objects.

Relic



Faerie Relics

The Shield and Spear has noticed something unusual about relics containing faerie magic. Though certainly useful each comes with some sort of cost and the magic is always twisty inflicting some Drawback. The fae themselves do not need to pay the cost, but still suffer the drawback.

Elfshot (•)

Elfshot look like small flint arrowheads, to anyone who has The Sight they are made from a strange unearthly and altogether untrustworthy looking metal. To use elf-shot the Hunter must fire it as with any arrowhead, this normally requires fixing it to a proper shaft which must be made entirely of natural plant materials. With a little craftsmanship Elfshot can be fired from a bow, crossbow or even a speargun. (When using a bow an Elfshot increases the damage by one, standard arrows are made for sport not combat, but has a -2 penalty against a hard or armoured target.)

When an Elfshot arrow is fired it instantly vanishes from the eyes of anyone without The Sight. A hit won't cause any damage directly, but when the target next goes to sleep they will catch a fever that causes the exact amount of damage the arrow should have done. As for the arrow itself, an arrowhead will turn up in the general area it was shot after a few days to a few months.

Cost: 1 Willpower.

Drawback: After the arrow is fired and until the target falls asleep the user becomes fearful that everyone saw the shot and are now tracking her down. She gains the Suspicion derangement, if she already has Suspicion or Paranoia all attempts to resist it are at -2.

Dreamcatcher (••)

One of the rarest and most valuable sorts of Relics are the ones any human can reproduce. The Shield and Spear will stop at nothing to add such knowledge to their libraries. They certainly stopped at nothing to steal the secret of making real working Dreamcatchers from the Native Americans.

By placing a Dreamcatcher by their bed a Hunter can ward off faeries and other creatures who prowl the halls of sleep. Any attempt to navigate into the Hunter's dreams suffer a -4 penalty, a Dramatic Failure indicates that the being has become trapped in the dream catcher for a few hours. Powers that work on sight or touch in the waking world are not affected by Dreamcatchers.

Elvish Shoe Box (••)

The Shield and Spear has come across several of these Relics. Each resembles an ordinary cardboard shoe box but always from some expensive and high class brand, or a brand that used to be expensive and high class. Elvish Shoe Boxes produce faerie gold, and lots of it.

Anyone can put legal currency into the Elvish Shoe Box and close the lid, when they open it the box will be filled with gold and gems worth one hundred times the value of the cash on the open market even if such an amount clearly couldn't fit into a small box. Elvish Shoe Boxes also accept cheques and credit or debit cards, they always drain the entire card's account and never accept a cheque that will bounce.

Cost: 1 Willpower, cash.

Drawback: After one day all riches taken from an Elvish Shoe Box turn into dry leaves. If the Hunter has cheated someone by paying with faerie gold they instantly know who has cheated them and how.

Masque of Empty Beauty (• •)

A Masque of Empty Beauty resembles a single item of make up such as eyeshadow or lipstick. Most have their brand names and Masques usually come from one of the cheaper high street stores. Applying the makeup always works wonders, granting the user Striking Looks 4 for a scene. They tend to be fussy about sex and will either work on women or men (defined by genitalia) but never both. Women's makeup works on women and, you get the picture. Be careful though, while the ones given to Guardians for use are temporary most of these relics have permanent effects.

Cost: 1 Willpower, one dot from your highest Mental Skill. Lost spots regain at a rate of 1 per week, in the case of a tie the player chooses.

Drawback: While under the effects of a Masque of Empty Beauty people instantly perceive the user as a pretty face with no brains or personality. This applies a -2 penalty to all social rolls where such opinions are a disadvantage. The storyteller remains the final arbitrator, the guardian may face no penalty when asking for the university to fund the next archaeological dig if the funding officer is the sort of person who would approve a large expense for a chance of sex. Alternatively the penalty may apply to seduce (where it balances out the +2 from striking looks) someone who finds bland personalities a turn off.

Neither the Striking Looks or the drawback apply to someone who can see through the Mask.

Hungry Glass (• • • •)

Despite it's terrifying power this relic looks like nothing more than a cheap mirror with a pink plastic frame, simple electronic light and sound effects, a couple of butterflies and basic decals. It's even got a battery casing and the Barbie brand name right on top. For all it's cheap tackiness experienced hunters of the Aegis Kai Doru hesitate to even go near this unholy abomination. Used properly Hungry Glass can steal a person's soul in a flash. The hunter holds the mirror so their target is reflected within and rolls Presence + Larceny vs Resolve + Supernatural Advantage.

Cost: 1 Willpower. The hunter must also pay with his reflection, he will not appear in Mirrors for the rest of the day.

Dramatic Failure: The glass shatters revealing nothing but an empty void between the frame. The surrounding air immediately begins flying into the void and may suck in small debris, never to be seen again. Reaching into the void has no effects beyond a normal total vacuum. Only complete destruction of the Hungry Glass ends this effect, but blocking the frame can suppress it. Any human (including humans with a supernatural template, but not ex-humans like changelings) who is within the vicinity must succeed on a Morality (or equivalent) roll or gain the Melancholia Derangement at their current Morality level; they are convinced that their soul has been sucked away and destroyed. It hasn't really, they still have their soul. Well most of it.

Failure: The Relic fails to have any effect.

Success: The target's soul is yanked from their body and trapped within the mirror. From their perspective they're floating in a pure void before a tiny window that lets in light and sound. This lasts for one day, unless someone on the outside releases them early or rolls a Dramatic Failure to use Hungry Glass. During that time the prisoner is likely terrified out of their mind and are ripe for threats or interrogation. The target's body carries on as normal, but suffers all the usual penalties of being temporarily without a soul.

Exceptional Success: The target can be imprisoned for up to a week.

Drawback: Upon being freed from the mirror the target remembers everything that occurred, within the usual limits of their memory. No memory erasing Relic can affect someone trapped by the mirror, the Hungry Glass blocks such attempts (and if a stronger Relic overpowers it, the Hungry Glass shatters as though a Dramatic Failure was rolled).

The Loaded Die (Beyond Measure)

This relic looks simple, a red plastic six sided die. A closer look will reveal the edges are shaved and the weighting is slightly off to favour rolling a six. No one would be fooled into thinking it's simple, not when they see the extensive security the guardians put it under, and the elaborate contraption designed to make sure that even if an earthquake hit the vault there is no way in Earth this die could roll.

The effects seem simple enough; once per day rolling the die grants the user a short burst of impossible luck. Maybe just a little if you roll a one, maybe a lot if you roll a six (despite the shaved edges the odds are exactly one sixth for every side). This isn't why the Aegis Kai Doru locks it away. They lock it away because the die comes with it's own destiny, the moment you make a roll your fate is sealed.

If the Guardian rolls The Loaded Die roll a six sided die, for the Guardian's next roll the target number for a Success decreases by the result. This means that you could get a Success on a two or above if you roll a six. The more Successes you gain as a direct result of the die the more outlandish the results. A bullet could go wide, ricochet and hit a gas main bringing an entire building down on the target.

Cost: 1 Willpower, the user also pays in future luck. Remove Successes from all future rolls until the user has paid back a number of Successes equal to the number rolled with The Loaded Die.

Destiny: Every hunter who has ever rolled The Loaded Die has at some point found themselves in dire straits. Fate itself arranges it and in this it seems unstoppable. When things seem like they cannot get any worse the guardian finds themselves face to face with a mysterious stranger. It's a different stranger each time but they all resemble a ratty poverty struck old man who loves to gamble and is willing to wager exactly what the guardian needs to fix their predicament. The Stranger never mentions the Loaded Die but he makes it clear he wants a fair game. Then he rolls first and rolls very well. The Guardian could play fair and if they win he'll hand over their winnings without a fuss (assume that 2 Successes with two dice wins). If the Guardian tries to cheat the old man immediately spots them and leaves in a huff.

The results of this meeting depends on the guardian's actions. If they refuse to play or loses fair and square then they suffer no consequences but are still in an awful predicament. If however they win fairly the Stranger gives them what they need. If they try to force the Stranger to hand over what they need or prevent him from leaving he collapses into a pile of trash appropriate for the surroundings. If they try to cheat with The Loaded Die then roll it as normal, the result is the number of days for which every Failure becomes a Dramatic Failure (other forms of cheating default to one day). Regardless of the guardian's actions, from this point they have completed The Loaded Die's destiny. It will not trouble them again, after all they couldn't possibly be foolish enough to continue using it, could they?

Thaumatechnology

There's secrets in the fairies. Medical. Scientific. Philosophical. Okay, the third one, corporate could care less, but the first two? Sweet Mother, is there a payoff to those. Maybe there needs to be some quality control first, but that's why there's so many cells to use those new parts on.

Second Shadow (•••)

In defiance of all logic Cheiron's surgeons have discovered a way to transplant shadows. They nail it to the ground and drag the faerie away until the shadow rips free (screaming most of the time; anaesthetic isn't cheap), then they stitch it onto Cheiron agents. After a brief bit of acclimatisation the shadow becomes as meek and obedient as a little lamb.

Benefit: No this doesn't make all that much sense but it works all the same. The shadow functions like an extra pair of arms, ones which twist and stretch in supernatural ways. For all intents and purposes this can be treated like telekinesis using the hunter's regular Attributes and Skills and a range of 20 foot or so. Faeries and hunters with the Sight can see a second shadow following the hunter and performing her wishes, everyone else just sees objects floating around, like regular telekinesis.

Silvered Tongue (••)

The Silvered Tongue might look like a perfectly ordinary tongue but out the corner of your eye, was it actually pure silver? When surgically grated in place of the hunter's own tongue it certainly lets the hunter speak temptations and lies with a smooth silvered tongue.

Benefit: The hunter gets a +2 to all Subterfuge rolls he is using the truth to deceive. He can lay on the jargon three foot deep or tell the truth in the most pedantic and literal sense while intentionally giving the exact opposite impression but he must be using the truth as a deception. The hunter's kisses also taste of honey.

The Spinner's Fingers (••••)

Not all faeries are graceful effeminate sidhe with pointed ears. The fae come in all shapes and sizes. The Spinner's Fingers are taken from spider-like fae who like to hang around in infested and condemned buildings. They're long and thin but look human enough, unless you have The Sight, and most importantly they have silk glands in the tips.

Benefit: The hunter can begin weaving a super strong invisible silk, just perfect for capturing monsters made of all sorts of expensive parts for Cheiron. This silk is invisible to anyone without The Sight (even the hunter who created it) but it's position can be given away if something visible rests upon it. The silk has a durability of 4, except to hunters with The Spinner's Fingers (and the fae from which the Fingers are harvested) to whom it has the durability of an ordinary spiders web.

The hunter may make one weaving roll per dot of Stamina until they run out of silk, afterwards it takes a good meal and about an hour to replenish the supply. If the hunter specifically eats to produce extra silk (protein shakes work best) they may make one extra roll.

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Crafts

Dramatic Failure: The hunter makes a complete mess and ruins their previous work.

Failure: The hunter makes a mistake and has to undo a little work. No progress is made.

Success: The hunter accumulates Successes. Every 4 Successes covers an area of around 6 square foot. After a couple of hours the silk turns into nothing more than ordinary spiders silk.

Exceptional Success: Great progress is made.

Anyone but a hunter (or faerie) with this ability who touches the silk is stuck fast. They must succeed on a Strength + Stamina - 4 roll to break free. One roll may be made per turn, but after Stamina rolls a calculative -1 penalty is applied for any additional roll. A Dramatic Failure means the character is stuck fast until someone cuts him down, or the silk reverts into mundane spiders silk. Bonus dice can be awarded if the hunter is aided in their escape, has a knife or other sharp object, or is able to burn the web down, the number of which is at the ST's discretion.

Sons of Cú Chulainn – The Warrior's Code (Cód an Trodaí) (•–••••)

The ancient Celts of the British Isles were a martial culture, known to history for sometimes charging into battle stark naked, covered in tattoos as a symbol of their fearlessness in the face of their enemies. These Celts were feared warriors to their enemies, and the time spend in the Hedge by the village warriors so honed this skill, that the Hounds have taken to calling it "The Warrior's Code", which they claim inspired the name of a particular punk album, but that is neither here nor there. What is important is that the Warrior's Code is vital to their operations against the unseele.

How does it work? It is because the Sons train themselves. On their meeting nights, they not only discuss their charitable business, they practice with their swords and train with weights. They clean their weapons and read up on their enemies. Many spend their free time doing the same, whether in the clubhouse or their own homes. It is essential they are at peak when fighting the enemy, and their Code has given them the ability to fight in superhuman ways.

It is also, however, a code of conduct for those inside the Sons. Written in 1963, the code describes how a true Hound must conduct themselves according to their beliefs. They must show kindness to the less fortunate in their community with charitable deeds. They must never knowingly reveal the secrets of the organization to non-members, especially those that are known to be enemies of the group. They swear to uphold their own duties, and to never knowingly wrong or harm an innocent. To break this code is to forfeit a Hound's abilities, as any and all of these will vanish the instant a Son breaks the code. The ancient Irish called this "geasa", a taboo against certain behavior that the ancient Irish found unworthy for a warrior to partake in, a way for the ancient warriors to be held to a higher standard in the eyes of the gods and their fellows. In this manner, the Sons emulate those ancient warriors of Eire, and maybe become legendary themselves.

If codes, training and traditions are the source of the power, iron focuses the power. It is through iron that the geasa bestows power on a warrior and armours his soul against the trickery of the fae. To use this Endowment the hunter touches a piece of iron (cold or hand forged) and swears a geasa upon himself. This geasa has two parts: What the Son swears to do, and what condition he deems his task complete. An example would be “I swear to hunt the unseelie who cursed my son” with the victory condition “My oaths are fulfilled when the unseelie is dead”. Finally the Son chooses how many dots of Warrior Code to invest in this oath. He may invest any number of dots but each dot may only be invested in one Oath at a time.

Until the Oath is completed the power of the geasa grants two bonuses. Firstly it becomes hard to sway the hound from his course; any faerie magic that would befoul his emotions, muddle his senses or otherwise attempts to influence his action away from filling his oaths takes a penalty equal to the number of dots invested in this oath. Secondly he gains a bonus to using the iron that the oath was sworn upon as a weapon when it helps fulfil the oath, +1 die per dot of Warrior Code invested in the oath. For this reason the Sons like to swear upon a hand forged iron sword, not a lump of cold iron they keep in their pocket.

If they should break or abandon this pledge, or if the terms become impossible to fulfill, they immediately lose the dots invested into the oath and cannot gain them back until they make amends. These can be anything from donating a considerable amount of money or time to a soup kitchen to giving a confession to a member of the Catholic Church. What’s important is that they make their amends well. If the leaders of the cell deems it worthy, the Hound regains the lost dots.

The Wilde Society – Beautiful Madness (• – •••••)

The Endowment of the Wilde Society is one that other compacts envy, fear and believe the Society frivolously wastes on writing poetry. It is simple, yet potent. Members of the Wilde Society can understand the fair folk, they can even think like them.

To climb to the heights of Beautiful Madness the society uses artistic techniques, and often drugs, to open themselves to Faerie Glamour on a level beyond all others. A musician can hear the emotion within music, in time she learns to hear the mad turmoil of Arcadia deep within a Faerie’s pipes. A painter’s keen eye for inner beauty expands to see hints of the Gentry’s terrible intentions in the Faerie forms of it’s victims. A method actor knows how to enter the mind of his roles, by entering the mind of the Fae he learns to see the world behind the Mask.

Opening your minds to Glamour is beautiful, it’s inspiring, and it gives the Society an indescribable intuition into all things fae while so many hunters must fumble in the dark, searching for the least hint to help them predict their faerie foes. Yet it comes at a price, opening yourself to faerie Glamour will always, always, (have we mentioned always?) drive you mad.

Members of the Wilde Society have a pool of Beauty and may hold an amount of Beauty equal to their dots in Beautiful Madness. They may spend a point of Beauty to:

- Add their current Beauty score (before spending) to every roll used to create art for the rest of the scene.
- Add their current Beauty score to a single roll or all rolls in an extended action where understanding the Fae is helpful, this manifests as mad insight. Applicable rolls include but are not limited too: Research rolls, tracking or investigating the Fae, noticing the effects of Fae magic, social rolls with a Fae, and navigating the Hedge.
- So long as they have at least one dot of Beauty a member of the Wilde Society has The Sight, some madmen can naturally see the Fae and the Society have the right kind of mad.

Example: After a trip to the Hedge Oscar has a full five points in Beauty and wishes to write a poem of his experiences. Oscar’s player spends one point of Beauty, for the rest of the scene he adds 5 to all rolls to create art. The next scene Oscar decides to paint a picture to go with his poem, Oscar’s player spends another point of Beauty and adds 4 to all rolls to create art.

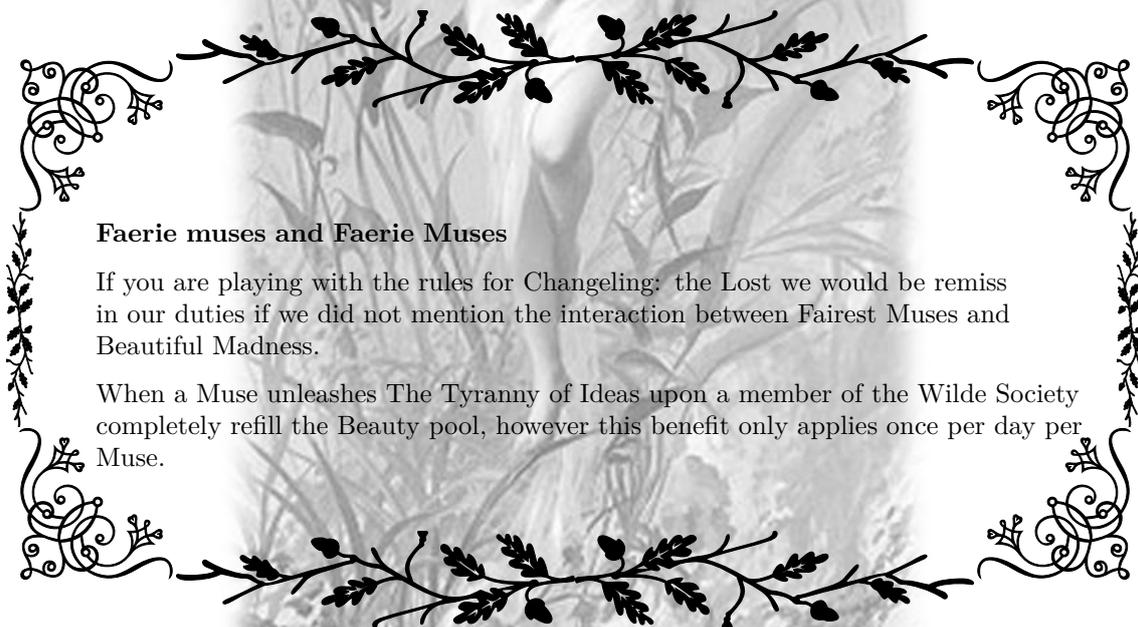
In addition, on every roll benefiting from Beautiful Madness the hunter can ignore up to their Dots in Beautiful Madness worth of penalties for being drunk or on drugs.

To recover Beauty the hunter must seek inspiration from the fae. Consult the following list:

- Eat a goblin fruit: Refill up to the first dot.
- See a changeling or hobgoblin: Refill up to the second dot.
- Do something artistic with a changeling or hobgoblin, such as paint it's portrait: Refill up to the third dot.
- See a large group of changelings or hobgoblins: Refill up to the forth dot.
- Do something artistic with a large group of changelings or hobgoblins: Refill up to the fifth dot.
- See a True Fae: Refill up to the fourth dot.
- Do something artistic with a True Fae: Refill up to the fifth dot.
- See the Hedge (from inside or outside): Refill up to the first dot.
- Traveling the Hedge: Refill up to the second dot every ten minutes according to time within the Hedge.
- Do something artistic with the Hedge: The Storyteller must use her judgement. Painting the standard path between two walls of vine and thorn refills up to the third dot while painting a beautiful vista can provide up to the forth or even fifth dot.

As Beauty is refilled at the end of the action but may be spent at the beginning, a member of the Wilde Society may spend beauty on their artwork and regain it from that same endeavour. Yet another reason they prefer to base their art upon the fae.

Beauty doesn't last forever and inspiration fades over time. If the hunter goes as many days as their Wits without seeing something related to the fae deduct a point of Beauty.



Drawback: It's called Beautiful Madness. The more points of Beauty a hunter has the more unhinged they are. In small doses the hunter merely seems eccentric, perhaps even charmingly eccentric or possessed of a dark mystique. As they accumulate more Beauty they become more visibly unhinged, and perhaps even more darkly attractive.

At one point they gain the derangement fixation. Further mild derangements occur at three and five dots. Two mild derangements may be traded for a severe derangement but Fixation can only be traded for Obsessive Compulsion.

If the hunter spends or loses points of Beauty the Derangements vanish, for a time.

Searchlight – Moral Compartmentalization (•– •••••)

Stable or fanatical? It's all in the eye of the beholder. The hunters of Searchlight rely on a system of emotional training to help them deal with their loss, and like any emotional training, it is in its own way a system of indoctrination. By participating in their group support sessions, Searchlight hunters receive reinforcement of their emotional compartmentalization, training to deal with their feelings of guilt and trauma, and certainty that they are on the right path.

By participating (including sharing) in a Searchlight group session, a hunter gains a number of "Support points" equal to his rating in the Endowment. These points can be spent in a number of ways.

- Spend 1 Support point to add +2 to a roll to resist Morality loss, provided it was in the cause of your search, or helping a group member with their search. With their training to deal with feelings of guilt and trauma Searchlight members tend to be very skilled at separating their actions on the Vigil from their everyday persona and leaving their own "stolen lives" to return to unblemished by whatever justified acts they've had to commit.
- Spend 1 Support to suppress a Tell. This applies until the hunter next commits the Sin that's replacement lead to the suppressed Tell or until she next actively pursues the Vigil.
- Spend 1 Support to suppress the social penalties caused by The Code. This applies until the hunter next commits any of the Sins that have been modified by the Code or until he next actively peruses the Vigil.
- Support points convert into 2 xp points that can only be spent on purchasing Morality through their group support. When doing so you must replace the Sin you committed with a replacement according to The Code. The hunter washes herself clean of guilt by retroactively applying The Code to her actions.

The Office of the Lord Stewards – Arrangements

The Stewards have been upholding ancient treaties with the land for centuries. Many of these arrangements entitle the Stewards to various privileges and favours which they may call upon to assist the Vigil.

Every arrangement is a formal contract negotiated and signed. A Steward who intends to use one had better uphold her end of the deal. To represent this every arrangement has a Requirement that either be fulfilled to activate the arrangement or limits how it may be used. In some cases a hunter may find a loophole in the Requirement. Using loopholes is considered exceptionally bad form by the Stewards who take their reputation for dealing in good faith very seriously. Any member caught doing this can quickly expect to lose Status. If the Steward tries to cheat and fails the roll he is caught: Failures are upgraded to a Dramatic Failure and he cannot use that arrangement again until reparations have been made.

The Stewards are not the only group who make use of arrangements. Odd traditions or family superstitions can point to a well maintained pact, some occultists know how to negotiate new ones on their own behalf or on behalf of their clients. For the most part the Stewards are not concerned with enforcing a monopoly on arrangements, when they find an independent user of arrangements they attempt to record what deals are in-place and only if they deem it necessary for their mandate will they offer assistance in maintaining the deal or nip it in the bud. However the Stewards are very keen to make sure no one else is negotiating on behalf of the government or the public. That could lead to no end of trouble.

Each arrangement is purchased as a separate Merit. In addition to other modifiers all arrangements have the following modifiers:

- +1 to +3: The Steward has recently made some attempt to give back to the land. Picking up litter, cleaning and maintaining his home, gardening. The exact benefit depends on the effort and passion involved.
- +2: The Steward is genuinely honest and reliable in his bargaining.
- +1: The Steward genuinely likes the part of the country he is in.

- -1: The Steward doesn't like the part of the country he is in.
- -1: The Steward has shown some minor disrespect to the land, like littering.
- -1 to -3: The Steward has recently broken a deal (mundane or magical).
- -2 to -4: The Steward has shown some major disrespect to the land. Like chopping down a tree without receiving permission first.

For there is much to see (•)

The common rue has long held strong associations with sight and the Lord Stewards know well that if you ask it nicely a taste of rue can open your eyes to the hidden sights of the fae. The Stewards usually take their rue as a tea. Rue is actually a slightly dangerous herb to drink, fortunately this arrangement covers that too. The Stewards don't actually digest their rue tea, just drink it. That's enough for the magic.

No roll is required for this arrangement, each activation makes enough for six cups of tea which can be stored and carried for a day without losing its potency. That's enough to give one hunter The Sight for six scenes (they don't have to be consecutive) or six people the sight for one scene.

Cost: 1 Willpower.

Action: Instant.

Requirement: While the Steward is under the effects of this arrangement they cannot deny the existence of faeries. The closest they can come is saying something like "no comment".

Key to the City (•)

With a polite word a Steward may ask any door to open. This only works on doors, not locked chests, cabinets or similar. Key to the City will not work on any supernatural, or even slightly enchanted door, simply because they never signed the treaty.

To invoke this arrangement the steward takes a key, identity card or some other object that symbolically opens a barrier, crosses it over his heart and promises that she is acting for the good of the country.

Cost: One Willpower.

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Persuasion.

Requirement: A man's home is his castle. Doors to a person's home (it must be owned, not rented or a squat) are exempt to this arrangement.

Drawback: When the Steward is confronted with advanced security, the arrangement works as normal but the entry is fully logged under the Steward's real name, as though she was fully registered and opened the door in the mundane way.

Dramatic Failure: The Steward sets off every alarm attached to the door she wishes to open.

Failure: Nothing happens.

Success: The door unlocks and every attached security system gives the all clear as though the correct passwords were entered, cards were swiped or fingerprints checked out. Any logging systems records every detail it usually would, with the Steward's correct details where appropriate.

Exceptional Success: As the Steward walks through the door it gives him a word or two of advice. Of course being a door its perspective is somewhat limited. It might proudly mention a recent failed attempt to pick its lock, or that someone walked through looking shifty or carrying stolen goods. Unsurprisingly doors are not omniscient, their advice isn't always useful.

Suggested Modifiers:

- The Steward is entering their own home +5
- The Steward is entering any other door she has full permission to enter (some safe-houses are designed with doors that cannot be unlocked without some kind of magic): +3
- The door has been mistreated: +2
- The door is in use exclusively by people who aren't supposed to: +2

- The door has been neglected (ignored squeak, flaky paint, etc): +1
- The door was built and installed by people who would disprove of what it's currently being used for (it was built by a law abiding construction firm, and is now used to hide a criminal gang) +1
- The door is loyal to it's owners: -1 to -3
- The Steward is lying about acting for the good of the country: -5

Neither Snow nor Rain (•)

The postal service was once the backbone of an empire, carrying messages around the world. Without the royal mail trade and governance would flounder. Times have changed and new technology eclipses the humble letter, yet enough of the old power remains to deliver a message.

Sending a message requires placing it in an envelope with the feather of a pigeon. Some form of identification is of course required. Something like "the faerie who I bumped into on Thursday" might be enough, but it's easier to use a full address and post code. When the particulars have been arranged just stick it in a post box.

Messages sent with this arrangement can be intercepted magically and they can be blocked by magical wards. Most wards can recognise these messages as harmless (because they are) and for that reason some let them through.

Cost: 1 Willpower.

Action: Instant.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Persuasion

Requirement: The Steward must pay the full price for postage and place their message in an envelope with the proper stamps.

Dramatic Failure: The message is delivered to the wrong person, or the right person at the wrong time, probably causing a serious hardship to the sender.

Failure: Nothing mystical happens and the letter remains in the post box, revealing it's presence with a thump. The post man may attempt to deliver it, or not if there is no delivery address.

Success: As the steward posts his letter it vanishes. The recipient will get the message within the time frame for the service the steward paid for. It may arrive as graffiti, by written onto the ground by a sudden burst of rain, be scrawled onto the back of a receipt or even arrive in the morning post. It will always be some form of writing and it is either portable or vanishes after the recipient has read the message.

Exceptional Success: The message arrives in the earliest time advertised by the service the steward paid for.

Suggested Modifiers:

- The Steward does not know the recipient's name or address: -3
- The Steward uses a full address and post code belonging to the recipient (regardless of whether the recipient is likely to go there): +3

Wanderer's Wayfare (•)

One of the nice things about being on speaking terms with the land is that it's very hard to get lost. By lightly smearing earth, dirt, sand or whatever on the soles of his feet a Steward can navigate even the most unfamiliar part of the nation.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Presence + Socialise

Requirement: The Steward is outdoors or in a natural cave.

Dramatic Failure: The land tries to lead the Steward astray. Remove 10-Agains and deduct 1s from successes. Roll Wits + Survival after each failed roll to realise what is going on, since the Steward doesn't have to follow bad advice this removes the penalty.

Failure: The Steward listens but hears nothing.

Success: The land speaks to the Steward without words, guiding his path. It seems everywhere he looks he spots landmarks and trails. All navigation rolls get 8again.

Exceptional Success: As above, and the player may reroll the first failed Navigation roll.

Suggested Modifiers:

- Famous Landmark in view +3
- On a road or man-made path +2
- A small navigation marker like a street sign or milestone in view: +1

Vox Loci (•)

Before she negotiates with the land a Steward is best advised to learn all she can about it. By taking an ambulatory stroll and opening her eyes to the voice of the land a Steward can take measure of her surroundings.

Cost: Nothing.

Action: Extended, each roll is three minuets of walking around. Listening to the birds, reading the graffiti or exchanging a few words with the locals. Threshold: 4 Successes.

Dice Pool: Wits + Socialise (uninhabited areas) or Wits + Streetwise (inhabited areas)

Requirement: While invoking this arrangement the Steward must be barefoot.

Drawback: Sometimes the land itself can become corrupted, such as when a demon inhabits a location. When this power is used in such a place not only does the Steward alert the malign being of her presence but opens herself to retaliation depending on the creature's abilities.

Dramatic Failure: The Steward accidentally opens her mind too far and senses the land at a deafening volume. She suffers -2 from a headache for the next few hours.

Failure: The Steward makes no progress to learning the lay of the land.

Success: The Steward makes progress. When she reaches the threshold the Storyteller should reveal the current atmosphere in one or two sentences. Such as "The people are frightened; several students have gone missing." "The forest is calm. It is enjoying the sun but hopes for a little rain soon".

Exceptional Success: The Steward also learns if there is any supernatural beings in the immediate area. They gain no details, just a single "yes" or "no".

Vox Britannia (• to •••••)

Vox Loci is a small measured power that lets the Steward safely learn about his surroundings. Vox Britannia is anything but, by invoking this arrangement a Steward connects his consciousness to the whole of the land, from Cornwall to Scotland. A vast expanse of godly intellect and power.

To listen to Britannia the Steward must allow the land to overwhelm his senses. Stand on a windswept moor and let the wind, rain and cold seep into every fibre of his being. Lose himself in the noise and scents of a dark moonlit forest. Row against the river until every muscle aches then drift down the stream with the sun on his cheek.

Cost: 1 Willpower.

Action: Instant, but it requires one to ten minuets to get into the right mood.

Dice Pool: Wits + Composure.

Requirement: The steward must swallow an acorn whole. (It helps to soak it for a few days first).

Dramatic Failure: The steward opens his mind to the land, and can't close it again. Everywhere he looks he sees messages; in the stones. The pattern of sunlight through the trees, the movement of birds. These messages are completely real but the overload can be represented by the Schizophrenia derangement and a careful choice of behavioural triggers. This lasts until five Successes are assimilated on an extended Composure roll. Sit down with a nice cup of tea, because each roll takes half an hour.

At the Storyteller's discretion this state might come with benefits, possibilities include: Increased navigational abilities. The ability to spot hidden details of the land like spiritual resonance or purely supernatural features like Hedge Gates or Graveyard Gates. Complete immunity to magical effects that target perception like Mind spells or the Mask. Or the effects of a Success in addition to the drawbacks. If the Storyteller offers an advantage they may also allow characters to intentionally turn a Success into a Dramatic Failure. The downsides to doing this should be sever enough to make this an act of desperation.

Failure: Nothing happens.

Success: The Steward opens his mind to the entirety of the land. It's a profoundly humbling and sometimes terrifying experience. He realises how small he is, and how big the country is, how easily it could shrug and crush them to bone dust. Fortunately the land doesn't do much more than offer advice; the Storyteller gives one clue about the current story per dot in Vox Britannia. If the Steward has three dots or more they can instead ask a specific question, and get one clue per dot about that question.

Exceptional Success: In addition to the benefits of a Success the Steward is also given one warning or advice to look out for. Before making any roll the player can at any point declare that they have reached the event they were warned about and turn that roll into a Rote Action. Only one Rote Action may be stored at a time, and it will expire after a number of scenes equal to dots in Vox Britannia. Use it or lose it.

Suggested Modifiers:

- Status (Lord Stewards): +1 per dot.
- Previously ignored advice from Vox Britannia: -1 to -3
- The land is currently upset with the Steward: -1 to -5
- Used within the last week: -3
- Used within the last day: -5

Walk With the Wind (•)

The people and the land may be able to coexist well enough, but like slightly awkward roommates they both have their habits that annoy the other. A cold wind, a heavy rain, a thick layer of mud. Again like awkward roommates ways of accepting and coping have developed: Coats, umbrellas and Wellington boots.

The Stewards like to have a little arrangement, it shows that they are making effort to talk about these things rather than just put up with them. To protect himself from the weather a Steward ties three swallow feathers to a small piece of oak. When the oak calls like a swallow the arrangement has been invoked.

Cost: 1 Willpower.

Action: Instant.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Persuasion.

Requirement: The Steward cannot be carrying an umbrella.

Dramatic Failure: The Steward comes across as unsympathetic and demanding. She gains a penalty equal to their Presence on all rolls for the rest of the scene as the Land (plus any nearby oak trees and swallows) throws a huff at him

Failure: Nothing Happens.

Success: Each Success reduces environmental penalties for perception and movement caused by natural weather by one for the scene. In addition the user is immune to Temperature Extremes, again it must be natural.

Exceptional Success: Extra Successes are their own reward.

Loqui ad Animalum (••)

The Lord Stewards have agreed with the birds and the beasts that they may be permitted to understand their languages. Animals can make useful allies, affectionate pets and in some cases party to the pacts the Stewards maintain. Ravens and crows for example both have abilities relating to fortune which they are willing to offer for a price.

Cost: Nothing.

Action: Instant.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Animal Ken

Requirement: The Steward offers the animal a small tasty treat.

Dramatic Failure: The Seward makes a grave insult. It will be impossible to get anything useful without making amends first.

Failure: The arrangement does not take.

Success: The Steward gains the ability to talk to the target. They only gain the ability to talk, acquiring useful information or favours requires social rolls as it would with everyone else.

Exceptional Success: As above and the Steward gets a +2 bonus on social rolls against the target for the rest of the scene.

Suggested Modifiers:

- Highly intelligent species (+2)
- Species native to Briton (+2)
- Species introduced to Briton in the last 50 years (-1)
- Very unintelligent species (-2)
- Species introduced to Briton in the last 10 years (-3)
- Species has no sustainable wild population in Briton (-5)

Once Loquere Animalibus is successfully activated the Steward may talk with it's target as they would any other human. This means that with the exception of Animal Ken in place of Empathy they should use the same Social Skills that they would if they were talking to a human. The animal responds to the Stewards request as appropriate for it's personality and the Stewards social abilities. In general the Stewards have learned from experience that it pays to have arrangements in place rather than trusting your ability to sweet talk and bribe animals.

Loqui ad Terram (••)

Loquere Terrae is rightfully considered the most important of all the arrangements used by the Lord Stewards for it allows one to talk directly to inanimate objects. This is the arrangement that makes it possible to create other arrangements and negotiate the very treaties the Stewards were founded to protect. It's obviously not the only way to talk to the land, someone had to negotiate Loquere Terrae, but it's the method the Lord Stewards use.

Cost: Nothing.

Action: Instant.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Socialise

Requirement: The Steward must make gesture of friendship for the object she wishes to speak too. The object will make a gesture of it's own.

Dramatic Failure: The Seward makes a grave insult. It will be impossible to get anything useful without making amends first.

Failure: The arrangement does not take.

Success: The Steward gains the ability to talk to the target. They only gain the ability to talk, acquiring useful information or favours requires social rolls as it would with everyone else.

Exceptional Success: As above, and the Steward gets a +2 bonus on social rolls against the target for the rest of the scene.

Suggested Modifiers:

- Talking to an object that looks like a human, such as a doll or statue (+3)
- Talking to an object that looks vaguely like a human, such as an oddly shaped tree (+2)
- Talking to an object that looks vaguely like an animate living being (+1)
- Talking to an object that was once alive, like a bone or a wooden chair. (+1)
- Talking to an object containing computer chips without any dots in Computer (-3)
- Talking to an object with mechanical parts without any dots in Crafts (-3)
- Talking to an natural object without any dots in Survival (-3)

Once Loquere Terrae is activated the Storyteller should treat the target like a NPC, depending on what the Steward asks social rolls may be required. Generally put natural objects like a tree or rock are reasonably intelligent and each has it's own personality though they can be accurately stereotyped. Artificial objects tend to be have slightly more rigid personalities that revolve around the purpose they were created for.

A Steward isn't limited to just talking, she can ask for favours too. Generally objects are happy to perform actions that are natural to them. A tree will happily drop a piece of ripe fruit into a Stewards waiting hand. A tap will gladly dispense water. However artificial objects are incredibly stubborn about not betraying their purpose: A computer will not tell you about it's files without the proper password, a vending machine will not dispense drinks without being paid. Resolve 5 is a minimum for measuring how stubborn an object is.

Natural objects by comparison are usually open to doing something a little unusual if asked. However they are intelligent and have their personalities. Most react much like you would expect if a person came up and started asking for favours: They might oblige their friends (An unusual but valid use of Allies for a Steward) but strangers will be perceived as rude without good social rolls, probably combined with some form of payment.

Put together you get the reason the Stewards favour premade arrangements. It's a lot less hassle and a lot more reliable in the long run.

In both cases an object is limited by it's fundamental capabilities. A door can open itself, but it won't double it's size when you want to move bulky goods. No matter how nicely you ask a typical desktop computer isn't going to hack into the MI5 databases; it could try but it's unlikely to get very far. However in the World of Darkness some things have additional abilities. Rowan wood is quite capable of aiding or hindering magic. But in general the rule is simple, things can only do what they can do.

Loqui ad Manes (••)

The British Isles have been densely populated for a very long time, and a large human population leads to a large population of ghosts.

By the Stewards' standards ghosts are model citizens. They rarely cause any trouble – they rarely do much at all – and so the Stewards are content to just let them be. However when a ghost is causing trouble, or when the last memory of an important bit of folklore was taken to the grave, then it is necessary to communicate with the dead.

To perform necromancy the Stewards turn to blood. If there is a physical form of life itself then blood is that form. The steward procures a small measure of blood, then she waves a knife above it to ward off all ghosts. Finally she invites one ghost by name to drink from life, and appear within the land of the living for a short while. If the ghost does not wish to talk then it can resist the summons and the temptation of blood by rolling Resistance.

Cost: Nothing.

Action: Instant.

Dice Pool: Presence + Persuasion vs Resistance

Requirement: The Steward must know the ghosts name (or be willing to manifest a ghost on a first come first serve basis) and must offer the ghost a tablespoon of human blood, or a cup of animal blood. The blood must be fresh, it cannot be stored for over a day.

Dramatic Failure: Any ghost in the area may consume the life within the blood, gaining the ability to Manifest and +1 on all Numina for the scene.

Failure: The arrangement does not take.

Success: The ghost manifests, for the remainder of the scene it may be seen and speak to anyone in the area, even if it does not normally possess the Ghost Speech Numina.

Exceptional Success: Drinking from life restores some of the mental faculties lost to death and the degradation of time.

Suggested Modifiers:

Manifestation modifier (see WoD Core p210): +3 to -3

The Honest Atlas (••)

Maps know things, it's their purpose and they're rather good at it. However maps don't always tell the truth. Some places are omitted, some have changed since the map was written and some mapmakers include trap streets to protect their copyrights.

While they may deceive the public, maps have agreed they'll reveal the secrets they know to the Lord Stewards. The Steward asks a question then takes a single drop of ink and splashes it onto a map from a height. The inksplashes will cover the exact locations that answer his questions. This arrangement can only provide answers in the form of locations.

This arrangement can only reveal secrets on the open pages of a map – simply because ink cannot pass through solid paper.

Cost: 1 Willpower.

Action: Instant.

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Persuasion.

Requirement: Maps will not reveal secrets they were specifically created to protect nor will they reveal secrets that are directly tied to love.

Dramatic Failure: The steward spills ink everywhere ruining the map.

Failure: The ink makes a perfectly normal splash on the map, the steward is aware the arrangement didn't work.

Success: Every success reveals the location of one secret that answers the steward's question. Additional Successes are wasted. If there aren't any locations that answer the Steward's question the ink flows right of the page.

Exceptional Success: The steward also sees one still snapshot of every location from a bird's eye view. Anything that has moved in the last three days is not present in this snapshot.

Suggested Modifiers:

- Asking about something that could be found just by reading the map: +5
- Asking about something publicly known, just not shown on the map +2
- The answer is a location protected by Safehouse Secrecy, Haven Security or similar (-1 per dot).
- The answer is protected by Occultation or similar (-1 per dot).
- The answer is protected by an active supernatural power, such as Space Arcana wards. (Use appropriate mechanics for the power. Or default to making an appropriate Contested roll)
- Asking about something that has been lost to time, like where is Excalibur? (-1 per ten years. This may go beyond -5. Using a map from within 100 years the item was lost reduces the penalty by one. Using a map from within 10 years reduces the penalty by 3).

Pact of Protection (•••)

Pact of Protection is a generic arrangement meant to represent dozens, if not hundreds of different pacts. In times of yore, long before John Dee presented his recommendations before the crown, protection from the supernatural was one of the most common boons people would ask of the land.

The Lord Stewards have inherited, to put it simply, an ungodly mess. Dozens of pacts all asking for the same thing, all of which have to be paid for separately. Monstrously inefficient. Over the years the Lord Stewards have been keeping records of which pacts are no longer needed by members of the public and can be safely allowed to expire. When the opportunity arises they have encouraged occult groups, magic dabblers and superstitious but ordinary citizens to switch to a few centrally managed treaties but the process of standardisation is slow going and often interrupted by more pressing emergencies. (Which pacts they have chosen to standardise on is up to the gaming group to decide.)

Regardless of which pacts the character knows, they all use the same system to defend against monsters.

Cost: Nothing.

Action: Reflexive, activate after a Dread Power is targeted at the character.

Dice Pool: Composure + Resolve vs Supernatural Advantage + Resolve.

Requirement: No pact can protect against one's own wickedness. If a Steward bargains for personal gain – anything advantageous that is added to his character sheet qualifies – and fulfilling of the pact requires a Morality Sin of 7 or less (normal Morality not the Code) or the pact is with an inherently evil being such as a demon. That creature bypasses Pact of Protection when targeting the character. This vulnerability does not expire after any amount of time, if there is a way to atone it should be treated as an entire plot.

Dramatic Failure: The Steward struggles to invoke the clause, spending the turn futilely.

The monster gets more Successes: The Clause invokes, but with insufficient strength to protect the Steward.

The Steward gets more Successes: The power targeted against the Steward fails to have any effect.

The Steward gets more Successes and an **Exceptional Success:** The Steward also gets +2 to all attempts to invoke this arrangement against the same target for the rest of the scene.



Traditional protections

Here is a list of objects a Steward might use with a Pact of Protection or a Warding organised by what they defended against.

Generic / Unknown: Witch bottles – usually buried; written charms; mummified cats; old shoes – hidden on the property.

Witches: Rowan wood or Rowan berries; carvings – often simple geometric or letter carvings on or around chimney flutes; birch – prop against a stable door to protect horses; hawthorn; yew trees – in churchyards; beans – keep one in your mouth to spit at the first witch you see; horseshoes – hang above the door; a sheep or bullock's heart stuck with pins – place up the chimney.

Faeries: Iron; a daisy chain – to protect children against faerie kidnapping; bells – particularly church bells; bibles; bread – sometimes dry bread; a cock's crow; St John's wart; scissors hung above a cradle to prevent kidnapping; the fathers trousers laid over a cradle to prevent kidnapping; birch – prop against a stable door to protect horses.

Evil: A holly hedge; rowan; peoneys – planted in a garden; St John's Wart – hang over doors; the skin of an owl – nail to a barn door; a cockerel – bury in the foundations; mistletoe – hang in the doorway; Gargoyles or fearsome door knockers.

Warding (. . .)

An Englishman's home is his castle. A threshold divides two worlds. These are not just empty words, they hint at some of the oldest pacts on record; pacts that can turn the simplest cottage into a fortified castle against the supernatural.

Warding is a generalised Merit to represent the combined use of a large number of arrangements designed to protect people's homes against invasion by the supernatural. By constructing wards and invoking guardians the Stewards can endow the threshold of a building with mystical defences able to keep all but the most powerful monsters at bay. The steward first chooses how strong to make the wards,

anywhere between one to five. Then they must build the wards physically, by planting holly or nailing up iron horseshoes, and mystically, by speaking to the new defences and requesting their aid according to the old treaties.

Cost: 3 Willpower.

Action: Extended, each roll is ten minuets of work, nailing up horseshoes, building a hedge of holly or other labour. Target number is Safehouse (or equivalent) Size times the strength of the desired wards.

Dice Pool: Strength + Crafts

Requirement: The steward must have permission from the owners of the building, or own it himself.

Dramatic Failure: The Wards fail to take, and the steward runs out of or somehow spoils the necessary supplies.

Failure: No progress is made.

Success: Progress is made, when the required successes are reached the building is warded.

Exceptional Success: Great progress is made, additionally if the action is completed with an Exceptional Success increase the rating of the wards by one.

To enter a building protected by Warding by any means, or to project a supernatural power across the Threshold requires that the monster has a higher Wyrd (or equivalent) than the strength of the wards. If the monster has a sufficient Wyrd then it may enter freely. However the so long as the invader is inside the home or projecting powers across the border she suffers a penalty to activating any Dread Powers equal to the strength of the wards. An alternative way to enter is to get an invitation from a family member, resident, staff member, or similar. This allows full entry and removes all penalties.

Wardings may be constructed as a Teamwork action. People who do not know any variation of Warding can serve as secondary actors by working on the physical part of the wards, at a -3 penalty.

Exceptional Success: Not only is significant progress made, but the final wards will be have a strength one higher than planned, to a maximum of six.

Suggested Modifiers:

- The building has strong feelings of safety or comfort to those who use it: +3 to +5.
- Solid, defensible building: +2
- The building is naturally welcoming to the supernatural (e.g. it contains a Locus or a Hedge gate; note that the wards prevent entry through such means) -2.
- The building is easy to breach -2.
- The building is not a home -2.
- The building is neglected or otherwise poorly maintained -3.
- The building's inhabitants have no strong feelings for it -3.

The Messenger's Protection (. . .)

To walk into the lions den is a terrifying prospect, and for good reason. Is it any surprise therefore that no sooner than the Stewards were informed it would be their task to negotiate with monsters they set about crafting a powerful arrangement to protect themselves.

By requesting aid from the doves, who have long been a symbol of peace, the Stewards can travel without fear.

Cost: 1 Willpower.

Action: Instant.

Dice Pool: Composure + Socialise

Duration: One scene

Requirement: The steward carries a branch adorned with white dove feathers, the steward may not attack anyone, nor may she carry arms or armour for the duration of this arrangement.

Dramatic Failure: The steward begins to project an palpable aura of treachery and danger.

Failure: The arrangement fails to take.

Success: For the remainder of the scene the steward cannot be attacked by anyone, human or monster. Should the steward attack another or take hold of a weapon the arrangement instantly ends.

Exceptional Success: The steward also begins to project an aura of trust. Everyone in the vicinity gets +1 to empathy.

Drawback: The Messenger's Protection is powered by a sacred vow of truce, breaking it has enormous consequences. For the duration of any scene in which The Messenger's Protection has been invoked, if the Steward intentionally attacks another or intentionally takes any weapon then she must roll for degeneration as though they had committed a Morality one sin, what's more they may never use this arrangement again.

Should the Steward be attacked then the Drawback ceases to apply for the scene, however breaking the Requirement will still end the arrangement.

Suggested Modifiers:

- The arrangement is invoked with any intent other than to facilitate honest negotiations: -5
- The Steward travels with a live and uncaged white dove: +2
- The arrangement is invoked for negotiations that aim to end some form of hostilities: +3

Ley of the Land (••••)

In the World of Darkness Britain's earliest travel network were the lay lines. A network of straight travel routes that criss-crossed the country passing directly through sites of importance. By invoking the ancient pacts that aided travel across the lays a Steward may travel enormous distances in a remarkably short time.

Even without this arrangement the lays are still bound by their word to aid travellers. Travelling along a lay grants +1 to navigation rolls and +2 speed, the more scenic routes are very popular spots for a hike. Many Wardens de L'île think that these treaties should be expanded to cover railways and the more important roads.

Invoking Lay of the Land isn't difficult, but it's one of the more complicated arrangements invoking not only the lay itself but a few entwined treaties to ease travel and stay safe on the road. First the steward needs the following things: A handful of salt and grain, water, some wool for warmth on the way, and a candle to make the road plain. To open a passage onto the lay the steward closes his eyes, recites a short six line verse, and when he opens his eyes he will see the lay by candle light.

The Stewards recommend using a long lasting candle since no matter how well lit the lay seems; without candlelight any travellers are completely blind. Modern candles can last for hours, far more time than needed. The wool symbolises a travellers cloak and while upon the Ley it offers some protection from misfortune and, if necessary, the elements, it can be worn as a garment or pinned to one's jacket. The grain and salt are payment, the grain is for the trees who keep the path and the salt is food for the birds who keep the way safe. Without proper payment a traveller suffers the effects of a Dramatic Failure.

Cost: 2 Willpower or 3 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Persuasion.

Requirement: The lays hold to antiquated ideas about travel, chiefly the sanctity of hospitality which they wish to encourage in the modern day. From the moment a steward invokes this arrangement to the moment his journey ends – defined by when he next sets foot in his own home – he cannot pay for his bed, his dinner or his breakfast (lunch is ok) with coin, service or demand either by virtue of Status. He must rely on the hospitality of friends or strangers or pack heavily.

Dramatic Failure: The steward somehow gets terribly lost and winds up in a random part of the country.

Failure: The arrangement fails to take.

Success: From an outside perspective the steward walks around a corner and vanishes. Supernaturally enhanced senses might reveal the steward in twilight, or the presence of a mystical road. From his own perspective the steward has stepped onto an isolated road between hedges, hills or even a back alleyway – it's form reflects the real world around it. The sounds of the real world are close but always just around a corner. If the steward spends an extra point of Willpower he may lead a number of people equal to his Resolve or a small vehicle. However the lays were never built for vehicles, anything larger than an off road quadbike or a horse is impractical.

On this path, the lay, all the normal rules of geometry and travel apply but distance is compressed by fifty times. The Steward simply walks to his destination. The network of lines and their interconnections are the same here as they are back in the material world and conveniently they are as well landmarked as the day they were built. When the Steward arrives at his destination he simply states his intent to leave, a doorway, steps or some sort of path will appear leading through the walls. The Steward always arrives outdoors.

Exceptional Success: When the steward enters the lays he leaves behind a false trail that might lead trackers astray.

Roads Beneath Roads, Doors Within Doors (••••)

You could write entire books on how cities work, how they fit together. The important thing to the working of this arrangement is that geographical is just one of kind of closeness. It's not just a play on words either, two areas on the other edge of the city could be very intimately linked. What happens in one affects the other.

What would be a play of words is saying politically close is as good as geographically close for travel. At least, it would be if you didn't have magic.

Before a Steward can use these secret paths they have to first know where they are. If they don't already have a map or directions this takes research. There are a verity of possible skills a steward could use: Academics, Politics, Occult or Streetwise. Each skill finds different connections. Intelligence is used for trying to work out likely spots from books and maps. Wits is used for walking around and feeling out a place. Or the Steward could cut out the middle man and copy a map from the office.

Once the Steward has found a connection between her current location and where she wishes to go she simply finds a convenient door, places a few scraps of birch bark in a semicircle surrounding the door, draws a few chalk symbols on the door describing the road connection plans to use, turns the handle widdershins and steps through.

It's generally believed that these roads exist between cities as well as within them. But this arrangement is signed with individual cities (as well as towns and villages) and they are not able to offer travel between cities.

Cost: One Willpower.

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Persuasion.

Requirement: A man's home is his castle. Paths leading into someone's home (it must be owned, not rented or a squat) are exempt to this arrangement.

Dramatic Failure: The steward opens not a path, but a crack in the city and falls through. It's not quite as simple as saying she ends up in Twilight, though that's true. The steward can make himself visible for a turn by spending a point of Willpower and doing something attention grabbing but quickly fades from memory. However other people who have fallen between the metaphorical cracks, such as the homeless and some long term unemployed can see the steward just fine. What's more every day the steward remains lost she loses one dot of Social Merits like Allies, Contacts, Retainer or Status, though these dots return at a rate of one a day after the steward is restored. Status (Lord Stewards) is always the last to go and first to return. Fortunately doors that lead back to normality are common and found in places like homeless shelters or job centres. So unless plot mandates a detour the steward should be able to use this arrangement again to return to safety.

Failure: Nothing happens.

Success: The steward steps through and arrives at her destination.

Exceptional Success: Additionally the steward arrives in a fortuitous circumstance.

Sealing the Deal (••••)

The Lord Stewards make a lot of treaties, but a treaty is only worth the parchment it's written on if the signatories are willing to keep their ends of the bargain. To this end the Wardens de L'île have arranged for a little help in enforcing treaties.

The stewards can bind any signed contract with magic. Should any of the signatories break their word the magic reaches out, inflicting the agreed sanctions upon the one who broke the treaty. Invoking this arrangement is simple. First the treaty is written up including all the sanctions, then after everyone

has signed their name the steward adds a red wax seal bearing the emblem of the Lord Stewards. That's all it takes.

The treaties sealed by the Lord Stewards use the same mechanics as faerie pledges (see page 148) with one important difference. Sealing the Deal cannot provide pledge boons. The treaties created by the Stewards tend to be more forgiving than faerie pledges and often include clauses that allow for reparations before the treaty is truly considered broken. This is a cultural difference, not a magical one.

A Steward may have an indefinite number of active treaties provided they were signed on behalf of the government. If the Steward wishes to moonlight (or someone without permission to negotiate on behalf of the government learns to invoke this arrangement) they may have no more than three active treaties at any point in time.

Cost: Variable.

Action: Instant.

Requirement: All parties are aware and have agreed that the contract is to be enforced with magic. In the case of groups only the agreement of an official representative with the authority to deal in her organisation's name is required.

Dice Pool: None

Hospitality of the Hearth (. . . .)

One of the simplest yet most powerful arrangements allows the Stewards to uplift a promise of hospitality into a sacred oath. In times gone by a traveller rarely had any option but to rely on the hospitality of strangers. By necessity a variety of rituals, superstitions and moral codes evolved around the concept of hospitality. They evolved into powerful treaties which have passed down into the modern age; where the Lord Stewards make good use of them, primarily to host diplomatic conferences.

To make a promise of hospitality is as simple as you'd expect. The steward offers his guest food, drink and guides his guest to a seat warmed by a hearth with a wood fire. If the guest accepts all three, that's all it takes.

Cost: 2 Willpower; subsequent activations in a scene are free.

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Presence + Socialise

Requirement: The Steward must own the building in which he is offering hospitality.

Dramatic Failure: Aghast the building swears that the Steward will never find rest hear again. Within the walls the Steward will be unable to eat, drink or cook at the hearth. He will always find the building freezing cold.

Failure: The arrangement does not invoke.

Success: Hospitality is offered and accepted. Anyone who breaks hospitality by attacking or using a hostile supernatural power on the host or any other guest suffers the following effects.

- They are no longer protected by hospitality.
- The host and other guests get 8-again on any action made against them until the next sunrise.
- They lose 10-again and 1s remove Successes on any action against the host or another guest until the next sunrise.
- They are physically marked by their crime, clothing will not hide the effects. Though they can explain the mark however they want, anyone who looks at it instinctively feels this person is not to be trusted.
- Finally breaking a sacred oath is not particularly good for the soul. It qualifies as a Morality 2 (or equivalent) Sin.

One unusual effect that usually goes unnoticed is that the hearth itself is party to this agreement. People won't feel too hot and it won't burn anyone.

Exceptional Success: As above but everyone gets +1 on social rolls with the host and other guests. It becomes easy to get along.

Suggested Modifiers:

- Good food and Drink: +1
- Good ambience: +1

Burial at the Crossroads (•••••)

The Crossroads have long been important to mythology. Liminal places. They mark borders, where the community ends and the other begins.

Suicides and murderers were buried at the crossroads to prevent them from returning to haunt their communities. In the World of Darkness they still are, despite the practice being officially over, as sometimes it's simply necessary to safely dispose of dangerous things for the greater good. The Stewards have discovered that the technique works for more than just dead bodies, whether it's the traditional murderer back as a vengeful ghost or a cursed artifact it's dangerous to even be near. Things are still buried at the crossroads.

Cost: 3 Willpower.

Action: Extended, Threshold 6 Successes.

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Expression

Requirement: The thing being buried must have significantly hurt someone or enabled someone to hurt someone. Physically, mentally, spiritually, the precise details are not important. In the case of ghosts and their anchors, actions in life qualify.

Dramatic Failure: It seems like the arrangement has activated successfully.

Failure: No progress is made.

Success: The steward makes progress, when sufficient Successes are reached the ground is prepared and shovelling may commence.

Anything buried at the crossroads is prevented from projecting mystical energies. They are scattered harmlessly in all directions. In the case of a ghost's anchor (or some other fetter that allows a supernatural being access into the world) the ghost becomes lost and confused, even if it has other unburied anchors.

The protection offered by the crossroads is not infinite, so anything strong enough can power it's way through. Generally the better the modifiers for the arrangement the more effective the protections will be, but digging up motorways is expensive and unpopular so the Stewards need to demonstrate a significant need before they are allowed to sign out a road crew.

Exceptional Success: Great progress is made.

Suggested Modifiers:

- Number of roads: +1 for every road above 3, maximum of +5.
- Density of Traffic: -5 for a deserted country lane to +5 for a busy intercession.
- Number of people who consider this area part of their community: -5 for the middle of a residential area to +5 for a busy motorway that everyone explicitly thinks of as non-residential.

Undoing the arrangement is as simple as digging up whatever was buried. Tempting though it may be, most occultists eager for a little loot understand that things buried at the crossroads are often best left that way. Or at least that safety precautions should be taken before digging anything up.

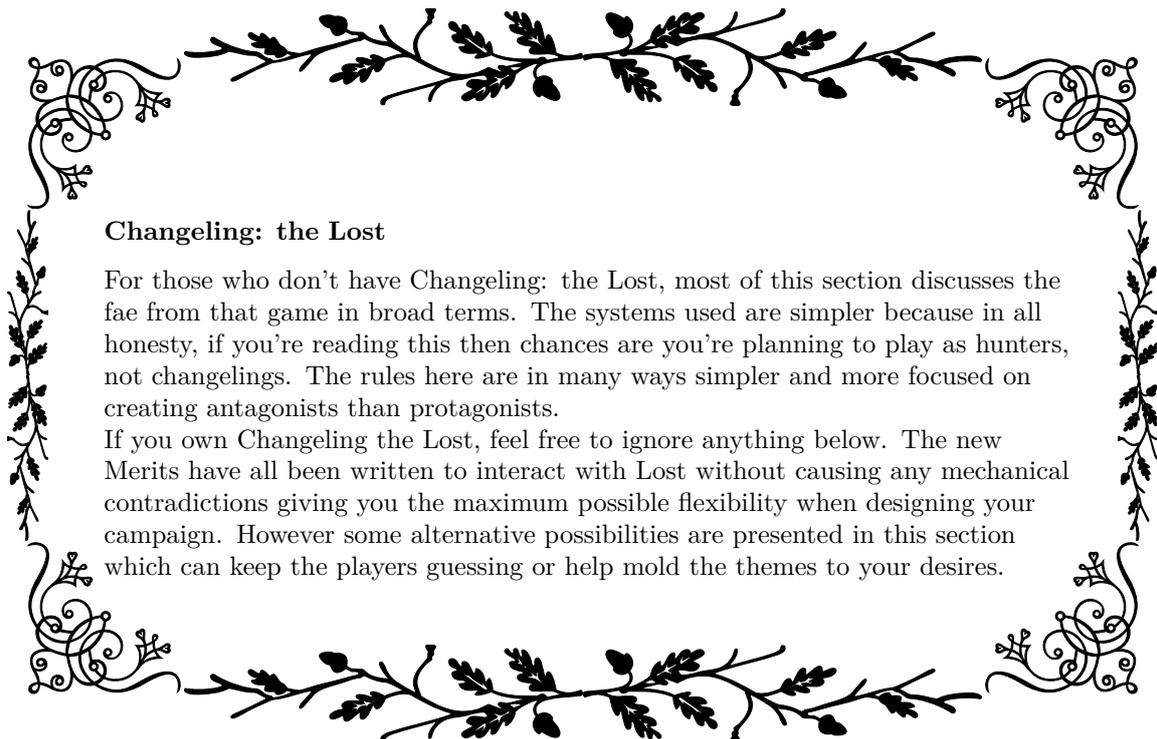
Under The Hill

Imagine a world where everything was alive, where everything would speak to you if you could only find the right words.

Imagine a world where anything could be negotiated. Where you could bargain with stones, bribe the moon and seduce fire.

This is the world of the faeries, and they have learned from their world well. Faerie magic is subtle and often indirect, full of odd subtleties and compromises from the negotiations. Being exposed to faerie magic is an otherworldly experience, one feels as though the world has become much thinner and all that they were sure about is now under question.

The Dread Powers of the fae can be found in this section: Everything you'll need to build a suitable faerie antagonist, from a humble brownie to a mighty sidhe lord is presented.



Merit: Wyrd (• – •••••)

A person's Wyrd is their personal destiny, to the fae their Wyrd is the source of their power. Their connection to Fate and the tapestry of contracts which the fae claim underlies all of reality. A faerie's Wyrd is added to all contested rolls to resist supernatural effect, but more importantly possessing dots in Wyrd allows the fae to form pledges and benefit from contracts with aspects of reality. A fae gets Wyrd dots in Contract for free and may have three + Wyrd active Pledge at any one time.

Drawback: Like demons the fae have Bans, a lot of Bans. Every fae starts with at least one Ban at Wyrd 1, and gains an additional Ban at Wyrd 4. The True Fae, who have a maximum Wyrd of 10, gain bans at Wyrd: 6, 8 and 10.

In addition to the regular Bans of Task and Bans of Torment the fae may also have Bans of Vulnerability. A Ban of Vulnerability allows combatants to bypass any and all Dread Powers that the fae might use to protect himself from harm in combat. Magical armour falls apart and protective enchantments shatter against the Ban. If the Ban is particularly obscure or hard to trigger the Storyteller may rule that qualifying attacks also cause Aggravated Damage. Example bans of Vulnerability include: Blood relatives of one you have harmed, attacking the fae while looking at it in a mirror instead of looking directly, using a weapon coated in human tears, using a weapon held in the left hand.

Merit: Contract (• – • • • • •)

To the fae reality is negotiable. Fire burns... Well only most of the time. Walls are solid... not to put a fine a point on it. Bullets hurt... that's negotiable.

Each dot of Contract represents one aspect of reality the fae is able to negotiate with. These aspects be reasonably narrowly defined. Dogs is too broad, but stray dogs is ok. Weapons is too broad, but a type of weapon like knives or handguns is ok.

By negotiating a contract with an aspect of reality the fae can create quick spontaneous effects or even change how they relate to that aspect of reality. A contract can let a fae breath water like air, have a tree hide the fae in it's branches from her perusers or make the changeling immune to bullets. All the fae has to do is pay back in kind.

First the fae must decide what they are asking for, this is measured in dots of Dread Powers. A 1 dot Dread Power is worth 1, a three dot Dread Power is worth 2 and a 5 dot Dread Power is worth 3.

The value is increased depending on how long the benefits will last for. An effect that takes place once adds nothing. Anywhere between a day and a week is worth 1. Between a lunar month and a season is worth 2. From a season up to a year and a day is worth 3. A lifetime contract is worth 3 and a Willpower dot (a lifetime contract must also have a reoccurring task or permanent restriction, fae never swear such oaths lightly).

To pay the Wyrd back for it's favours the fae must swear to perform a task, or live under some restriction for a while. The difficulty of the task or restriction defines how much it is worth on the same 1 to 3 scale and the value of the tasks must match the benefits and duration. A simple task such as giving a treat to every cat you see is only going to be worth 1, while a swearing to hunt down and kill one of the gentry is almost certainly worth 3. Failing the task instantly removes all benefits and inflicts a fitting curse upon the changeling, the strength and duration of the curse is based on the potency of benefits from the contract.

There is one rule: No faerie can have contracts that bypass their own bans or their weakness to iron. If a changeling is hurt every time he hears the name of his father, he cannot ask the air to keep his father's name away from his ears. The ban is written into his Wyrd, it would be like asking the bank for a million dollar loan with no credit history. No one will sign to that.

Example. Grandma Pleasence finds herself being perused through the streets by a cell of the Ashwood Abbey. As she runs she spots a run down charity clinic. Grandma Pleasence is a skilled healer who knows all sorts of faerie remedies, because of this her Wyrd has formed a connection with clinics. Running inside Grandma Pleasence forms a contract with the Clinic: "Accept me as your own and I shall use my magic remedies to heal one person here every day for the week".

Grandma Pleasence gains 3 dots in the Dread Power New Face. This is worth 2. The power can only be used once, this is worth 0. Because healing people with faerie remedies takes skill and resources it is worth 2, balancing out the contract. The Storyteller also agrees that because of it's unusual origin this version of New Face will shift her into a generic nurse rather than a specific person Grandma Pleasence has seen before.

Such Glamorous Rapture

Faeries are beings of wild passions and debaucherous excesses. They delight in strong emotions of any form and love to incite them within mortals.

An old widow loves to gossip; she can make even the most ordinary tale seem exciting and scandalous. She cares nothing for gossip itself but her audience's curiosity is delicious.

A strange wizened man has a reputation as the best marriage councilor in town. He enjoys sharp spices of anger followed by the velvety chocolate of loving reconciliation.

A creature like a gargoyle uses tricks with light and sound to make people think they're followed. He scares people half to death, but he never hurts them. All he's interested in is their fear.

A young woman projects such an air of innocence and vulnerability that most men and some women can't resist the thought of corrupting her. Their illicit desire is like a fine smoky wine and their eventual satisfaction adds the perfect sweet aftertaste.

The Emotional Harvest Dread Power represents the fae ability to feed of emotions. By default this is harmless to their targets. Faeries are not vampires, they do not need to harm people to survive. Hunters have plenty of reasons they might wish to bring a fairy down, but feeding on emotions isn't one of them, or if it is there has been a misunderstanding somewhere.

Or maybe feeding on emotions is a reason to hunt faeries. All it would take is a slight tweak to the rules of Emotional Harvest. After each successful Emotional Harvest deduct one Willpower per Success and mark a dot above rightmost Willpower point consumed. Until that Willpower dot is refilled the mortal falls into ennui, feeling gray and lifeless. Mechanically this can be represented by the Depression (or Melancholia) derangement and applying a penalty to all Crafts and Expression rolls that require creativity: Remove 10 again and deduct 1s from Successes.

Or maybe that's a little too obvious for the subtle and hidden fae. Maybe you want emotional harvesting to be bad, but not so obvious, so try this: Every time a mortal is successfully harvested from, make a mark above the leftmost unmarked Wits dot. Remove one mark every 6 - Resolve days, measuring from the most recent Emotional Harvest. When all the Wits dots are marked the mortal falls into ennui until the last mark is removed. So long as the mortal is in ennui they cannot be harvested for glamour, so they are guaranteed to recover given time.

The Hidden Folk

Monsters walk among us, blending into humanity like a wolf in sheep's clothing: To the naked eye a witch appears like you or me, a vampire's network of minions and slaves can allow it to interact with human society and a werewolf is human some of the time.

The fae also walk among us, but they have earned their title of the hidden folk because they protect themselves with the Mask. A protective glamour that disguises the fae as ordinary people.

The Mask is one of the most potent illusions a hunter is ever likely to encounter. It is a fully comprehensive illusion that covers all five senses and more, the fae's aura covered by an illusion of humanity, as is their appearances to other mystical perceptions. Yet even the Mask is not perfect; there are three ways to see the truth behind the Mask:

The Sight

For some lucky, or unlucky, people the Mask may as well not exist. The fae themselves can see each other for what they are, but in the right circumstances so can ordinary humans. A Merit, The Sight, exists for hunters who can see the fae.

Supernatural perception

Against all natural and technological senses the Mask is impenetrable but against supernatural senses the Mask is merely exceptionally tough. When someone with a Dread Power or a mystical Endowment that grants supernatural senses or penetrates illusions looks upon the fae they may roll to see through the Mask. Roll the ability's usual dicepool, or Wits + Composure if it doesn't have one, with a -3 penalty. The roll is contested by the Fae's Resolve + Wyrð, this defence is Reflexive and automatic.

The corner of your eye

Ordinary senses cannot hope to defeat the Mask, but sometimes they catch a glimpse of the truth. Such glimpses are always from the corner of your eye, when you're half asleep, or for some other reason not paying attention. Such glimpses can be next to impossible to tell from your mind playing tricks, at least, impossible to tell with the surety a Hunter should have before they decide if someone's not actually human. Experienced hunters are the worst affected; the more you look for monsters hidden in the corner of your eyes, the more you see them even if they're not actually there. Some hunters wonder if the Mask was intentionally designed to make them start double guessing what should be their most potent tool, their intuition. Given how the fae operate, it's a possibility.

A decorative border of black ink-drawn vines and leaves surrounds the text. The border is composed of several horizontal and vertical segments, each featuring a central vine with small leaves and buds, connected by ornate, swirling flourishes at the corners.

Strength of the Mask

Anyone who's ever encountered the fae can tell you straight that, when they don't use their magic, they look just like you and me. Maybe hunters get lucky sometimes and one of their cellmates has the Sight, but more often than not, it's just blind luck. A hunter might get a glimpse from the corner of their eye (and was that a real glimpse or is the Vigil just making you jumpy?) but to truly see the fae for what they are requires The Sight. Even other supernatural Endowments and Dread Powers that can see through illusions cannot be truly relied on, few illusions are as tough as the Mask. The hunter rolls with a -3 penalty vs the Faeries Wyrd + Resolve. The faerie's roll is automatic, she doesn't even have to be aware of the hunter.

Of course, Storytellers get a little more flexibility when it comes to such matters. So, if you say the Mask isn't as thick as we're making it out to be, hell, go for it. Remember the story you're trying to tell. If it's one where your hunters are wrapped up in enigmatic mysteries that need a lot of investigation to solve, odds are the Mask might be nigh impenetrable.

If you're just trying to have a nice little shoot'em-up session where the players are gunning down monsters left and right, a decent Kirlan camera or exposure to iron can show the Fae for what it really is.

Lost Amongst Endless Thorns

Standing firm between Earth and Arcadia is an infinitely large endless maze of ever shifting paths. The walls are vines and brambles, barbed wire that grows like ivy, ivy with thorns like rock and windcarved rocks that bite like caltrops. It is a world, some fey call it home, others pass through. Few Hunters ever see the Hedge, and of those who do many are never seen again.

Entering the Hedge

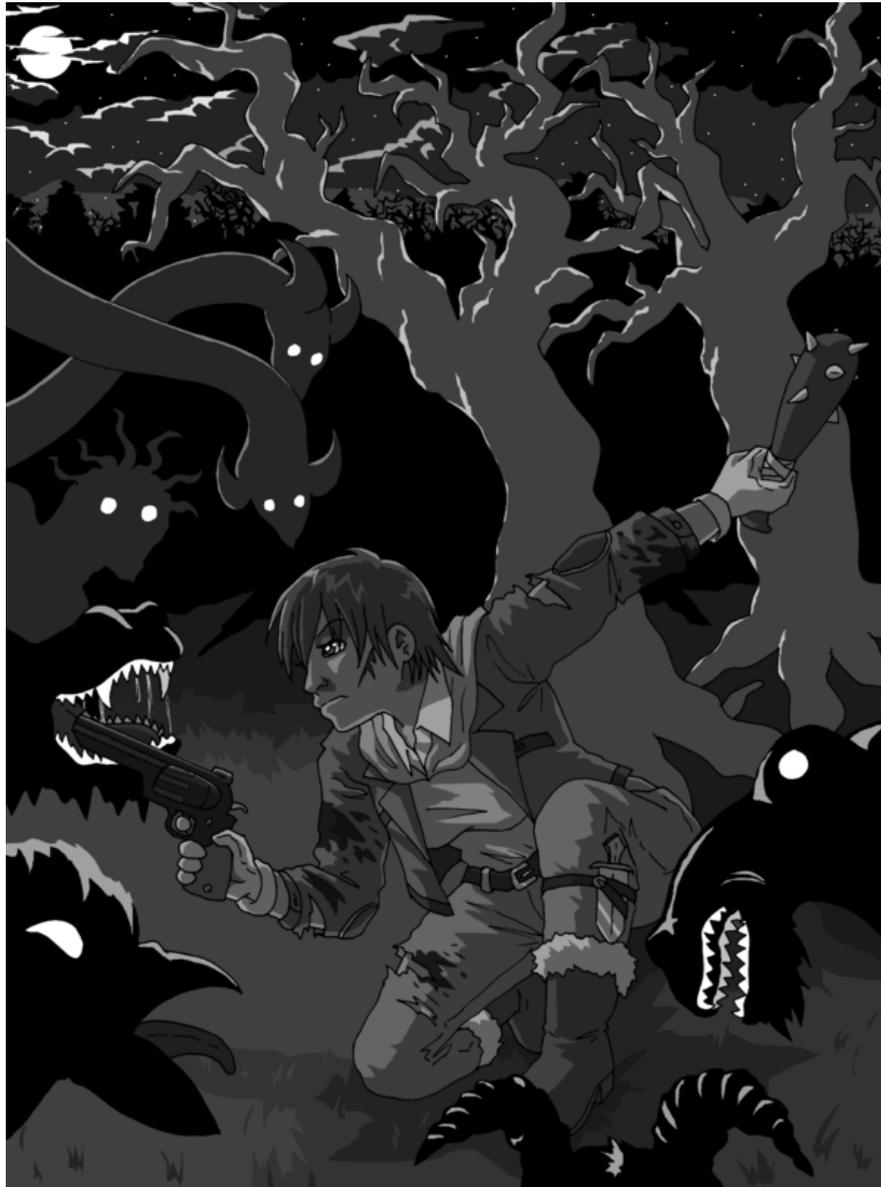
One of the nice things about the Hedge is that it's remarkably hard to get there. That this is considered one of the nice things says a lot. Yet there are a few ways for the brave and foolish to enter the Hedge.

Follow the Fae: The fae can enter the Hedge from just about anywhere, when they open a doorway into the Hedge it remains long enough for someone to follow them in. The Dread Power Knock Knock provides more details on the fae's ability to access the hedge.

Keyed Doors: If the fey make frequent use of one of the gateways created by Knock Knock it can start to develop keys. A key could be anything, a gesture, an emotion, being truly lost, somebody wearing red and blue under a cloudless full moon. A skilled occultist could track down keys and find a way for her cell to enter the Hedge. Most doors that have keys provide easy access to something useful, or at least something the fey consider useful, after all there had to be a reason for all that traffic.

Vices: No one knows why, but the Hedge tempts humans in through their Vices. Anyone who indulges

in their darker desires within sight of a gateway into the Hedge risks being lured into the Hedge. The doorway opens for them alone, and on the other side is a tempting illusion.

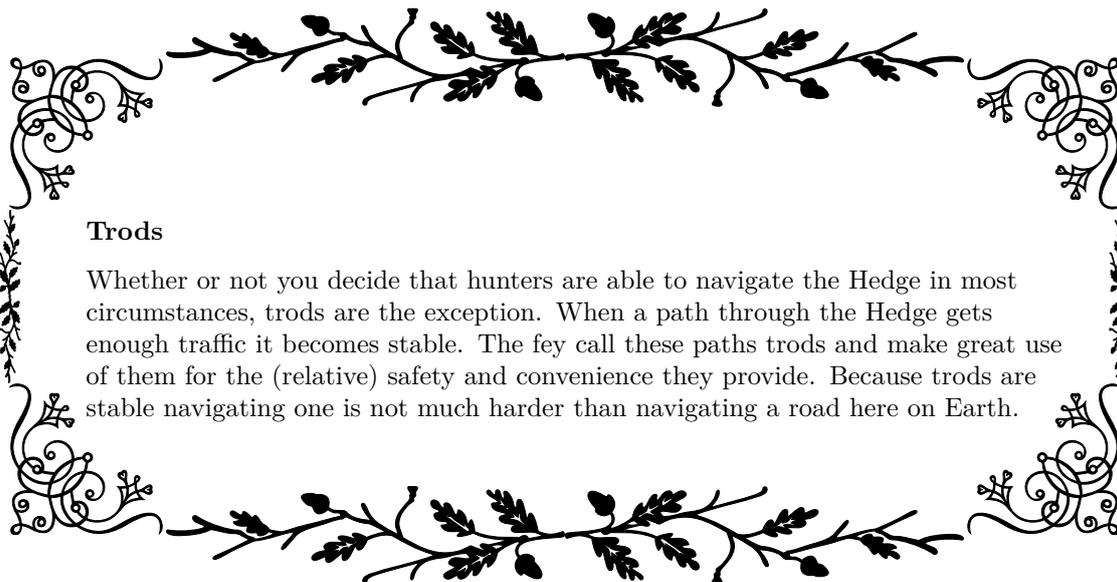


Navigating The Hedge

The biggest threat to hunters within the Hedge is not the strange inhabitants or the terrible thorns, it's simply getting lost. The Hedge and any rational understanding of distance or direction might nod to each other in the street but they wouldn't shake hands. The fey have their methods of navigation, but without appropriate Endowments such as The Shoulder of St Christopher or Beautiful Madness is it even possible for a hunter to find their way?

Saying that the Hedge is simply impossible to navigate for ordinary humans helps build a feeling that the player's have really gone down the rabbit hole this time. They've broken faerie tale rule number one. It also opens up plot hooks, the need to find a guide can open up all sorts of complications. However if the Hedge is nearly certain death to hunters chances are your players will stay well away, allowing hunters to navigate the Hedge makes it far easier to include it within your story. In addition the Hedge is a potent advantage to the fey, an avenue of retreat in through which, without the ability to navigate, hunter's cannot follow. If the fey's tendency to run becomes more frustrating than challenging think

about allowing hunters to peruse.



Trods

Whether or not you decide that hunters are able to navigate the Hedge in most circumstances, trods are the exception. When a path through the Hedge gets enough traffic it becomes stable. The fey call these paths trods and make great use of them for the (relative) safety and convenience they provide. Because trods are stable navigating one is not much harder than navigating a road here on Earth.

If you allow hunters to navigate the Hedge, or if the hunters have an Endowment that allows Hedge navigation without magically finding the way for them, then you may use the following system.

Visualising the Destination

The hunter's begin any attempt to transverse the Hedge by building a clear picture of their destination in their mind, this picture is vital to any attempts to navigate the Hedge.

Visualising the destination is an instant action; roll Resolve. The cell may work together with a Teamwork action.

Dramatic Failure: The hunter's botched attempts to visualise their destination makes navigation impossible, and they do not realise it. When they attempt to navigate they will assuredly end up in the Throns.

Failure: The hunters fail to create a clear focus on their destination, they can navigate the Hedge but they will never reach their destination. If the hunters roll an Exceptional success on a subsequent navigation roll they will realise this, and may attempt to visualise their destination again.

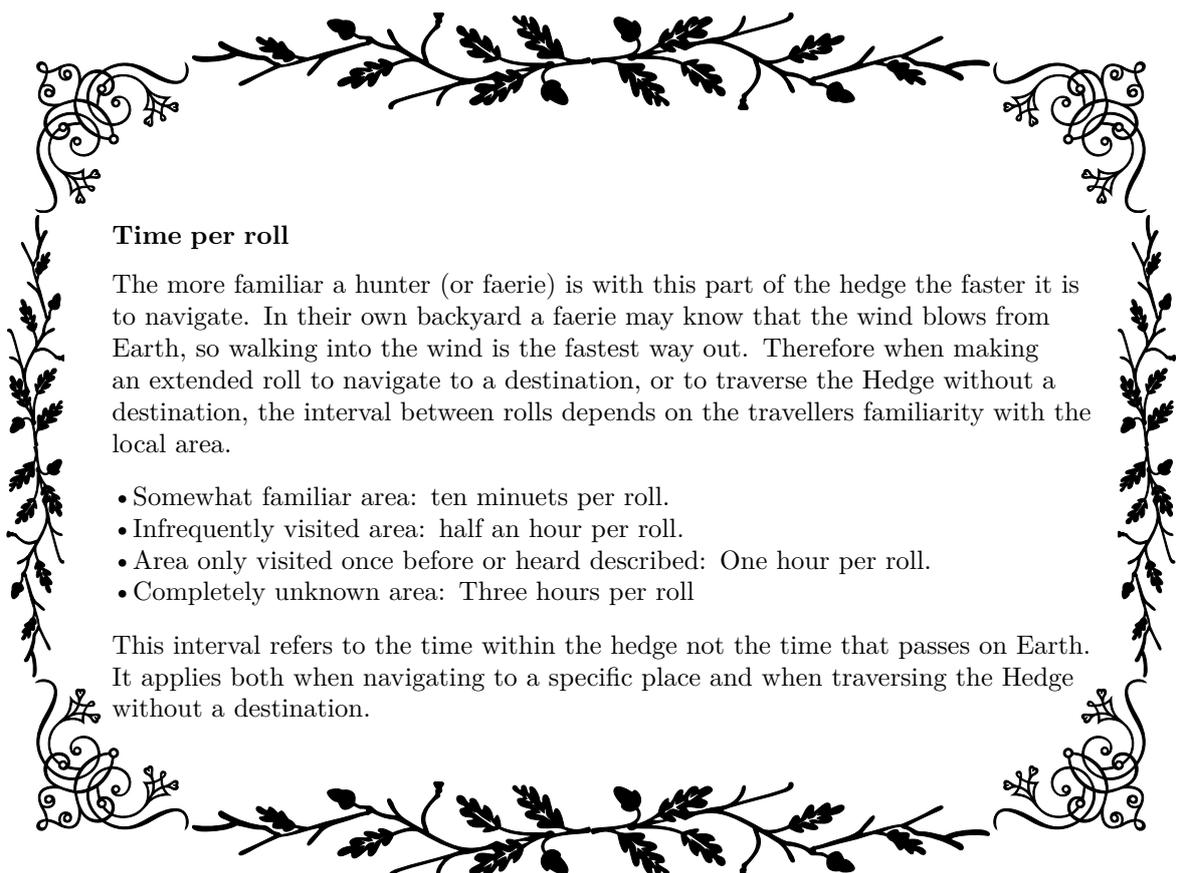
Success: The hunters can clearly visualise their destination.

Exceptional Success: The hunter's exceptionally clear focus provides a +1 bonus to all navigation rolls.

Walking the Path

The path through the Hedge is rarely a nice straight road. It twists and turns. It connects to other paths leading the wrong way. Sometimes the correct path is hidden behind a large rock or looks like a wall from the wrong angle. Therefore once the hunters must make navigation rolls to correctly follow it ("Look! A ticket stub for the Flyers, we must be on the right OW! It bit me!"). The target Successes depend not on how far the hunter's wish to travel, but how specific their destination is. Trying to navigate to Germany might require only six Successes, Germany is a big place, but trying to travel to "somewhere near my Safehouse" would require quite a bit more.

There are many techniques that hunters (and Faeries) could use to navigate the Hedge. Navigating the Hedge should be impossible. There is no sane directions or geometry within the Hedge, no maps to follow or landmarks to remember. The methods used to navigate the Hedge are as much about forcing the Hedge to become navigable as they are about picking the right direction.

A decorative border of black ink-drawn vines and leaves frames the central text. The border is composed of horizontal and vertical sections with ornate, swirling flourishes at the corners.

Time per roll

The more familiar a hunter (or faerie) is with this part of the hedge the faster it is to navigate. In their own backyard a faerie may know that the wind blows from Earth, so walking into the wind is the fastest way out. Therefore when making an extended roll to navigate to a destination, or to traverse the Hedge without a destination, the interval between rolls depends on the travellers familiarity with the local area.

- Somewhat familiar area: ten minuets per roll.
- Infrequently visited area: half an hour per roll.
- Area only visited once before or heard described: One hour per roll.
- Completely unknown area: Three hours per roll

This interval refers to the time within the hedge not the time that passes on Earth. It applies both when navigating to a specific place and when traversing the Hedge without a destination.

With the **ritual method** (Dicepool: Composure + Academics or Occult) the hunters create a list of rules to follow. If a couple of lost children share their lunch with a faerie hag and are given instructions to follow as a reward, they've just began to follow the ritual method. The rules can be taken from traditional faerie tales (an appropriate speciality applies to navigation rolls) but in a pinch even simple rules like "always turn left" or "always take the wider path" will suffice. So long as the hunters believe that following a long list of rules will take them safely to their destination then their certainty will twist the Hedge and make it so. A dramatic failure implies that the hunter, intentionally or an accidently, broke their own rule. This lands them in a perilous situation, or perhaps in the Thorns themselves.

Optional rule: The ritual method not only helps navigate, but keeps the users safe. Every time the Storyteller wishes to include a hostile or dangerous encounter in the Hedge roll the lowest Morality in the group. On a Success they are confronted with a moral test instead of a hostile encounter. The test is quite safe, so long as they pass. Failing the test counts as a dramatic failure on navigation.

With the **surveyor's method** (Dicepool: Intelligence + Survival) the hunters treat the Hedge as though it were bound by sane geometry. This is objectively untrue, even the stable Trods can connect in geometrically impossible ways, but drawing a map, taking notes, even remembering that the waterfall is fifty paces beyond the gallows tree, can force The Hedge to remain stable and obey geometry for the duration of a single journey. The secret to the surveyor's method is to fill the map with landmarks (and if they roll well, they will find such landmarks). Each landmark is like a thick nail that pins the Hedge to Earth (or to itself, if they are navigating to somewhere in the Hedge), spreading it out like a transparent overlay above a map of their destination. Then; with landmarks and the Hedge forced to obey geometry, the hunters extend he boundaries of their little bubble of order until they reach their destination. A Dramatic Failure at navigating means that the hunter has misremembered or drawn their map wrong, and they are now in unmapped territory where the Hedge is wild, the paths shift, and they may have no options but to enter the Thorns.

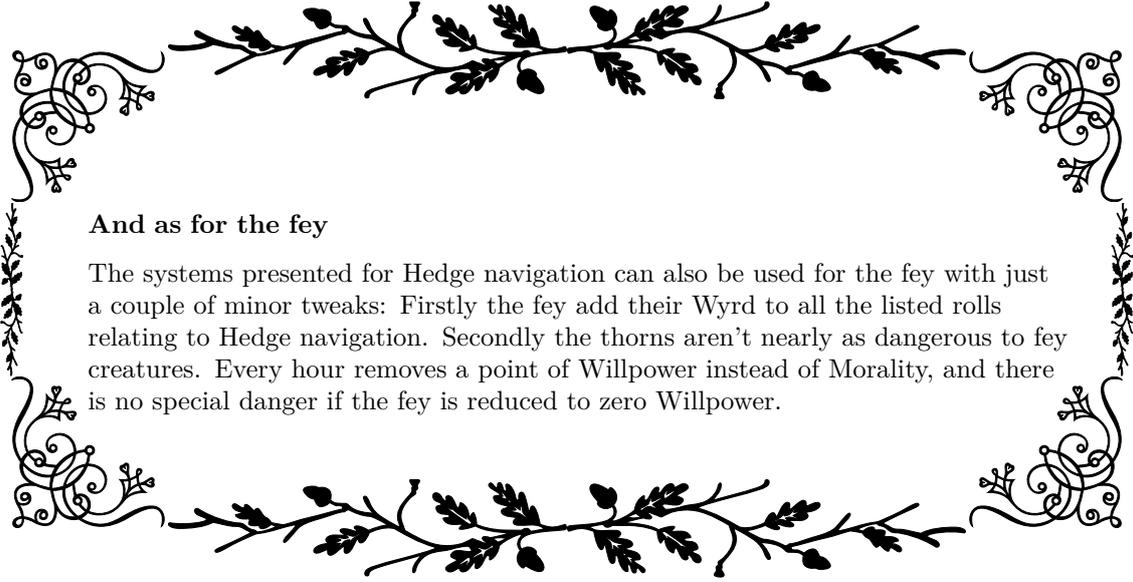
Optional rule: The other methods force the Hedge to lead the hunters to their destination, the surveyor's method simply forces the Hedge to make enough sense that the Hunter's can find their own way. The Hunter's do not need to visualise their destination, and it is far easier to change destinations mid journey: The first five successes (the ones that enforce order upon the Hedge) apply to every destination, in addition the Hunter's can backtrack across any path they clearly remember or have included on their map safe in the knowledge that the path hasn't shifted while their back was turned. Though it may be a long and potentially dangerous walk. If the hunters leave the Hedge, roll a Dramatic Failure on navigation, enter the Thorns, or even spend a significant time without using their map (for example: They spend the night in a faerie inn) the Hedge changes and the map becomes worthless.

The **puzzle method** (Dicepool: Intelligence + Investigation) treats the Hedge like a puzzle to be solved. Every random item has some sort of meaning, a cluster of different coloured mushrooms is a colour sequence that will open a gate later. A strange brass contraption will open a secret door if you position the arms just right. Essentially proponents of the puzzle method treat the Hedge like an old interactive fiction game, and the psychoreactive Hedge obliges. The trick to the puzzle method is to assume with the final answer is your destination, and work backwards until the clues become directions and the reward for a solved puzzle is a shortcut. A dramatic failure means that the hunters have given the wrong answer to a puzzle, or misinterpreted a clue, and are headed into dangerous territory. They may soon be forced to enter the Thorns.

Optional rule: Not only does the puzzle method force the Hedge to become navigable for a while, it also forces it to make some small measure of sense. Every success on navigation rolls, to a maximum of the highest Intelligence + Investigation in the group, is added to a pool. When the hunters have an encounter on the road (see below) they may take dice from the pool and add them to any roll using a mental skill. This represents something they saw before turning out to be a useful clue, players are encouraged to make up cool cryptic clues that the brains of the cell can interpret. Once the hunters leave the Hedge, or even spend a significant time without navigating the Hedge changes and the clues become worthless. Dice cannot be taken from the pool to use on navigation rolls.

The other methods use rules and patterns to force order onto the Hedge and make it navigable, the **trance method** (Dicepool: Wits + Composure) embraces the Hedge's fae nature. The hunters use altered states of consciousness: Hallucinogenics, religious fervour, meditative states, even raw panic to block out all thoughts but their destination. By avoiding thought and embracing intuition the hunters can feel which paths have been created by their thoughts of the destination. A dramatic failure implies that the hunter snaps out of their trance, and realises she are lost deep within the Hedge with no idea how they got here. The Thorns may be the only choice.

Optional rule: The trance method is just faster than other techniques, the hunter decreases the time per roll by one step, to a minimum of one minute per roll in a somewhat familiar area.



And as for the fey

The systems presented for Hedge navigation can also be used for the fey with just a couple of minor tweaks: Firstly the fey add their Wyrđ to all the listed rolls relating to Hedge navigation. Secondly the thorns aren't nearly as dangerous to fey creatures. Every hour removes a point of Willpower instead of Morality, and there is no special danger if the fey is reduced to zero Willpower.

Traversing Without a Destination

A hunter in the Hedge does not have to travel to spots they know well. They could just look for a way out, any way out, and run though back to the sweet embrace of their home reality So long as the hunters are close to earth (see below), and if hunters are able to navigate the Hedge than finding an exit requires three Successes on an Extended Wits + Investigation Teamwork action. If you have decided that humans cannot navigate the Hedge then perhaps this is still an option, so long as they have not left the path. You don't really need to navigate. Just wander the paths randomly until you find what looks like a door, window, or some other portal that feels like part of Earth. However if you really want to play up the dangers of the Hedge the exits could be as hard to open as the entrances.

Looking for a way out is not the only option for hunters without a specific destination in mind, though it is definitely the most sensible. Perhaps the hunters are wandering the paths looking for fruits or items of magical power. They could be travelling to a spot they don't know at all, like the home of a capricious faerie. If you allow hunters to navigate the Hedge, or they have an appropriate Endowment, then the hunters can search for their bounty with an Extended Wits + Investigation Teamwork action.

As a general rule exploring has a reasonable chance of finding something that is both non-specific and common, such as fruits. Trying to find something specific is usually a fool's errand, but it might be possible if what the hunter's seek is what passes for near to their current location. If the hunters know there's a fae market near the gate under the 3rd street bridge then it might be possible to find it by entering that gate and exploring.

Distance from Earth

When a hunter enters the Hedge they are considered to be close to the mortal world. They might hear the sounds of the city in the distance, or they may see skyscrapers towering over the thorns. So long as the hunter's remains focused on the mortal world: They're trying to navigate to somewhere on Earth, looking for a way home, or even attempting to reach a part of the Hedge located close to the mortal world, then they will remain close to Earth.

However the moment the hunters lose their focus on Earth: They try to navigate to a goblin market deep within the Hedge, they leave the path and enter the thorns for any reason, or they see a faerie stealing a baby and give chase (unless the faerie is focused on Earth of course). Then they turn a corner and realise they can no longer see or hear the traces of Earth.

Once the hunters have lost sight of Earth they suffer a -1 penalty to all Resolve rolls to stabilise a path (not cumulative with the -3 for being lost among the Thorns) and they can no longer start searching for exits with Wits + Investigation. There aren't any exits just lying around this deep into the Hedge. If the hunters navigate back towards Earth, when they have less than 3 Successes left on their navigation rolls, then they once again catch sight of the mortal world.

Encounters on the Road

If all goes well the hunters will eventually find their way to their destination but the journey is unlikely to be safe. The simplest solution is for the storyteller to eye up the dice, the characters, the time interval for rolls, and the feel of the story and decide what encounters are appropriate. If you prefer to let the dice decide then each navigation or searching roll comes with one encounter: Be it a combat scene, a moral test, a puzzle, friendly conversation or something else.

The Thorns

If things don't go well, if they go very badly indeed. The hunters might find themselves tracking through the thorns. They might have chosen to brave the thorns after an encounter on the Hedge left them no better options, or perhaps they rolled a Dramatic Failure on a navigation roll. Once the hunters are in the thorns then the first thing they must do is find their way back onto a path. Use Wits + Investigation rolls to search for a path, with a -3 penalty for everyone for being lost among the thorns. After three Success the hunters have found a path, and may attempt to travel to their destination starting from the very beginning.

The hunters had better find a path quickly because the longer the hunters wander among the thorns the more time the thorns have to tear strips from their flesh and soul. Every hour spent lost among the thorns tears away a dot of Morality, each time this happens the hunter's may roll their new reduced Morality to try and notice what is happening.

Technology in the Hedge

Mundane technology in the Hedge is unreliable and prone to failing in the most bizarre ways. A car might gradually lose the ability to travel in each direction one by one. What sounds like static turns out to actually be a swarm of buzzing insects that somehow got inside the radio.

As a general rule apply a -1 to -5 penalty to all technology with any components more complex than a couple of moving parts. The deeper in the Hedge the hunters are, the worse the penalty. The Storyteller and players are encouraged to come up with elaborate, weird and creepy ways for technology to go wrong on a Failure. If the penalty is equal or greater to the equipment bonus every failure removes a point of Structure. This damage is often bizarre and idiosyncratic. A gun might lose the ability to fire every third shot but be otherwise undamaged.

In the Hedge no communication technology can connect to Earth; it may on occasion connect to strange and often dangerous faerie signals.

Time in the Hedge

...is weird.

In the Hedge time never actually flows backwards. If you meet a hobgoblin a dozen times you will both agree on the order of those meetings but how long went between each encounter? He says an hour, you say a year?

There are no guarantees how long any trip into the Hedge will take. Going for a short lunch with a faerie (you did get a promise that the food comes with no obligations right?) and returning home to find everyone you know dead and buried is a classic element of faerie lore. However repeating the story of Rip van Winkle is taking an enormous risk with your player's emotional investment in the game. Instead, we offer the following mechanics. They are a bit too predictable to really capture the chaos of faerie time, but they are unlikely to destroy your game.

Providing the characters never lost sight of the mortal world, the time in the Hedge and the time on earth will match up perfectly. Otherwise: When returning to Earth add up all the time spent on actions that are important to either the story or to character development. If your hunters spend 13 minutes solving a Sphinx's riddle, 5 minutes haggling with a wondering hobgoblin merchants, six hours navigating of which about ten minutes were interesting, and 15 bantering while walking between these events then that comes to a base time of 28 minutes, ignoring the banter and the uninteresting navigation.

Next the Storyteller rolls one die per person in the group, and increases or decreases the base time by 10% per Success in whichever direction she desires. If there are any faeries in the group the Storyteller does not roll, instead each faerie rolls Wyrd. The faerie with the most Successes will increase or decrease

the base time by 10% per Success (or less if they prefer), in whatever direction brings the faerie closest to his desired arrival time. This is a natural effect of the faerie's Wyrld outside of conscious, or even subconscious, control.

If, God forbid, there is a true fae in the travelling party they use the same rules as lesser fae but instead of rolling dice, they have one automatic Success per dot of Wyrld.

Risk and Reward

Ok, let's be honest. Even if you're a faerie the hedge is a dangerous place to go, for a hunter it could be unthinkable. So why on Earth would a hunter leave the safe domains of Earth and step into an endless maze of vicious thorns and madness? The truth is that most hunters don't even know the Hedge exists, only the smallest minority ever set foot inside. Those who do enter the hedge may do so for one of the following reasons:

To Stop Monsters: Fighting werewolves. Tearing up a vampire's network of influence. It's not like anything else a hunter does is safe, so why should hunting faeries be any different? If the faeries hounding the hunter's community retreat into the Hedge at the first sign of trouble then your only choices might be to enter the Hedge, or let them get away. Hunting the monsters is often a lot less dangerous than other reasons to enter the Hedge. Faeries with interests in both worlds often have a door (or doors) leading straight from Earth to their homes in the Hedge. Find the faerie's personal door and you can avoid all the trouble with navigation. If you can't find the faerie's door it may be worth asking if there are trods in the local area, if you're lucky the faerie's home is connected to the trod. It's probably well hidden, but exploiting a trod is a lot safer than the alternatives.

Resources: The Hedge is at least the size of Earth, and it's absolutely full of interesting resources that might attract the attention of the right conspiracy. Prepare the strange fruits of the Hedge just right and they can form potent alchemical elixirs. Cheiron's health and safety policies are lax enough that the Field Projects Division could organise a hunting trip to see if they can bag any of the natives. In the Hedge magical items can be just found lying around, in fact if you leave something lying around then it will become magic (this quite empathetically does not mean it will become useful). The Aegis Kai Doru can find this quite tempting, and though they know simply carting in piles of junk and hoping rarely works (and the natives usually nick any good stuff while you're waiting on Earth) cells left alone near a trod with nothing to do occasionally start rummaging through garage sales looking for items with interesting stories that might turn into a useful Relic. Hunters of all stripes may benefit from a goblin market, but they're covered separately.

The Hedge Itself: Some hunters may wish to study the Hedge itself. What could the Null Mysteriis learn about physics in a world where distance and direction would be flattered to be called guidelines? Occultists seeking to learn about the subtle and hidden fey could do worse than to observe the rules of one of their two worlds. How would the world dismiss Network Zero's footage as just special effects if Michael Bay or James Cameron would have to admit there's no budget big enough? The Wilde Society finds the Hedge to be extremely inspiring (and for a group of drug addled artists, they seem remarkably adapt at finding their way around). Hunters interested in the Hedge itself are the most likely to survive, simply because there's often no need to leave sight of the exit.

Travel: With aircraft, trains and cars travel is not that hard. Yet hunters are often well armed vigilantes or members of world spanning conspiracies, and it's not quite so unfeasible that they might have a good reason to want to travel or transport goods in secret. Taking one of the international trods is dangerous, (honestly, most hunters who come up with a scheme like this use the Underworld. Even the land of the dead is safer.) but sometimes there's no choice. Hiring hobgoblin couriers (there's usually someone, or someone who can put you in contact with someone, at a goblin market) is no more reliable than making the trip yourself but it does mean that only the goods are at risk



Sample Goblin Fruit

One of the more common resources mentioned above are the fruits of the hedge. They can be brewed into alchemical elixirs by the Ascending Ones, prepared into culinary works of art by the Wilde Society, but most commonly you just eat them.

Friar's lantern: This fruit resembles a light yellow, soggy, furry walnut and can usually be found floating in stagnant water where the hedge resembles a swamp. Friar's lantern constantly emits a strange luminescent gas making it very easy to spot, but this is something of a trick for the fruit grows just deep enough into the thorns that it's nearly impossible to reach without some sort of specialised tool. Many travellers have lost their way, and their lives, attempting to pick a lantern. Eating a friar's lantern gives you a nice buzz. It feels like the smoke is rising from your tummy, through your throat and curling around your brain with a mild and pleasant tickling sensation. While under the influence mortals gain the ability to navigate the hedge, as well as suffer a one die penalty on all mental attributes and initiative. This lasts for four hours, so several may be needed on a long trip. When eaten by a faerie (or if you give mortals the ability to navigate the hedge) a friar's lantern gives a +1 bonus to navigation rolls.

Lover's remorse: A beautiful flower looks like nothing more than a red rose crafted out of icing sugar and is found only in the most scenic parts of the hedge, legend has it that lover's remorse grows in the spot where lovers have lain together. Do not be fooled by the lack of thorns, a single bite of lover's remorse shatters the petals into sharp shards that cut the mouth and the throat all the way down. The name comes from the plant's medicinal properties, lover's remorse is one of the most powerful abortives known to man or fae; a single bite can terminate a pregnancy at any point up to the final moment before birth with no harm to the mother. It is prized by faerie courtiers who make potions (just boil lover's remorse in water, the result is easily disguised as ordinary sugar water) to ensure their rivals never have an heir, less commonly it is used by doctors to treat malign pregnancies that are immune to more common methods. Even the most powerful "chestburster textquotedblight can usually be harmlessly destroyed with a single bite of lover's remorse.

Stooge: This fruit looks more like a warm brown apple pie, though attempting to move it will quickly collapse the pie into a doughy mush. Eating stooge, which tastes like dough mixed with overcooked apples, grants an enormous resistance to all manner of deception and any magic that directly influences the mind or emotions. On all such rolls the 8-again rule applies. However on any other rolls that use a mental attribute the influence of stooge removes 10-again and causes 1s to cancel out successes. If the roll turns up more ones than successes, the result is a dramatic failure. Stooge lasts for one scene before the effect wears off.

A Sample Trip Into the Hedge

Things have not gone well for the cell, of the seven members only three survive. What remained of their support network has vanished after the cell's enemies managed to frame them for ritualistic child abuse. With the police closing in Alfred convinces his companions, Jennifer and Brian, they must flee. The three are some of those rare hunters who have some knowledge of Hedge Navigation, after making sacrifices to Janus, the Roman god of doors, the cell enters the Hedge.

It is up to the individual Storyteller to decide if it is possible for Hunters to navigate the Hedge (without Endowments). For this example it is assumed that the cell can navigate the Hedge, if they have the proper training. The sacrifice is the key to open the Hedge Gate, but the cell are devout followers of Janus. Is there any truth to their beliefs? That's is an excellent question.

Like many Hedge Gates with a Key, this one leads directly onto a Trod. This close to earth the occasional lump of asphalt can be seen beneath the mud and vibrant plant life. Other traces of humanity are visible. The two towering walls of vine and thorn grow in unusual shapes, which suggests at the presence of walls, windows, even a fire escape buried beneath the foliage. While the cell get their bearings the wind blows a sheet of paper into their hand, it's a wanted poster for the cell, listing their "crimes". The Hedge has already began to react to the Hunter's presence.

By unspoken agreement the cell decide to head to Rome, it is unlikely that anyone will think of placing an international arrest warrant. The Trod is useless, it leads away from Earth, so the cell look for another way. As they travel Brian begins drawing a map, clearly labelling both the Gate and the Trod as fixed landmarks. Before long the cell finds a narrow path leading away from the Trod, there is no sign of the buildings it supposedly cut's through.

Now that the cell have left the Trod they must roll to navigate. They are using the surveyor's method, and in this example the optional rules are in full effect. However because the cell are both fleeing in fear for their lives and abandoning their duty the Storyteller also rules that this potent mix of negative emotions will make the trip more danger dangerous and inflicts a -3 penalty to all Navigation rolls. Travelling to Rome will take seven successes, but with the penalty the cell only get one success on their first roll.

Away from the Trod the hedge seems wilder, only the occasional piece of rubbish or snatch of sound assures the cell they haven't wandered deep into the Hedge. For lack of any better plan the cell take random routes when the path branches, making sure to record every turn on their map. After a while Alfred notices a mailbox sticking out of the thorns, the flag raised. The cell debate and agree to open the mailbox inside they find a letter addressed to them from the police. The gist is that running away only makes things look worse and if they turn back they can make some kind of plea bargain. The cell burn the letter, but it's not all a loss. The mailbox has an Florida postcode, the cell at least are further south and east than they started.

After an uneventful encounter with a mailbox the cell make their second roll and score two successes.

The cell mark down the mailbox as their second landmark. As they still don't have any better ideas for directions, they continue heading in the same way hoping that it will continue to be roughly south east. Before long the vibrant greens of the Hedge give way to a foggy swamp and the cell are wading across marshland surrounded by stagnant pools where mist hides the way and the water contains tangles of broken thorny brambles, overturned trees covered in thorny vines, and other swamp themed Thorns.

After a long, miserable, but uneventful three hours the cell find themselves at the base of a granite cliff. The walls are climbable but razor sharp, unwilling to brave the Thorns just yet the cell follow a path along the base until they see a narrow set of footholds carved into the cliff face that have been carefully cleared of sharp rocks. At the top the cell find that the Thorns have been cut back to make a large but foggy clearing. There are lights moving within the fog, this place belongs to somebody. The cell looks for a hiding place, but visibility is poor and they Jennifer steps on a branch. Knowing that they're found, the cell reveal themselves and hope to make a good impression.

It turns out they needn't have worried. The locals, small wrinkly Hobgoblins wearing nothing but long scarves, are friendly and frequently refer to the cell as though they were kindred spirits or part of a secret brotherhood in a thick Scottish accent. The cell are lead back to what passes for the Hobgoblins encampment: A pile of boxes and loose goods scattered on the damp grass and a solitary cooking fire. More Hobgoblins are busy unloading and loading a set of three rickety carts. Most of the goods appears to be junk, but horrifically there is a seven year old girl huddled in a too-small cage.

Their hosts seem exceptionally proud of the disarray, and offer the cell a chance to shop before anyone

else sees these goods. The cell tries to buy the girl, naturally they intend to set her free, but it turns out the only thing they have of value on them are their keys. Not nearly enough for a child, and they're outnumbered eight to one. Hating themselves every moment but unwilling to give offence the cell end up buying an ancient revolver of dubious quality; as a "special offer" their hosts throw in dinner and a chance to rest for free.

As given away by the Hobgoblins' accent, if the cell was to leave the Hedge around here they'd end up in Scotland. Which means their plan to continue in the same direction failed, they've been travelling east and north. The latest encounter continues the theme of the Hedge reacting to their "crimes", they are recognised as fellows by other criminals who actually do prey upon young girls. The cell do get to roll to try and rescue the girl, but with a hefty penalty for not having anything nearly as valuable, they failed. Combat is an option, but they were too heavily outnumbered. The cell had to settle for buying lunch and a revolver that fires beatles. Eating a faerie's food is never a good idea, but having brought it the cell are actually eating their own food. The revolver was brought simply to keep their hosts happy; if the cell had actually asked they'd realise it mechanically works like a regular revolver, but can be fired for 1 bashing damage instead of bullets and (like all Faerie devices) doesn't stop working in the Hedge.

Now that they're clearly in Europe the cell have three options: They could press on to Rome, they could change direction for Edinburgh, or they could stop navigating and start traversing without a destination.

Traversing without a destination would sacrifice the accumulated successes in the hope that there's a Hedge Gate nearby (for the Hedge's usually incomprehensible ideas of nearby).

If the Cell navigate to Scotland they'll start with their three successes, and the Storyteller rules it requires six successes: The cell haven't yet enforced a sane geometry on the Hedge, but once they do all the Hedge Gates in Scotland will be forced into whichever area corresponds to Scotland on their map, making it easy to find an exit.

The final option is to press on to Rome, which would only require one additional success (but probably more walking) than looking for Scotland. As they have little money and no documentation the cell choose to brave the hedge rather than border control. The next navigation roll scores another two success, the cell have a total of five successes.

After their meal and a short rest the hobgoblins point the cell on their way, along with the advice to head downhill. The path here is marked by a bunch of lanterns hung on rickety wooden poles, a small path of light between enormous walls of fog. After another long trek the cell find themselves once again back on a dirt road between two walls of vines. Their next landmark is not much further, a small window half buried among the Thorns. Though it's too small to climb through the cell can see a small village on the other side. After a bit of debating the cell decide to open the window. After half scaring a passer-by to death but they do manage to learn that the window opens to a village in central France. Thanking their benefactor the cell head onwards, the path here has only one direction, and aren't particularly surprised to hear the sound of breaking glass behind them.

After a short bit of walking the path splits in two, seeing smoke in the distance the cell decide to take the left path, it's a steep climb but they soon find the source of the smoke. A Changeling who looks mostly like a walrus standing on two legs and wearing an old fashioned naval captain's uniform; he's smoking some fish. To cell's surprise the Changeling recognises the symbols of Janis they each wear, and he's not pleased. In fact he looks like he's choosing whether to run or to fight. After some fast talking Alfred convinces the walrus they mean no harm and he agrees to tell them where they are, if they agree to depart peacefully. Accepting the Pledge the cell learn they're in a village on the northern coast of France. In fact there's an exit nearby, but it would break the Pledge if they use it.

It's not all for nothing though, Brian has had a brainwave. It seems as though on this hedge trip east and west correspond to direction within the Hedge, but north and south correspond to elevation. With this they should be able to find their way to Rome.

The Storyteller suspects that the cell will find their destination soon, and so she decreed the cell's map now has enough landmarks to force a somewhat consistent relationship between the Hedge and Earth, and that a successful roll revealed the secret to the cell. With this the cell should be able to find their way. They only need two more Successes.

However they only score one.

The cell still feels pretty horrible for abandoning their duties in America, and for abandoning the girl to the hobgoblin slavers. These emotions now turn against them. Turning a corner the cell find themselves face to face with an open air temple to Janis. Cautiously they move closer. A hobgoblin

congregation of all shapes and sizes attends to a faun delivering a sermon. She is covered in self inflicted scars, crude keys and staves, and wears a mask on both the front and back of her head. To the cell's expert eye this ceremony is clearly not following the proper rites. As is to be expected by now, a young girl is tied up on the altar. She looks like the girl they left with the hobgoblins, but the cell cannot tell if it's the same person.

Unwilling to abandon a second girl, or the same girl a second time the cell enters the temple. The priestess bids them welcome and offers seats in the congregation, but after some theological debate and persuasion she agrees to let them lead as visiting priests. The cell approach the alter and Alfred graciously accepts the ceremonial knife, then the three move as one. Alfred cuts the prisoner's bonds while Jennifer and Brian go for the priestess, Jennifer scores a solid hit that knocks the priestess of the dais buying the cell time to run.

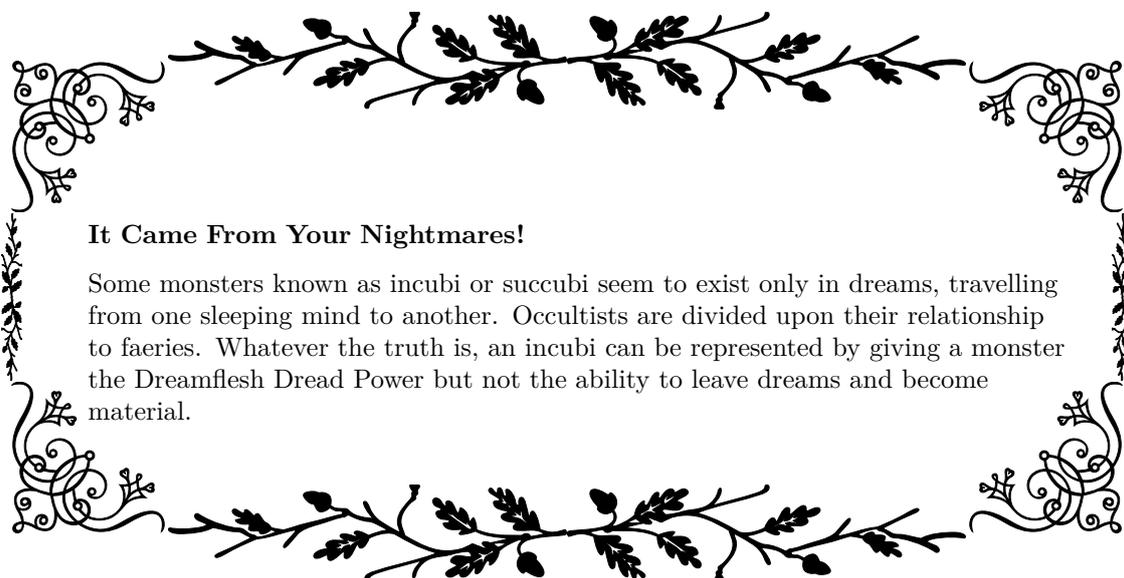
Unfortunately the congregation manages to reach the exits first, surrounded and outnumbered the Cell have no choice to dive for the thorns. After a forcing their way though a solid, but thin layer of brambles the Cell, and the girl, find themselves in what appears to be a wild forest. Brambles grow around the trees, hang from the branches and snake across the ground. No matter how cautiously the group move the Thorns cut at their bodies and tangle with their clothes and hair.

Even if the group manage to find a path they will have to begin navigating from the start.

Was it all a Dream?

The fey can strike at humanity with an ogre's brute strength, strange twisty magic or deadly arrows tipped with unearthly stone. But perhaps the most insidious way the fey can attack humans is through their dreams. The following rules are written to be applicable to any monster with the correct Dread Powers; for the fey use the rules as written but add the faerie's Wyrd to any dice roll while in a dream.

Mechanically speaking, play in a dream works much the same way as play in the physical world. If Sgt. Kane, a Lucid Dreamer working for Task Force: Valkerie is defending his dream from a faerie, Spinning Jenny, he might remember watching Inception and think bigger than his sidearm. With a thought he summons the Enola Gay to drop The Bomb on Spinning Jenny. It sounds impressive but when all's said and done, he still rolls an Attribute + a Skill (in this case Wits + Empathy) and counts the Successes. If he rolls well, it is The Bomb. If he rolls badly then it won't do much damage after Spinning Jenny dives turnwise to escape the blast area.



It Came From Your Nightmares!

Some monsters known as incubi or succubi seem to exist only in dreams, travelling from one sleeping mind to another. Occultists are divided upon their relationship to faeries. Whatever the truth is, an incubi can be represented by giving a monster the Dreamflesh Dread Power but not the ability to leave dreams and become material.

What to do When You're Asleep

Inflict Nightmares: Any monster with two dots of Dreamshaper can inflict a nightmare upon somebody by rolling Wits + Empathy vs Resolve + Supernatural Advantage. A nightmare denies the sleeper the Willpower from that night's rest. A single nightmare is unlikely to do much, but a vicious

faerie can come night after night until their victim begins to seriously suffer from a lack of proper rest.

Spy on people: By rolling Wits + Empathy a dream traveller can learn information about the sleeper. A dream of drowning in paper, correctly interpreted, can tell you that he is stressed by a deadline for next Thursday. If the monster has two dots of Dreamshaper they may construct an empty framework for a dream then analyse whatever the subconscious mind fills it with. This framework should be describable in a couple of words: School, the office, Bob from accounting. Be warned, if the roll to shape a new framework scores less Successes than the dreamers Wits the sleeper will remember it vividly and feel that it was just plain weird. They might even become suspicious if they are aware of dream or mind affecting monsters. Constructing the proper frameworks can even be used to draw out and thus detect the presence or remnants of mind control and emotion influencing powers.

Subliminal Influence: By making subtle changes to a dream a monster with two dots of Dreamshaper can plant subliminal cues that will push the dreamer in a certain direction. These cannot control a person's actions, people do not make important decisions based a dream (at least, most people don't) but it can provide situational modifiers. The monster rolls to activate Dreamshaper like normal and each Success becomes a situational modifier to ordinary social rolls that activates when the sleeper is exposed to a chosen stimuli. Potential examples include: When you next see me, you will become aroused – a situational bonus to seduction. When you next see the smiling killer you will become scared – a situational penalty for the smiling killer to get the sleeper to let her guard down.

Monsters who have mind affecting Dread Powers (that can work in dreams, they can't require pheromones or similar) can go further, leaving their magical effects buried in the subconscious until a later time. To do this roll for subliminal influence like normal, then immediately make an activation roll of a mind affecting Dread Power with a dot value equal or less than the successes rolled. For example Red Riding Hood creates a subliminal trigger "When you next see Mrs. McClusky, my worst enemy, you will fly into a rage" and gets two successes. Red can then roll Manipulation + Persuasion + Fury (treating Fury as a two dot Dread Power, even though she actually has four dots). When the sleeper next sees Mrs. McClusky the effects of Fury trigger and the sleeper must roll to resist Red's original successes.

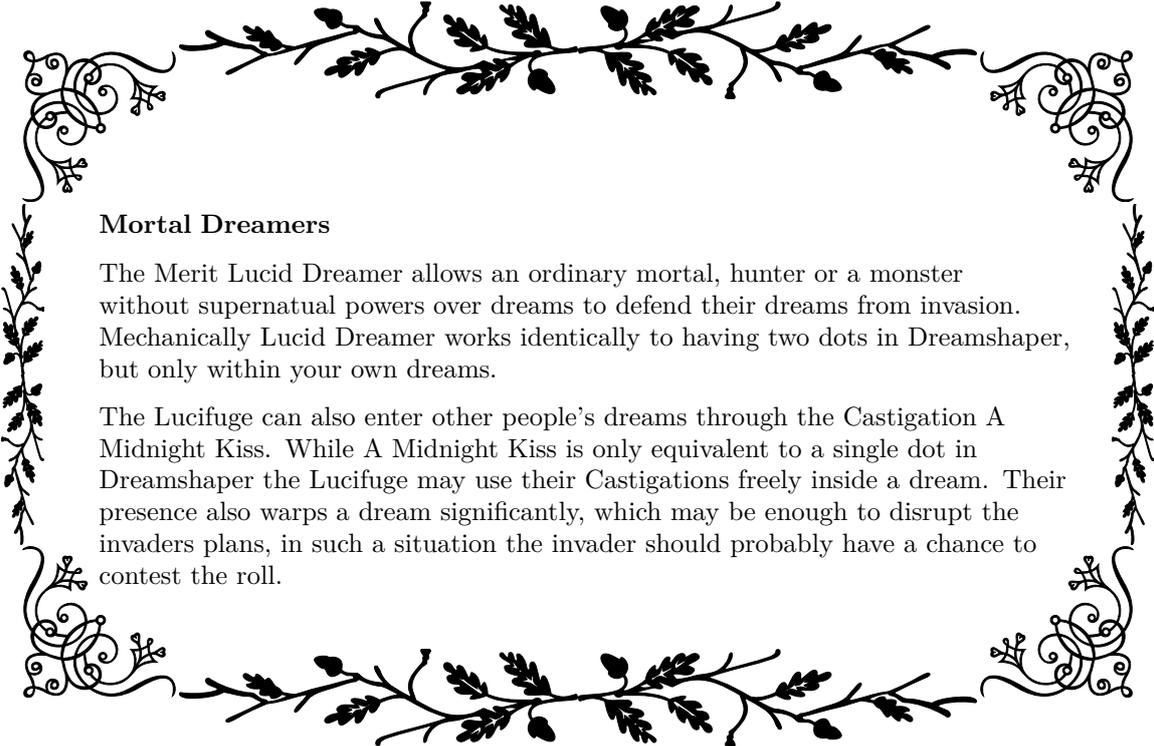
Dream Combat

Lets be honest; most people and most monsters do not want people poking and prying in their dreams. Fortunately none of the previous abilities will work until the invader has dealt with any and all opposition. Opposition can come from the dreamers friends and allies, or the dreamer herself. With even one dot of Dreamshaper or the Lucid Dreamer Merit a character may make a contested Wits + Empathy vs Wits + Subterfuge roll to detect any other active minds inside a dreams. They may make an additional roll every time the intruder makes a change to the dream, and may notice automatically should the change be dramatic or obvious.

If an invader is spotted within a dream battle is likely to follow. Dream combat works mostly like normal combat with the following changes:

- No one has Health in dreams; damage is deducted directly from Willpower. At 0 Willpower an invader is thrown out of the dream while the sleeper will sink into unconsciousness.
- All attacks use the highest of the three power traits + any of: Athletics (for thrown weapons), Brawl, Firearms or Weaponry.
- All combatants have a Defence equal to their highest finesse trait and Armour equal to the highest Resistance trait.
- At two dots of Dreamshaper a character may attack with changes to a dream, such as turning their opponents clothes into stinging scorpions. This uses Wits + Empathy for a dicepool.

Beyond these changes combat works just as normal. The fighters may be summoning dragons, dual wielding rocket launchers or turning themselves into giants and stomping on their foes but it works out to much of the same thing as normal combat.



Mortal Dreamers

The Merit Lucid Dreamer allows an ordinary mortal, hunter or a monster without supernatural powers over dreams to defend their dreams from invasion. Mechanically Lucid Dreamer works identically to having two dots in Dreamshaper, but only within your own dreams.

The Lucifuge can also enter other people's dreams through the Castigation A Midnight Kiss. While A Midnight Kiss is only equivalent to a single dot in Dreamshaper the Lucifuge may use their Castigations freely inside a dream. Their presence also warps a dream significantly, which may be enough to disrupt the invaders plans, in such a situation the invader should probably have a chance to contest the roll.

SUBCLAUSE 13.2.b: Honeyed Milk Every Day

Anyone who has read a faerie tale knows that the fae love to make deals and bargains. The reason for this is Pledges, one of the most powerful forms of fae magic. Health, wealth, even happiness. The fae can offer it if you just sign on the dotted line. That's not even the impressive part. A faerie doesn't need to have money to offer or anyway of getting it. If you keep your end of the bargain the money will just turn up, a gift from Fate, and if you break your word...

Don't break your word.

The first step in constructing a pledge is to choose what the tasks are. What you must do, or what you are forbidden from doing. The difficulty of the task or restriction defines how much it is worth on a 1 to 3 scale. An easy task such as leaving a bowl of milk outside your door every night is only worth 1, while a swearing complete obedience is worth 3. A pledge may consist of many separate tasks, and each party may have their own unique set of tasks.

The second step is to choose the benefits. Unless stated otherwise a benefit lasts the duration of the pledge and vanishes instantly if you break your word. A pledge may offer:

- Skill: an additional dot of any Skill is worth 1. No one may ever have more than one dot in any single skill from Pledges.
- The Sight: It might be exceptionally rare for an ordinary human to be able to see the fae, but every last faerie can grant The Sight through a pledge. A faerie may grant the sight to her pledge bound servants so they may better fulfill their tasks. Others may wish to show their friends and family the truth in an attempt to regain part of their old life. For most hunters this is the only way they could gain access to The Sight, but if the hunter is not working with the fae. Well few faeries will offer such a powerful tool to those who have not earned their trust or pledged not to "misuse" their gifts. A cunning hunter could trick or force a fae into making a deal, but be careful. The fae know deals better than most, and a less than cunning hunter could discover they've brought more than they bargained for. The Sight is worth 2.
- Merits: a pledge may increase a merit, or even grant them outright. A one dot increase is worth 1, three dot increase is worth 2. A full five dot increase is worth 3. This cannot increase a merit past five dots, nor can any Merit benefit from two separate pledges. Supernatural beings, including

the fae, get less from pledges. They only gain: one, two or three dots instead of one, three or five. In addition a pledge cannot grant endowments of any kind, status in any organisation that consists of supernatural creatures or has close ties to the supernatural (including all compacts and conspiracies), or any merit which is supernatural in nature (such as Fated Path). The only exception to these limitations is The Sight.

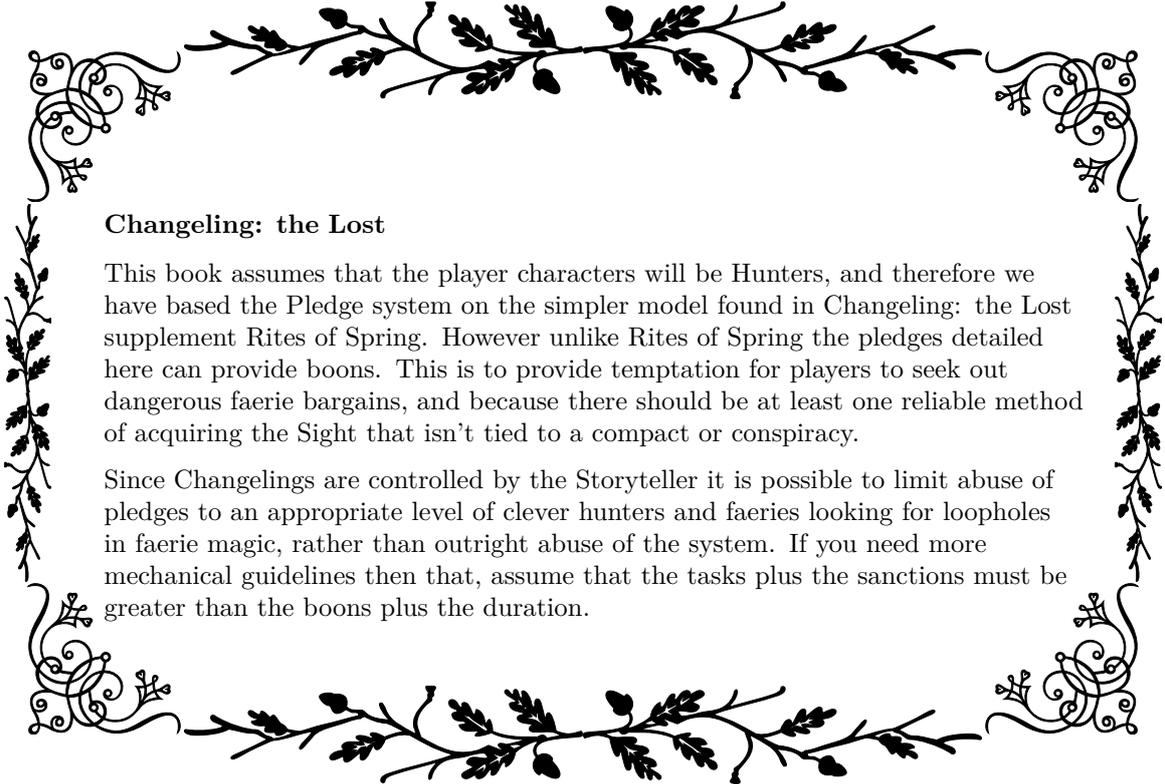
- A Favor: It goes without saying that perhaps the most useful benefit of Pledges is not what the pledge itself gives you, but the security that the other party will uphold their end of the bargain. When making a pledge you can ask for a Favour worth 1, 2 or 3. Some time afterwards you can call in your favour, creating a single Task of an equal or lesser value to the favour within whatever limits were agreed upon in the pledge.

The third step is to define the sanctions that fall upon any who breaks the pledge. Any combination of penalty clauses can be added, and different parties can be held to different penalties. The duration of a sanction is equal to the duration of a pledge, beginning the moment somebody breaks their word. Possible sanctions include:

- A curse: Fate itself marks the oath breaker as a pariah. Her word is worth nothing, so her works shall come to nothing. Removing 10-again from all rolls is worth 1. Removing 10-again and no longer counting eights as a Success is worth two. Finally removing 10-again and only counting 10s as Successes is worth 3. Appropriate Dread Powers or endowments can counter ill fortune. A power that grants 9-again will reduce the severity by one, 8-again reduces the severity by two and a rote action reduces the severity by three. The difference between the two becomes the final bonus or penalty.
- Forfeiture: Whatever benefit the pledge bestowed is taken back, with interest. Someone who gained two dots of Resources loses four dots of Resources, leaving them two dots worse than they were before the pledge, and possibly bankrupt. Someone who gained a dot of a skill loses two dots in that skill.
- Flaws: After breaking your word Fate will soon cause you to suffer from a flaw agreed to in the pledge. These flaws are often ironically appropriate. A Flaw is worth two.
- Vulnerability: If you break your word the other parties have the right to punish you personally. You either gain a Vulnerability to physical harm and cannot benefit from Defence and supernatural Armor against the other party, or you gain a Vulnerability to supernatural effects. You do not subtract your resistance attributes or get to contest any Dread Powers or supernatural Endowments used against you by the other party.
- Death: The most powerful sanction of all calls for the life of the oath breaker. When the oath is broken all the parties involved know who broke their word, any of them may pay a Willpower Dot. Should the price be paid, Fate will soon kill whoever was foolish enough to break their word. A sanction of Death is worth 3.

The fourth step is to choose the duration of the pledge. From a day to a week is worth 1, a month to a full season is worth 2, a year and a day is worth 3. Finally a lifetime pledge is worth three but also demands a dot of Willpower. A pledge that passes down to your descendants is worth three and a dot of Willpower, but only the True Fae can create such terrifying bargains.

Finally the fifth step is to pay the price. Add up all the costs from the previous four steps, counting each person individually: if two people swear to leave each other in peace then that is two separate tasks each with their own cost. Next divide the total cost by five, rounding up. This is the amount of Willpower that must be paid to seal the pledge. All parties to the pledge may contribute willpower, in whatever division they wish.

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Changeling: the Lost

This book assumes that the player characters will be Hunters, and therefore we have based the Pledge system on the simpler model found in Changeling: the Lost supplement Rites of Spring. However unlike Rites of Spring the pledges detailed here can provide boons. This is to provide temptation for players to seek out dangerous faerie bargains, and because there should be at least one reliable method of acquiring the Sight that isn't tied to a compact or conspiracy.

Since Changelings are controlled by the Storyteller it is possible to limit abuse of pledges to an appropriate level of clever hunters and faeries looking for loopholes in faerie magic, rather than outright abuse of the system. If you need more mechanical guidelines then that, assume that the tasks plus the sanctions must be greater than the boons plus the duration.

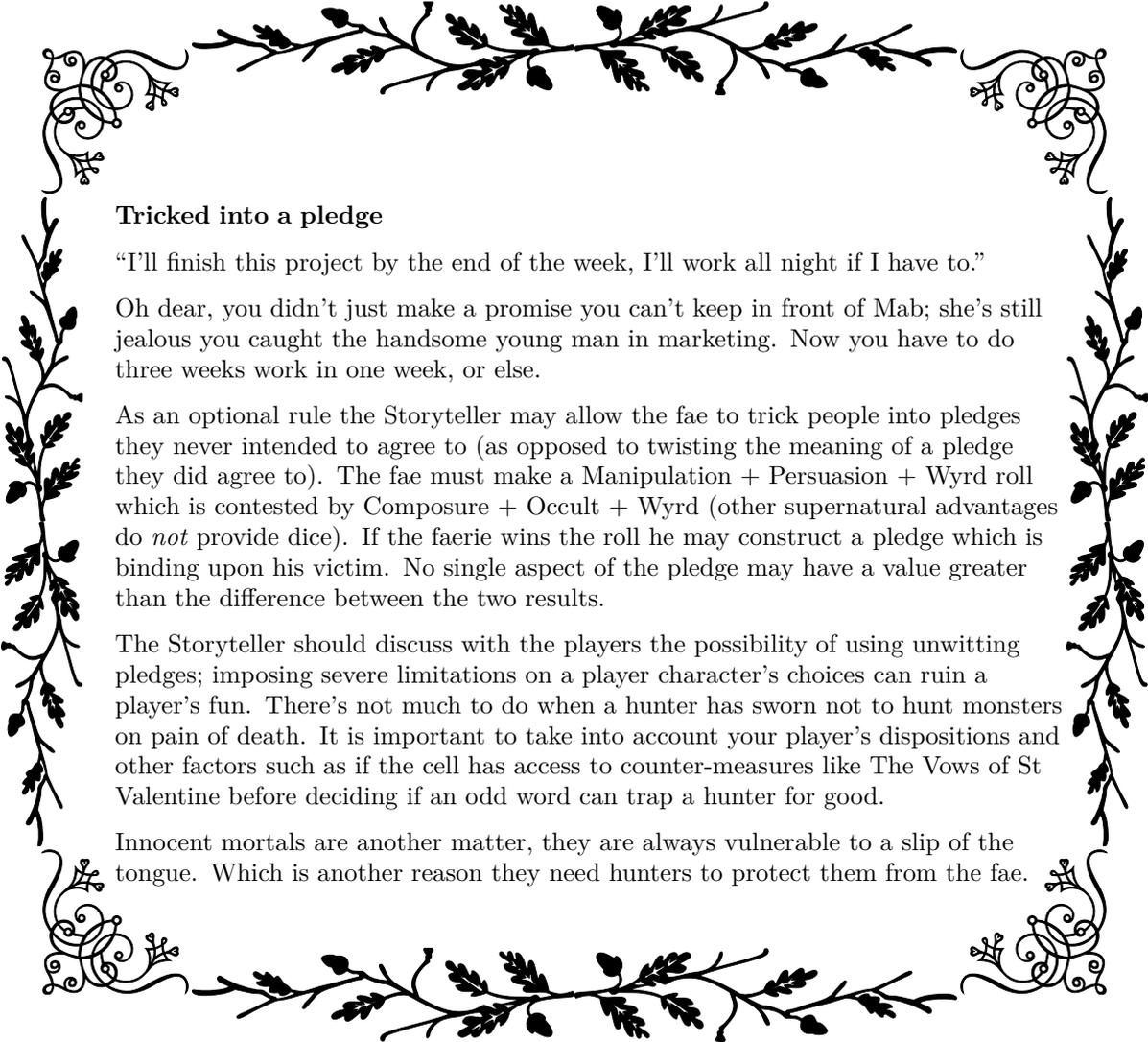
Example: Alice and Jack have both been trying to win the heart of the cutest guy in town, and their constant attempts to sabotage each other is starting to be a real problem. Since Alice and Jack are both changelings they decide to resolve this faerie style: With a contract. They agree that both will play fair and if either of them gets the guy the other will graciously concede; two very simple tasks which combine to be worth two.

While they're drawing up the contract they realise that neither of them has gotten far, so add two dots of Striking Looks; Since they are both supernatural a two dot merit is worth two.

The third step is to choose the sanctions for oath breaking; both Alice and Jack want the other to forfeit their chance at winning the guy's heart. But how to represent that mechanically? Alice and Jack's players debate with the Storyteller and decide upon a Flaw, the Avoidance derangement, with the trigger being romance.

Finally they need to choose a duration, it doesn't take Alice and Jack long to realise that spring will arrive soon. Spring is the season of rebirth and growth, a fitting time for romance, and so they agree on a season.

All together each of the four stages costs two, and since both parties have an identical pledge that comes to a total of sixteen. Dividing by five and rounding up Alice and Jack must spend four Willpower between them to seal the pledge. With that taken care of they can get back to courting... do they even know his name?

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Tricked into a pledge

“I’ll finish this project by the end of the week, I’ll work all night if I have to.”

Oh dear, you didn’t just make a promise you can’t keep in front of Mab; she’s still jealous you caught the handsome young man in marketing. Now you have to do three weeks work in one week, or else.

As an optional rule the Storyteller may allow the fae to trick people into pledges they never intended to agree to (as opposed to twisting the meaning of a pledge they did agree to). The fae must make a Manipulation + Persuasion + Wyrð roll which is contested by Composure + Occult + Wyrð (other supernatural advantages do *not* provide dice). If the faerie wins the roll he may construct a pledge which is binding upon his victim. No single aspect of the pledge may have a value greater than the difference between the two results.

The Storyteller should discuss with the players the possibility of using unwitting pledges; imposing severe limitations on a player character’s choices can ruin a player’s fun. There’s not much to do when a hunter has sworn not to hunt monsters on pain of death. It is important to take into account your player’s dispositions and other factors such as if the cell has access to counter-measures like The Vows of St Valentine before deciding if an odd word can trap a hunter for good.

Innocent mortals are another matter, they are always vulnerable to a slip of the tongue. Which is another reason they need hunters to protect them from the fae.

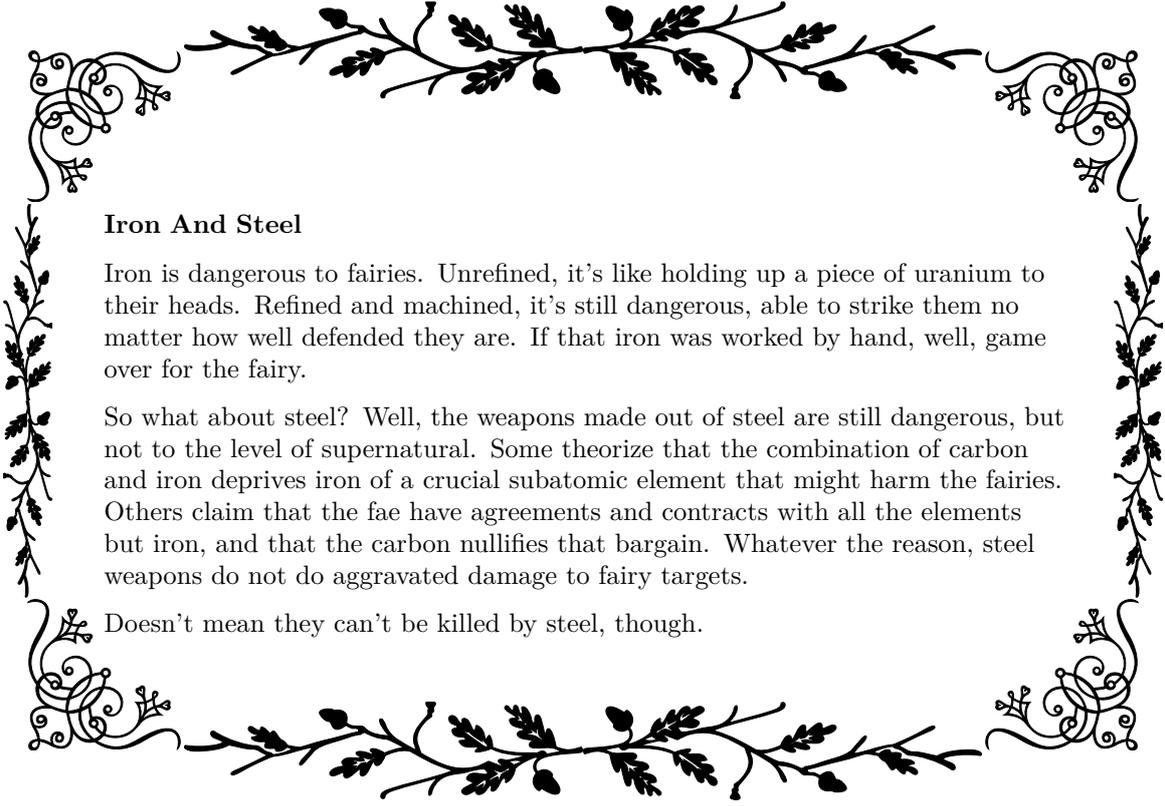
I Don’t Believe In Faeries

All magic comes with a price, and all monsters have weaknesses. For the fae no weakness is more famed than iron.

Iron passes through the fae’s mystical defences as though it was not even there. A protective enchantment parts to let iron past. The finest faerie forged armour has no more consistency than smoke when struck by an iron weapon.

Therefore you might expect the fae to hate and fear iron. In truth they don’t, or at least not all of them do. Changelings know no enemy greater than their former slavers and eagerly seek out iron weapons. A fetch will often has a need to defend itself against changelings and is just as happy to use an iron weapon.

The gentry themselves do find the use of iron revolting, and are affected by it to a greater degree than the lesser fae. A hand forged iron weapon (or even a lump of iron ore) that has never been worked by automated tools will do aggravated damage to the fae.

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Iron And Steel

Iron is dangerous to fairies. Unrefined, it's like holding up a piece of uranium to their heads. Refined and machined, it's still dangerous, able to strike them no matter how well defended they are. If that iron was worked by hand, well, game over for the fairy.

So what about steel? Well, the weapons made out of steel are still dangerous, but not to the level of supernatural. Some theorize that the combination of carbon and iron deprives iron of a crucial subatomic element that might harm the fairies. Others claim that the fae have agreements and contracts with all the elements but iron, and that the carbon nullifies that bargain. Whatever the reason, steel weapons do not do aggravated damage to fairy targets.

Doesn't mean they can't be killed by steel, though.

Other faerie weaknesses

As befitting creatures who have been written and reinterpreted by generations of authors a whole number of weaknesses and frailties have been associated with the fae. The large number of bans that faerie character faces is intended to represent the many, and sometimes whimsical, weaknesses of the fae.

Below you will find a collection of faerie weaknesses from mythology and fiction that can inspire a faeries ban. If you like you can apply them to the fey as a whole, but with Iron, Bans and more weaknesses be careful not to make the fey too easily defeated, or make it unnecessary to research a faerie's bans.

- **Deals:** It is a common concept that the fae cannot break a deal, though they are only bound to the letter of the contract and may gleefully break it's spirit. The rules for pledges cover this aspect of faerie lore, but it is not inconceivable that some fae might be magically bound by their agreements even if nobody invests Willpower into a pledge.
- **Honesty:** In many stories faeries cannot tell a direct lie. They are free to twist and warp the truth in any way they see fit, and are often better at deception than a human, but if you put a gun to a faerie's forehead and ask "Did you shoot Colleen, yes or no", then it is trapped.
- **Music:** The fey are sometimes presented as being fascinated, even hypnotised, by the sound of music. This trait is sometimes tied to the idea that the fae have no creativity of their own, and so are fascinated by human arts. However plenty of other stories portray the fae as artistic geniuses.
- **Pride:** Faeries are often strongly associated with the vice of pride; their common epithet of "The Fair Folk" is in fact an attempt to avoid giving them any offence. Pride can be blinding, and a cunning hunter could take advantage of that, but do be careful not to offend one unless you're prepared for the consequences.
- **Religion:** When Christianity spread to Europe, faerie lore was reinterpreted to fit it into Christian mythology, in the reinterpreted tales faeries are vulnerable to Christianity. They can be driven off by the sound of church bells, and even feel pain when they hear the name of God or Jesus. The Benediction – The Vows of St Valentine – was inspired by this weakness and allows the Hammer

of Witches to strike at the heart of faerie life or undo pledge based curses. Those of you who own Compacts and Conspiracies may also find The Casting Out of Witches (appropriately petitioning St Patrick) to fit the mythology. Storytellers who wish to play up the importance of religion may wish to grant additional powers to priests, or even the faithful, rather than extra faerie weaknesses. Consider adding dots in Professional Training as a religious leader to resist faerie magic, or if you own compacts and conspiracies then you could use points from the Long Night endowment textquotedbleft The Prayer” and a quick prayer to break faerie curses or force a faerie to flee for a scene. Those of you who have read the Changeling: the Lost books will know how important stories are to the fae, one possibility is to make the reinterpretation of faerie tales a key part of why the fae have these weaknesses.

- **Sunlight:** Sunlight has never been a general weakness of all faeries, but subsets such as dwarves or trolls have been portrayed as adverse to sunlight. These faeries are often portrayed as turning to stone when exposed to sunlight, but sometimes they return to flesh when the night falls. Which might turn out messily if your players have access to a decent sized sledgehammer.
- **True Love:** Want to break a faerie curse? True Love’s kiss. Want to find a loved one stolen by a faerie? If you love them then fate’s on your side. True Love has been used as a faerie weakness since before Disney came upon the scene (though it has gotten more popular afterwards). If you do not want to make True Love universally applicable than in special cases the Merit Fated Path can be used to give a potent advantage to someone trying to aid their true love.
- **True Names:** It is often said that knowing a faeries true name (which is probably not what he usually goes by) gives you protection from that faeries magic, or even power over it.

This Little Piggy Went To Market

Most places with more than a few faeries have a goblin market. Sometimes they spring up over night, growing out of the walls like thorny vines or sprouting from the ground like a faerie ring. Others have been in place for generations, leaving well hidden hints in folklore and local stories that advertise their wares.

For that is the thing about a goblin market. The merchant’s want people, or rather a certain sort of people, to find them. They want customers. Their largest market is of course their fellow fae. Nearly every customer is some sort of faerie, but anyone plugged into the supernatural underworld is as welcome as their wallet is heavy. What would a vampire pay for a chalice that is always filled with that other red wine? What would a hunter pay for the weapons needed to defend his community? It’s all for sale, lets talk price.

Finding a goblin market is never easy, this is the fae we are talking about. Markets are well hidden in deserted areas or squatting in buildings closed for the night. Others are hidden within the Hedge (though usually on a trod; you can’t make a market too hard for your customers to find). Once you’ve found it entrance could be hidden behind elaborate mystical defences or burly ogres who ward off all without the proper password.

All this is designed to keep the market secret for customers only, the merchants don’t want to waste their time with yuppies trying to buy their daughter a unicorn with a credit card, (it’s not that they mind the inevitable disaster, but credit cards are mistrusted even to the hobs), and they certainly don’t want to have to deal with people trying to destroy the market, hired muscle aside a market is not a military organization. A market wants customers however, so anyone who is connected to the faerie community or successfully spies on them is likely to learn where the market is to be held.

The Market Law

Every goblin market has it’s rules and all customers and merchants are expected to abide by the market law. Each market is unique and has rules ranging from the sensible to the simply bizarre. In some markets visitors may be bound to follow the rules by powerful faerie pledges, others rely on good faith and burly guards. Remember that the rules are for the merchant’s benefit, they only help you because a happy customer is a repeat customer. Some aspects of market law are universal, and in all markets the following rules are bound to be in effect.

- **No violence:** This is simple, while at market you are expected to avoid violence of any sort. Check your weapons at the door.
- **All goods as advertised:** Anything sold at the market will do everything the merchant promised, no exceptions. A weapon advertised as being able to cut through any armor will cut through any armor. Yet caveat emptor; there is no law saying the merchant has to tell you everything, and there never will be. That same sword may shine like a beacon showing the fae your location.
- **All deals are final:** The rule is simple, if you agree to make a payment you must make it. It cuts both way too, if the merchant agrees to sell something then he must provide the goods. No ifs, ands, or buts.
- **No refunds:** This rule is simple, if you sell something and want it back then you have to pay for it, probably at an inflated rate. Same goes for what you bought, if you want to return it; well there's handling fees, wear and tear, sales tax and whatever other reasons the merchant makes up to explain why he's paying less than he sold it for. If you're really unlucky you might have to pay the merchant to take a bad purchase off your hands.

The Goods

Goblin Markets have a whole range of strange and impossible merchandise to sell, much of which may be tempting to hunters.

- **Goblin Fruit:** The bounty of the Hedge is one of the most common and cheapest goods passing through a Goblin Market, all manner of Faeries, hedge witches, ascending ones, and weirder creatures can be found buying Goblin Fruit for it's mystical properties, or their groceries. Stalls selling all manner of fruit can be found at any market, other merchants often give fruit away to sweeten the deal on their actual merchandise, they wouldn't object if someone was more interested in buying the fruit directly.
- **Magic:** One goblin merchant sells strange relics, another is a "tutor" who can teach dark powers. A third sits behind a shabby booth, nothing but a single quill on his table. Pay him right and he'll write magical powers on your very skin. For many hunters a goblin market is the only way they'll ever even the playing field with monsters; more than one vampire has been surprised to meet her final end when the group of average joes she casually defeated last week return shooting fire from their fingertips. When the fae are in town certainties vanish and the rules are broken, for a price.
- **Self and Destiny:** Are you unhappy with who you are? For the right price you can be somebody else. Sometimes it's easy. Are you unhappy with your hair? Your gender or sex? Somebody's probably sold theirs to the market and you can buy it, physical transformation is easy. Entire lives are harder, but they can be done. Want to be a celebrity? Luckily for you someone fated for fame and fortune died last week in a car accident and the merchant bottled up the destiny. Want to buy that fame? The singing voice? It's for sale, buy both and you might get a discount, but try to figure out what you're buying. You don't want to be destined for drug addictions and failing celebrity marriages do you?
- **Skills:** At a goblin market you can find all sorts of tutors. Want to learn how to operate heavy weaponry or build a bomb without showing up on the government's watch lists? Maybe you'd rather learn to run a business from home so you have more time on the Vigil. Or perhaps you just always wanted to learn the piano. Goblin tutors work much like buying skills the normal way, except there's no need to spend time or effort studying. It is considerably easier to find tutors for old or timeless skills than more modern and mundane ones.
- **Services:** Does your cell of police officers lack an expert in the occult? Are your kids feeling neglected and starting to act out? Many goblin markets double as a job fair, anyone from domestic aid to skilled sorcerers may be employed. Sadly skilled sorcerers are extremely expensive while trained ten foot guard serpents are prohibited in most apartment leases. Hunters often have real trouble finding hobgoblins willing to work on Earth, most can't survive there, and if they do employ someone it's going to look very suspicious to any other hunters. Still, knowing where to get a good deal on hired muscle has saved more than one cell.

- **Slaves:** You all knew it was coming, it's true. Goblin markets deal in slaves. If their customers will object it may be well hidden. It might even be forbidden if the market simply cannot get away with slavery, in other markets you can find people bidding on slaves in-between a stall of goblin fruit and booth selling music memorabilia. Slavery is of course immoral and a Morality four sin (abusing a slave can be even worse). Some hunters get the bright idea of buying slaves to set them free. It works if your goal is to rescue someone specific, but in the long term it's expensive and loyal repeat customers simply encourage the merchants to acquire more people to sell.
- **Esoterica:** Beatles memorabilia, or a stall selling nothing but watches taken from car crashes. Garments spun by live spiders while you wait. Not everything in a goblin market has any mechanical effect, some are just part of the flavor. Buying a lunch of cockatrice eggs fried in honey for a coy smile while you debate the relative merits of buying a sword forged from moonlight or a replica of the gun that killed Abraham Lincoln (it even replicates being the gun that shot Honest Abe) can help set the scene. Above all remember to keep it surreal, dreamlike and occasionally horrific.

Paying up

No one is surprised to know that hobgoblins aren't all that interested in money, but what there are interested in doesn't really make much sense. Some hobs like to buy abstractions; the memory of your first video game, or an hours worth of sorrow. In mechanical terms these are points of Willpower (for when what you are buying doesn't go on the character sheet) or experience (for when it does), as always a dot of Willpower is worth eight experience.

Other hobs respect the long and noble tradition of bartering. They buy items that have a strange and often nonsensical form of value that nobody else understands. Which is why one day a powerful magical item might cost the president's pyjamas and the next day it could be as cheap as a bag of dead flies. Unfortunately for hunters, they're not faeries and are unlikely to ever get a clue on what's this moment's hot merchandise. But try to avoid having too many goblin merchants agree on a quest to fetch odd items and instead focus on the setting the mood with all sorts of odd transactions. You never know, the players might get lucky and discover for the next five minuets belly button fluff is in enormous demand.

Conflicts with the market

There are at least two good reasons why hunters might want to attack a market. The first is that it's the market where faeries, witches and all sorts of unsavory types stock up on the tools of the trade. The other is of course slavery. So what happens when hunters attack?

If the invasion gets past the front door it will be chaos, like a band of well armed attackers opening fire in a busy shopping mall. This is because, well, that's exactly what just happened, and may just be where it happens. A goblin market might have some guards, but they're mostly expecting shop lifters. Quite a few of the merchants stock powerful magic or supernatural weapons, but it is unlikely that they'll have any experience of actual battle. The customers are a wild card. A raid could be devastatingly effective but a prolonged battle is far riskier due as the attackers will have to deal with a numerically larger foe.

And how will a market counter attack? What will they do if hunters start patrolling the entrance to the market, scaring off customers? They'll use their mercantile skills of course. A goblin market could do a lot of damage by having the merchants go door to door with special offers on weapons to the hunter's enemies, cursed items to the hunter's loved ones, or just dumping potent and dangerous magic around town and waiting for the fireworks to begin.

In a direct conflict a goblin market is at a disadvantage but like so many things fae, the question is can you force a direct conflict before it's too late?

Tricky Tricks

If they can help it the last thing a faerie will do is play fair. The sheer verity of the fae is reflected in their Dread Powers, from industrious dwarfs and ingenious gnomes who have a superhuman mastery over machines. Strange boogiemen and lurkers in the night who fade into the darkness, emerging to steal or terrify. Beings formed of, and with the ability to command the very elements and of course impossibly graceful faeries. If there is a common trend, it is the faeries mastery of finesse and deception.

The following new Dread Powers can help you create the perfect faerie antagonists. Note though, that unless stated otherwise all of the following Dread Powers can be used for any monster that you please.

Animate Device (00000)

Cost: 2 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice pool: Intelligence + Crafts

Effect: The fae calls for the aid of a mechanical object, causing it to spring to life. The object acts as though it was controlled by Strength and Dexterity equal to the Successes rolled on this Dread Power and with any Skill required to operate itself (Drive for a car, Firearms for a gun) equal to the monster's Crafts. Animated objects are fully mobile with a Speed of 5 + Strength + Dexterity, they cannot fly but they can glide along the floor or throw themselves through the air. Objects remain under the monster's command for a full scene.

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The device turns wild, it obeys no one and acts on strange instincts.

Failure: Nothing happens.

Success: The device awakens and obeys the faeries orders.

Exceptional Success: The device awakens and obeys the faeries orders, with an additional die to all actions.

Change Details (0000)

Cost: 2 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice pool: Wits + Crafts

Effect: The fae alters the state of reality to bring themselves favor. They loosen the bars of their cage, remove themselves from an incriminating photo, or even change the contents of their pockets. The changes they make must be realistic however; bars can be loosened, but not made to explode, and nothing can be conjured which would not fit from where it was drawn. Objects whose details are simply changed can only be changed into similar objects. An apple might become an orange, but not a cannonball.

Dreamshaper (O – OO)

Cost: Free

Action: Permanent

Effect: When the fae has entered a dream they may influence it towards their own desires. At one dot they may only manifest within the dream and interact with it "physically". At two dots they may warp the dreams as they wish. With a thought walls melt away, or a squad of F-16s piloted by colorful ponies arrives to destroy their enemy.

Making modifications to a dream is an Wits + Empathy roll. A bonus or penalty is applied based on how symbolically appropriate the change is to the dream.

By itself Dreamshaper only allows the monster to shape it's own dreams, however most monsters with this Dread power also possess Dreamwalker which lets them enter, and thus shape, other people's dreams.

Dreamwalker (O – OO)

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Instant

Effect: The monster may invade dreams. At one dot they can enter a dream by touching a sleeping person and spending one Willpower. At two dots they may exit their own dreams and travel to the dreams of any sleeping person. It takes an Extended Wits + Occult roll to navigate the passages between dreams. The required Successes depend on how well they know the target.

Intimately: 2 Successes

Acquainted: 4 Success

Described: 6 Successes

Dreamwalker only allows the monster to observe the dreams they invade, most monsters with this Dread Power also possess Dreamshaper, which allows them to control the dreams they invade.

Dreamflesh (OOOO - OOOOO)

Requires: Dreamwalker (OO)

Cost: 2 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: None

Effect: The monster is not only able to invade a target's dreams. It can transform it's body from flesh to dreamstuff to enter people's dreams physically. The monster could dive into a sleeper's dreams to hide from her enemies and even reenter the world miles away.

If the dreamer wakes while a monster is physically inside his dreams than that monster is thrown randomly into the underlying web of dreams, and must find their way out using Dreamwalker. Rumors of monsters who can permanently reside in a single person's head as a base of operation or a nearly unfindable long term hiding spot are a little too common to discount. This ability is covered by the five dot version of this Dread Power. When the sleeper wakes up, the dream remains though the monster within cannot affect his host, or exit in any way until the mortal starts dreaming again.

Emotional Harvest (O – OOOOO)

Cost: Free

Action: Instant

Effect: The monster is able to feed on strong emotions once per day. Roll an appropriate Attribute + Skill + Emotional Harvest to create strong emotions, such as Presence + Intimidation + Emotional Harvest to create fear. Alternatively when exposed to ambient strong emotions, such as by attending a sports match, roll Wits + Resolve + Emotional harvest. Each success regains one point of Willpower.

Immunity (OOOOO)

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: This ability is always active.

Effect: The monster is completely immune to one source of damage. It could be something specific; a monster of living fire is not going to be hurt by a flamethrower. It could also be broader, such as an incorporeal being of living shadow that can only be hurt by light. Immunity cannot be taken to protect against any natural vulnerabilities such as Bans, or a faerie's aversion to iron.

Drawback: The monster's immunity to one source of damage comes with a vulnerability to another. Depending on how broad and useful the immunity is this could be as little as losing Defence and/or supernatural Armor against a certain source of damage. A more useful Immunity could cause the monster to take Aggravated Damage from it's vulnerability. Exceptionally potent immunities could even cause the monster to drop dead the moment they are hurt by their vulnerability.

Examples:

Davy Jones, a slasher who has been trapped in a diving suit since the 1930s, takes no damage from drowning or water pressure, but his suit is conductive and gives him no armor against electricity.

The Faerie Lord Prince Elladan of the Shining Blade is such a skilled combatant that no one has ever landed a blow against him in close combat (except with an iron weapon, which throws him off his game). However, he suffers from a faerie curse not too different from hemophilia, which is in fact why he trained his defence to perfection, and so if somebody does land a blow which draws blood damage is Aggravated.

The necromancer Satabous travelled deep into the Underworld and made a bargain with a god of death. In exchange for his service the god agreed that Satabous would not die from any weapon but a solid golden knife. Nothing else can hurt Satabous, but the slightest scratch from a golden knife would kill him instantly.

Invisibility (OOOO – OOOOO)

Cost: 3 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Wits + Stealth

Effect: The faerie is able to achieve true invisibility, hiding in plain sight. At four dots they are "merely" invisible to sight, smell and sound. At five dots they are undetectable by all mundane means except touch. Even occult paraphernalia like Kirlan cameras will have no effect. The monster can be noticed if they interact with their surroundings, so lace curtains or cans of spray paint make an effective countermeasure, as do mystical Endowments such as the True Sight of St Abel.

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The fae makes himself supernaturally noticeable.

Failure: The fae remains completely visible.

Success: The fae vanishes from sight.

Exceptional Success: No further benefit.

Knock Knock (O)

Requires: Only the Fae can learn Knock Knock.

Cost: 1 Willpower or Free

Action: Instant

Effect: By knocking on any door, window, portal or mirror and asking for entry the monster can open a doorway to the Hedge. New doors cost 1 Willpower. Existing doors can be opened with a point of Willpower or by successfully rolling Wyrd.

Knowing Touch (0-00000)

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice pool: Intelligence + Crafts + Knowing Touch

Effect: With a successful roll, the monster gains an intimate understanding of an inanimate object. He sees in an instant the history of that object, as well as its internal mechanisms. The fae who uses this power gains a bonus to the repair and use of the item equal to his dots in the dread power.

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The fae gains inaccurate information.

Failure: The fae learns nothing.

Success: The fae learns the history of the object, and gains a bonus to using it equal to her dots in Knowing Touch.

Exceptional Success: No further benefit.

Luck Manipulation (OOO)

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Wits + Occult

Effect: The monster can manipulate Fate itself, bestowing great or terrible luck. The monster touches the target or targets itself and rolls. On a Successful activation the next time the target rolls they must roll twice and take the better or worse result, depending on if they have been blessed or cursed.

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: Regardless of what the fey was trying to do, he curses himself.

Failure: No effect

Success: The fey either blesses or curses the target. Either way roll their next action twice, for a blessing take the better result, for a curse take the worse result.

Exceptional Success: Instead of creating luck, the fey moves it. The next activation of this Dread Power is free, providing it has the opposite effect: The luck stolen from an enemy is used to bless an ally.

Mechanical Repair (0-00000)

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Crafts + Mechanical Repair

Effect: With a simple bit of tinkering and magic even the most battered machine can be fixed up in record time. Tools and appropriate spare parts provide the normal equipment bonus, but are not required. A good thump or cursing the air blue can work just as well for the right kind of monster.

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The targeted device loses a point of Structure and this Dread Power cannot be used on that device for the remainder of the scene.

Failure: No effect

Success: Every Success restores one point of structure, this lasts for the rest of the scene.

Exceptional Success: Extra Successes are their own reward.

Mirage (0 – 00000)

Cost: 1+ Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Wits + Expression

Effect: The monster can create illusions, and these may be free standing or cover up an existing object. These illusions cover sight, sound and smell but not touch, taste and have no heat signature or aura. The cost is equal to the Size of the illusion created divided by the monster's dots in Mirage, to a minimum of 1 Willpower. If the monster dedicates a full action it can control the illusion like a puppet, rolling Wits + Expression to make it convincing. The monster can also program the a predefined behaviour into the illusion however unless the illusion is directly controlled then it cannot react in any way. An illusionary guard dog can run down the path barking furiously, but it cannot change direction to chase the intruders.

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The fae loses all access to Mirage for a scene.

Failure: No image appears.

Success: The desired illusion manifests under the direction of the fae.

Exceptional Success: The illusion is especially detailed and convincing.

Scarper (O – OOOOO)

Cost: 1 Willpower

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Wits + Expression + Scarper

Effect: To escape pursuit the faerie conjures up illusionary duplicates to confuse it's pursuers. First the fae chooses what strategy they wish to use: If they simply leg it, attempt to flee into the Hedge or some other tactic. The monster then rolls, with every Success creating one illusionary duplicate of the faerie. All the duplicates immediately try to escape using the same strategy but they all go in different directions. The illusions created by Scarper have sight, sound and smell but cannot be touched, tasted and do not have auras or heat signatures. They are capable of duplicating the appearance but not the effects of other dread powers: If a changeling tries to escape to the Hedge and covers his tracks with Scarper, all the illusions will attempt to escape into illusionary Hedge Gates.

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The fae makes himself supernaturally noticeable.

Failure: Nothing happens.

Success: The fae splits into several duplicates, one per success. Each duplicate then runs in a different direction, confusing any pursuers.

Exceptional Success: Extra successes are their own reward.

Sublime Skill (O - OOOOO)

Elvish archers, Dwarven smiths, the fae have long been associated with impossible skill beyond mortal ken. The monster can spend a point of Willpower to add their dots in Sublime Skill to boost a single skill by the number of dots they have invested in Sublime Skill.

Relic Crafter (O - OOOOO)

Cost: 1 Willpower per dot of the item to be created. In addition the monster needs a workshop, tools and component materials. This could require an entire story of gathering rare and potent components, or the monster could live in a workshop churning out relics at the end of a well oiled supply chain.

Action: Extended, target of the new relic's dots * Five.

Dice Pool: Strength + Crafts

Effect: The fae have long been associated with the creation of strange items with great and terrible powers and it is this Dread Power that allows a monster to craft Relics. The maximum potency of the monster's creations is limited by the number of dots they have invested in Relic Crafter. A dwarven smith with three dots of Relic Creator could create items of comparable power to any of the Aegis Kai Doru's three dot relics, or a creation costing three dots under the Endowment RnD rules. If the monster can only create items from a single theme, such as jewellery or a blacksmithing, then they get +2 to all relic creation rolls. If the monster can only create duplicates of one specific item the bonus increases to +4.

If the monster is a fae than their creations will always have the tell tell twists of fae magic, see the sidebar about fae relics on page 112.

Unlikely Device (0-00000)

Cost: 4 willpower

Action: Extended

Dice pool:Dexterity + Crafts + Unlikely Device

Effect: The monster works its influence on the world to cause a set of random objects to become something useful. The objects used for this dread power must be thematic, though not necessarily realistic; a set of batteries and a revolver might make an electro-pistol, but a cantaloupe couldn't repair a car (Unless that car was made of fruits, but that's for another sourcebook). Tools provide the normal equipment bonus, but are not required. Each roll takes 10 minutes per point of Size in the desired device, and the target number is equal to twice the Resources cost of the device's nearest mundane equivalent. Truly impossible devices may have a "cost" beyond five dots.

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The device falls apart, wasting time, effort and materials.

Failure: No progress is created

Success: Successes are gathered, when the target number is reached the device is created and lasts for 24 hours before falling apart.

Exceptional Success: Lots of Successes are gathered.

Hedge Hunting

“Place is fucking weird,” Jonesy said, pushing the brambles in front of him away with his rifle, careful not to let them touch him. “Where’s the animals? The bugs? Fuck, where’s the sun?”

“There’s plenty of places like this on Earth,” Kelly said, following Jonesy’s lead. “Amazon rainforest, that place has got plenty of low hanging trees that barely allow any sun in.”

Pat wasn’t really listening, though. The tracks kept leading through the thorns in the forest, and if the sun had actually come up, they’d all have to explain to their bosses why they had decided to skip work. The man they were chasing had definitely been some kind of magic user. Wielding the very plants in the forest against them, destroying the cars by ripping them apart with tree roots, it was too much to ignore. Then the freak ran into the forest, leaves shielding their escape for a few minutes.

“So where’s the GPS say we are?” Jonesy asked. “This doesn’t look like the Barrens anymore.”

“Hang on,” Kelly said, taking out her small little GPS. “Huh, that’s weird.”

“What?” Jonesy said, a touch of fear on the edge of his voice.

“This says we’re actually in Xinjuang, China,” Kelly said, tapping at the screen of her GPS. “No, now it’s saying we’re in Nairobi! What the hell is going on with this thing!”

“It’s messing with us,” Pat said, crushing another piece of thorn underfoot, gasping. “What the hell?” he shouted, pulling his foot up. The sole was torn open, blood dripping from the bottom of his combat boots. “How the hell?”

“Did that actually go through your boots?” Jonesy said, looking back. “How’d that happen?”

Pat tried to think of a reason, but just shook his head. “It’s okay...” Pat froze. “What’s this guy’s name?” he thought, staring at Jonesy like he’d never seen the man before. Quickly, he shook it off. “It’s okay. Let’s just keep going.”

As they forced their way through, the vegetation slowly changed more and more. The pines and sandy floor shifted, the sounds of distant deer and birds fading into the distance. One pine looked like it actually was growing deciduous leaves, full of fruit on each branch. For a second, Pat thought he saw a deer running past his vision, but then the thing turned its nuzzle up, and Pat found himself staring into a wolf’s sharp maw.

“Hey, guys, what do you suppose would happen if that thing trapped us in our own heads?” the woman said, Pat realizing he’d forgotten her name too. “Like if we’re stuck in a shared dream, and we’d have to do something drastic to wake up?”

“Maybe shoot yourself?” the man said, shrugging. The woman nodded, putting a black object to her head without a second thought, before pulling her finger and forcing a flash of fire and thunder from the thing. The man froze, a look of...something, some emotion on his face. Pat wanted to help the man, but he stopped. Something was coming towards them, something large, the ground shaking where they stood. In the distance, the Hedge (“Did I just call it by its name?” Pat thought) seemed to part away, the sound of thundering hooves coming closer. But instead of a horse with a massive rider, the Hedge revealed a woman of beauty, with flowers for her clothes and sunlight for her hair. The other man froze, putting another black thing up towards the woman, but Pat couldn’t understand why, she was clearly beautiful.

“Oh men,” she said. Her voice was barely a whisper, but her voice echoed across the Hedge. “Lost so far without one to guide you? I can be your light in such darkness, oh men.”

Pat didn’t hear what the man was saying to answer her, or pay attention to the sounds of thunder that followed. He was just fixated on the woman, how she moved effortlessly through the brambles and thorns of the Hedge, a burst of red color painting her face, vanishing a second later, her green-hued skin

even more beautiful now, if it were even possible. Some annoying mewling was coming from something, but Pat just ignored it, focused instead on the beauty, his jaw down to the ground.

“Oh, a man who would not attack one like me.” Smiling sweetly, she approached Pat. As she closed in, Pat was slowly taken away, the scent of flowers and nectar filling his nose, sending him into ecstasy. “What is your true name, oh man?”

“Patrick Carter...” Pat said, seeing the woman draw closer. Her eyes were green, with deep red in the center, her lips full and lush. Something deep inside Pat told him something was wrong, so very wrong, but he quieted it. This wasn’t any kind of problem. This was heaven on Earth.

“Oh Patrick Carter, you are one of great will and passion. You are one I will partake great joy in.” As she came closer, she brushed a hand across his cheek, the skin of her hand warming up his face. “What is your wish?”

“I want to fight the monsters...” Pat said numbly, his mind clouded in a sweetening fog of pleasure.

“Then you shall fight the monsters, oh Patrick Carter,” the woman said, circling around slowly to Patrick’s back, her dress of leaves and grasses trailing behind as she let her hand trail up Pat’s spine. Then, in his ear, she whispered, “But do you pledge to me and me alone?”

“Oh yes...” Pat mumbled, not noticing the green skin flowing over his cheek and limbs. “Only to you, babe.”

“Then let us seal the pledge,” she whispered, facing him. Slowly, she closed, Pat closing his eyes as her lips met his. A bright flash hit him, then blackness.

“What?” he grumbled, rubbing at his head. He realized then he had no hair. His eyes shot open, and he felt all over his scalp, feeling something pointy just off on the sides. Feeling the tips, he felt down to his ears. Shakily, he stood up, but felt something off. Looking around, somehow the stone walls of where he’d woken up seemed shorter than how they would normally be. “Hello?” he said, the light dim. All he could make out were the vines growing in the walls, and on his own skin.

Desperately he ripped at them, drawing green blood from his veins. But they kept growing back, the wounds staunching themselves instantly. The more he clawed, the more the vines grew back, hardier and thicker. As he struggled, he started to shout.

The sound of clanking metal brought his attention to the door of the cell. Spinning around, he saw the woman from before, from the Barrens. “What did you do to me?” he shouted. “What is this?”

“You wanted to fight monsters, did you not?” the woman said, but he was starting to realize that the thing in front of was no real woman. “I gave you the chance. But you needed to be changed. Now you can fight the monsters that come after me.”

“Who am I?” he said, looking up at her with big, fearful eyes.

“You are my plaything, my little wooden soldier.” Smiling again, she kissed him.

The pain broke him like a dead pine needle.

Chapter 4: Hedging the Bet

You see contracts... deals, well, they're the very foundation of all civilized existence.
– Mr Gold / Rumplestiltskin, *Once Upon A Time*

Cultures across the world have legends of fairy like creatures through their histories. Small house elves are told of, along with tales of dryads flitting through the forests. Fairy wars and loves are told to young children, as their mothers lock the doors and hang iron over the doorway.

What are the fairies? Well, there's a lot of different answers.

Faeries in Changeling: the Lost

Where do the fae come from? What trait is it that unites strange tree men, cunning goblins and mighty Arcadian kings, and what is it that divides them? Below you will find a brief overview of the faeries from *Changeling: the Lost*, followed by alternative possibilities from myths and legends.

Changelings

Changelings are created from the humans taken to Arcadia to be slaves for the gentry. Their souls are torn by the thorns of the hedge and the nature of Arcadia seeps into the cracks. Their bodies are twisted to become more aesthetically pleasing, or more proficient at their tasks, or to survive in alien environments, or just because. Even their minds are warped by faerie magic, and by the horrors they have lived through.

Yet changelings are more than victims, they are survivors. Each and every one of them had something that gave them strength, something that gave them a reason to fight, something that led them home. Upon their return most changelings find that their story has only just begun, and in their absence the world has moved on. The life they hoped to return to is often now occupied by a fetch. The changeling will need all the strength that led them home if they wish to build a new life or recover the old.

If that was all you could ask why do hunters ever hunt changelings? Indeed changelings have suffered hugely, and often they began their ordeal as just the sort of innocent, ignorant human hunters joined the Vigil to protect. Though modern culture often assigns a form of moral authority to victims simply being targeted by the fae does not imply you are or make you into a good person.

Changelings can come from all walks of life. A murderer, con artist or other lowlife could return from Arcadia and fall right back into their old habits, only this time they have faerie magic to abuse. Someone who was once a good person could pick up monstrous habits; an ordinary family man who spent years locked away in Arcadia only survived by eating the flesh of his fellow slaves. Sometimes the cravings get the better of him. Then there's insanity. After the horrors and madness of Arcadia, no changeling can ever be said to have a stable mind. If a changeling believes (correctly or not) that her former jailer will come for her if anyone strikes a match in her presence, all the hunters might hear is when the homeless woman froze a man solid for "no reason".

All that is if the hunter's judge changelings in isolation, it is far more likely that hunters who see several changelings will develop assumptions. If the first changelings the hunters meet are all loyal servants of the gentry, busy doing it's nefarious work. Why should they believe the one who says she escaped? That's what the loyalists said too. How will the hunters even tell the difference between changelings and the gentry anyway?

All in all, the best that can probably be hoped for is that hunters judge each changeling fairly. Somebody has to protect people from the bad ones, and the good ones don't deserve to be lynched for having the misfortune of being abducted by the gentry.

Building a Changeling

To build a changeling start with a mortal, then add Wyrd, Bans, Contract and Dread Powers.

A changeling's Dread Powers often favour finesse, guile and deception over raw power. Abilities that create illusions, enchant the mind or approach problems from an odd angle are all common, as are natural features of strange faerie forms.

Changelings also possess a large set of simple innate tricks. All changelings can see past the Mask much like humans with The Sight and possess the following Dread Powers: Dreamwalker 1, Dreamshaper 2, Emotional Harvest 1, Knock Knock 1. They may learn Dreamwalker 2 and higher dots of Emotional Harvest with study and practice.

Finally promises sworn with a changeling are binding. By spending Willpower when a promise is spoken a changeling can turn it into a Pledge, granting mystical sanctions if the promise is broken but also boons if it is upheld.

Fetches

When the gentry take a slave they sometimes cover their tracks by building a fetch from scraps and a piece of their new slave's shadow. Unaware of its artificial nature the fetch returns to everyday life to hide the gentry's crimes.

The process of creating a fetch is imperfect, the new fetch is always missing something that the real human once had. It could be integrity or empathy. It could be a violent temper or an addiction. Close friends and family can notice the change, but most assume there is a mundane explanation especially since the implications of a supernatural cause can be too horrific for words.

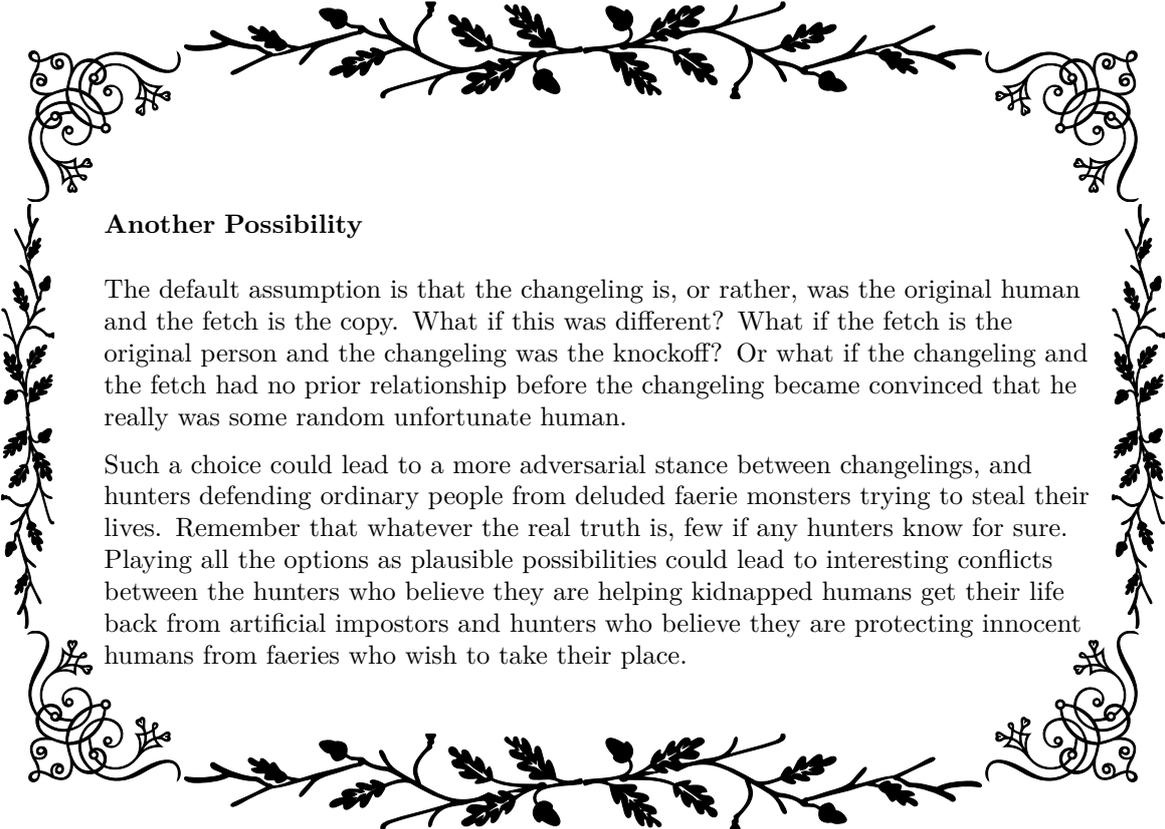
Unlike most faerie beings a fetch looks completely human, even to other fae and mortals with The Sight. Unless they meet their changeling counterpart most fetches genuinely believe they are truly human as well. Tracking down a fetch can be a hard task for any hunter, but sudden personality shifts can raise suspicion and the use of Dread Powers can prove it beyond doubt.

Hunters rarely get along with fetches. Firstly the fetches are built from faerie magic. Even though that scrap of shadow gives a fetch human emotions and the capacity to grow a depressingly large number of fetches degrade into fae like sociopathy or capriciousness. Hunters on the trail of a serial killer with strange abilities occasionally discover their quarry was a fetch, not a slasher. There is another reason; fetches were created by the gentry and serve the gentry's purpose, if perhaps unknowingly. At the least they hide the true fae's crimes from the world. Who knows what else they might be doing? Reporting on the gentry's enemies? Marking the choice victims for slavery? Perhaps it's best to take them all down, just to be safe.

Building a Fetch

To build a fetch start with a normal human then add Unseen Sense (Wyrd), The Sight, Wyrd and Dread Powers. A fetch's Wyrd always equals its changeling counterpart. They do not possess the other innate abilities common to changelings but can learn them as Dread Powers.

Fetches often have Dread Powers that let them blend into normal society and avoid suspicion. A couple of unique Fetch only Dread Powers exist: Mein of Normality (•) which permanently hides the fetch from any magical senses used by changelings and Aura of Banality (•••••) which prevents any fae from spending Willpower on Dread Powers in Wyrd * 10 feet for a cost of 3 Willpower per scene.

A decorative border of black ink-drawn floral and leaf motifs surrounds the text. It features a central horizontal branch with leaves and small flowers, with intricate scrollwork and smaller branches extending from the corners and sides to form a rectangular frame.

Another Possibility

The default assumption is that the changeling is, or rather, was the original human and the fetch is the copy. What if this was different? What if the fetch is the original person and the changeling was the knockoff? Or what if the changeling and the fetch had no prior relationship before the changeling became convinced that he really was some random unfortunate human.

Such a choice could lead to a more adversarial stance between changelings, and hunters defending ordinary people from deluded faerie monsters trying to steal their lives. Remember that whatever the real truth is, few if any hunters know for sure. Playing all the options as plausible possibilities could lead to interesting conflicts between the hunters who believe they are helping kidnapped humans get their life back from artificial impostors and hunters who believe they are protecting innocent humans from faeries who wish to take their place.

Sympathy for the Fetch

The default position for most hunters is an adversarial relationship to the fetch. And why not? Fetches can sink into dangerous fae thought patterns, they are supernatural beings and they're serving the purposes of the undeniably evil true fae. This means that introducing the fetch as the sympathetic victim can raise drama and interesting moral questions.

Here are three storyhooks that can challenge a hunter's preconceptions and maybe introduce a little sympathy for the fetch.

The Girl in Red: Your cell has a reputation in the neighborhood for solving certain problems and the girl knocking at your door has a "certain problem". You've known her for quite a while, she's a good kid, the sort of person you took up the Vigil to protect. When she explains that she saw a strange person, half-man and half-wolf, entering her grandmother's house it sounds well within your area of expertise. Then she mentions it all started with nightmares about being nothing more than scraps of wicker and red cloth while the real her hunted her down with a woodsman's axe. You've just spent the last week on the trail of a vicious axe murderer and you're sure some of the victims were ordinary humans. How do you feel now?

The Sweet Nurse: St Mary's hospital has a big problem. Every year a few kids go missing just after getting their flu shots. Everyone is looking for the truth: Police, media, parents, even your fellow hunters. When a brother and sister return claiming they escaped from a witch in a gingerbread house who tried to throw them in the oven, you know this is a job for you. No child killing monsters in this town! Will you keep that righteous fury when you learn the victims were all fetches, and given to the changeling "witch" by their parents in the hope it would help their real children come home?

Me and Myself: Your cell tries to help changelings back into human society. Often this meant getting the fetch out of the way first, so how do you react when you meet a changeling who doesn't want his fetch removed? He's convinced that he and the fetch can restore themselves into one being and undo some of the true fae's tampering, but he needs someone to help break the ice and someone to protect

him and his fetch from both hunters and changelings. Could this be the secret to helping changelings recover? Is this even a good idea?

Hobgoblins

Between Earth and Arcadia lies the Hedge. An endless maze of twisting paths bordered by terrible thorns. Yet even the liminal Hedge has people who call it home. Hobgoblins are native to the Hedge; some were once creatures, people or even items from Earth, warped by prolonged exposure the Hedge's faerie magic. Others are discarded experiments and toys created by the gentry, and some have never known any home but the Hedge.

Hobgoblins come in all shapes, sizes and characters. The verity is far too much to be summarized here. Some hobs are little more than wild animals, others are intelligent and can form entire societies and settlements. Some of these are almost sane enough for a human to feel comfortable. Others are dangerous threats who smack their lips at the thought of human flesh.

Under most circumstances a hobgoblin cannot leave the Hedge, and wouldn't be able to survive on Earth if it could. In rare places and at certain times the Hedge's nature will encroach into our world. Such places can be strange fey areas cursed with mysterious disappearances or they can be treasured magical resources where the people of two worlds meet for mutual benefit (Or trouble, like areas of "hungry grass"). It is not unknown for a goblin market set up shop, eager to sell to those humans who can understand and appreciate their goods.

Out of all the types of fey hobgoblins are the least likely to be encountered by hunters. They are hardly ever seen on Earth and few hunters will ever enter the Hedge. The places where hobgoblins visit Earth are frequently targeted by hunters, but they're also frequently protected by hunters with motives other than opposing monsters. There is profit to be made by the shrewd trader and even hunters who do specialize in fighting monsters can see a market as an irreplaceable resource. Who else sells the supernatural kick they need to level the playing field?

Building Hobgoblins

Hobgoblins are so varied that just about any thematically appropriate design will work. Hobgoblins can of course see other fey beings as they truly are, the ability to open Hedge gates is rare. Few hobs can travel between Earth and their home at will.

The True Fae

The true fae are the most deadly threat a hunter is ever likely to encounter. This is a simple statement of fact. There are monsters that rival or even exceed the gentry in power, but their presence upon Earth is a rare and terrible event. If the gentry's visits aren't exactly frequent their hunts are not rare either.

In their own domains within Arcadia the true fae are nothing short of gods. They can create armies and mountains with a whim or crush their opponents with a thought. On Earth their powers are far more limited, yet they remain one of the greatest threats a hunter is likely to battle.

Hunters who know of the gentry almost universally loath them, the rest have been duped or enchanted. The true fae are self-centered to the point of utter sociopathy, they seem incapable of even recognizing that other people have independent thoughts. A true fae will kill innocent humans for what seems like nonsensical reasons or even pure whim while their most common reason for visiting Earth is to take human slaves. No moral hunter could ever approve of their presence.

A method to stop the gentry once and for all is the holy grail for hunters who focus on the fae. Some hunters hope to win through force of arms, some new weapon that could chance the gentry away from Earth forever or even bring the fight to Arcadia itself. Others seek a more mystical solution. The true fae cannot do anything without pledges and contracts. It stands to reason that there must be some agreement that allows the gentry to prey upon Earth, if it could be discovered it might have a loophole or a condition that would banish the fey forever.

Building the True Fae

The true fae are built like changelings except for one important difference: They have a minimum of Wyrd 5 and can buy up to Wyrd 10. Attributes, Skills and any Dread Power where additional dots do

not change the mechanics may be brought up to a maximum of Wyrd. Though the gentry usually favor subtlety and finesse like other fey creatures their raw power is such that they frequently come across as possessing overwhelming force.

As beings of intense passions and utter sociopaths the true fae reverse the rules for Virtues and Vices and have no Morality whatsoever.

Faeries in Myth and Legend

Faerie Mythology is vast, stories have traveled around the world and down the centuries. Changing with each telling. Authentic faerie folklore can be combined with the setting from Changeling: the Lost, or it can replace it.

Celtic Myth

Thanks to the spread of folklore across the globe, most in the Western world recognize the British Isles, specifically their Celtic roots, as the origin of many fairies in fiction. There are so many creatures in Celtic folklore, entire bestiaries have been written about them, both fictional, and real. Sadly, what might have been real facts usable against the fae were lost in the transition to written writing thanks to the “efforts” of the Catholic Church to convert the Celtic tribes.

Cù Sìth

Large hounds said to claim the Scottish highlands, the cù sìth roamed the moors, looking for mothers to steal away, reportedly to use their breast milk to nourish the fairy young under the mounds. The truth wasn't that far fetched, as one cell in 1970s Scotland found the remains of a missing young mother, being eaten by the young of a cù sìth. Though large, they're still vulnerable to both iron and bullets, even when their clearly advanced intelligence shows in complex ambushes set against hunters. The most telling sign of a cù sìth are the three bloodcurdling howls they let out before attacking.

Kelpie

The mythical “water horse”, a kelpie is known to take two common forms. One is that of a beautiful black haired woman, tempting men to come to its place by a river or loch. Other times, it takes the shape of a proud mare, powerful and strong. It's form is frankly worthless, however, compared to its love of fooling men into riding them, in one form or the other. Once the fool is in their grasp, they will dive into the nearest pool of water, drowning the men, then feeding on them. In more modern times, rumors are circulating that kelpies now take the form of attractive women on top-of-the-line motorcycles.

Leprechaun

The very symbol of the Celtic fairies in the modern world, leprechauns have taken on a life all their own. According to the original myths, the leprechauns hid themselves from the world, haggard old men who spent their time fixing shoes and making mischief on the odd farmer. They also were known for wearing red, laced with gold, rather than their current imagining of entirely green-dressed gingers.

Though not as cruel as many of their others, they are still known as spiteful and shifty creatures. Many a hunter has caught one, seeing an end to their financial worries, but the leprechaun almost always manages to turn the tables and make the hunter submit to the leprechaun's demands.

In the folklore, the only way to find the pot of gold is to keep a constant watch on the fairy, or it would vanish forever, though threatening to harm the leprechaun also gave a similar result. Despite these tales, leprechauns have also been known to be some of the best manipulators of the “rules of hospitality”, and many an Irish family has been hounded by a wee man with an orange beard, demanding repayment for a long forgotten service.

Ogre

Great hulking brutes of immense size and strength, ogres were known as man-eaters and destroyers, able to lay down many men before being killed. In the history of the Vigil, many accounts of ogres are found, though they are primarily outwitted more than being outfought. Despite their gullibility, if an ogre is encountered in direct combat, odds are someone isn't coming back from that fight. That someone is likely to be the poor hunter that got into the fight with the ogre without any iron.

Pixie

Small creatures with long pointed ears and a mischievous disposition, pixies are known as the souls of infants who died before baptism, but no one has made the connection between dead infants and pixies yet. What is known is that pixies are often poorly clothed, and prize materials humans find trivial. Ribbon, string, and bottle caps have all been found to attract pixies in droves. However, they also delight in leading people astray from safe roads and snatching children for themselves. That said, they can also be calmed, and a pixie who is shown kindness, or at least a good deal, often repays in kind.

Púca

A more mischievous, and sometimes dangerous counterpart to the pixie, the púca more often than not causes trouble around the household, though it can be bribed with gifts of hot porridge into being a protector for the home and barn. Many a hunter has tried to clear out an infestation of the creatures, only to wake up the next day with their toes broken and house falling apart.

Scandinavian Folktales

The folktales of Scandinavia speak of many races. Some of the most famous types of faeries hail from Scandinavian nations, and owe their fame to the works of J. R. R. Tolkien, but one only has to go to the original stories to find far more fae beings than the fair elves and lovable but gruff dwarves found in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Dwarves

Some of the most famous fae beings around, in their underground homes they practice incomparable smithing and are known to be quite skilled at magical arts, two talents that were often combined to create magical relics. However dwarves were prone to greed and dislike the sun. Earlier tales portrayed dwarves as human sized with grey skin, perhaps referencing their origin as maggots who fed upon the body of Ymir, later tales portray them as short, heavy-set humans.

Hyllemor

AKA Elder-mother, a hyllemor is the spirit of an elder tree, and her permission must be granted before the tree can be chopped down.

Mara

A woman who spends her nights causing nightmares and riding horses until they are too exhausted to work in the morning. Not all mara are aware of what they are.

Elves

An incredibly beautiful race, who inhabit forests, meadows and mires. They are masters of both magic and illusions, and are strongly linked to mists. Elves are nasty when offended, and often spread irritating diseases as revenge. Watching elves dance is also dangerous, for years can pass in just a few hours, when one cell claimed that when it had started watching the elves dance in Norway, the year was 1982.

Näcken, Strömkarlen

A creature that spends its time playing the fiddle inside waterfalls, in some versions of the tale its beautiful music lures people into drowning, in others it is willing to teach its art, but its music may come at a terrible price.

Huldra

A stunningly beautiful girl at first, but her back is a rotting tree trunk. She may also have a cow or fox's tail. The huldra are associated with many of the typical faerie behaviours such as seducing away young men or stealing babies and leaving their own young in their place, however they are also said to watch over charcoal burners in exchange for food.

Trolls

Among the most famous faeries, trolls are long lived, exceptionally strong and sometimes eat people. Trolls even possess some magic, and can disguise their appearance with illusion. Despite this Trolls are not particularly bright, and are easiest defeated by tricking them into staying out until sunlight, which turns them into stone.

Germanic Folklore

The word "Faerie Tale" has become almost synonymous with stories collected and edited by the Brothers Grimm. Hidden among the enchanted forests of Germany lie all manner of strange fae creatures, there is more than one reason that forest is called "Black"

Aufhocker

A shapeshifter whose name literally means "Leap Upon". In some stories the Aufhocker would cling to their victims back and instil a supernatural fright so their victim would run until they collapsed from exhaustion. In other stories they simply went for the throat.

Feuermännlein

A small human shaped being made from living fire, Feuermännlein delight in burning down buildings.

Nix

Shapeshifting river spirits who lure people to drowning, in this the Nix share traits with many river spirits from around the world. Male Nix can assume many different forms, including the shape of a man, a fish, or a snake. Females usually appear as a woman or as a mermaid. When disguised as humans a Nix can be recognised by the permanently wet hem of their garments.

Weisse Frauen

One of the nicer varieties of faeries, the Weisse Frau, or White Lady, is a matronly figure wearing white who protects children, she is also closely linked to water. The Weisse Frauen are sometimes linked to Jenny Greenteeth, an English river spirit who drowns children.

Slavic Myth

The word "fairy" is primarily Anglo-Saxon in its roots, meaning that what may be fairies to those who speak English are considered something else entirely by those who come from Eastern Europe. What the English would call fae have another name in the Slavic countries. They would be considered "gods".

Bannik

A fairy that inhabits the banya, the bannik is a fickle creature, easily offended by Christian iconography. Specific times are reserved for the bannik, and if interrupted in the course of their steam baths, the creature is known to douse a victim in scalding water, even strangle them. However, the banniks also have the ability of seeing the future. To tell what might happen, one put their back to the open door of the bathhouse. If fortune was good, the bannik would gently massage the intrepid human. If fortune was ill, the claws would literally come out.

Domovoi

A house-bound fae, the domovoi is a haggard looking old man, resembling the previous owner of a house and possessing a pair of horns and tail. In return for a family caring for their home well, the domovoi would help with the housework and fields, though small offerings would also please the creature. If the domovoi were to become displeased with the family, however, the creature would commence harassment of the family, from poltergeist activity to the classic and possibly deadly action of attempting to suffocate a person in their sleep. In 1997, video surfaced from Russia, showing a series of creatures reported to be domovoi. Internet savvy hunters have put the videos up, but no one has yet been able to verify precisely what was in the videos.

Rusalka

Reportedly unquiet maidens or unbaptized babes who drowned, the rusalka are maidens of a body of water, only able to leave at night onto the banks of said water. Though at first attractive to the eye, the rusalka on closer inspection has more in line with a drowned corpse, hair wet and skin water damaged. Despite these qualities, the creatures were known to easily lure men and children to the waters, where they would be drowned or, in the case of some men, actually tickled to death, as a Polish cell on the Oder witnessed happen to a local police officer. Reportedly, should their hair dry, they would finally die forever.

Vodyanoy

Another river fairy, the vodyanoy were often seen as wrinkled, naked old men with long thin beards, black fish scales and gills inhabiting the rivers. Possibly one of the most powerful fae, the vodyanoy did not stop at mere drownings, but also would break dams, and most curiously, force those that survived their treatment to become his slaves at the bottoms of the rivers to be their slaves.

American Myths

Fairy isn't a natural term for what they are. They are the gods and goddess of nature. They are the spirits of the river and the forest and the land. They are the Crying Lightning and the Falling Rain, the Monster on The Roof and the Protectors of Nature. They are also bestial and wild, and averse to all things human, which they figure, are destroying the Earth.

Curupira

Known as a protector of the forests, the curupira has a mane of fiery red hair and feet that face backwards, used to trick hunters and explorers. They are also known to be capricious, able to create illusions and whistle in a way that would cause madness in the intended target, riding a collared peccary as it went. A cell of the Ashwood Abbey, in the Amazon looking for a separate target, soon found themselves afoul of the local curupira, and weeks later the two survivors stumbled into a local village, one mute, the other laughing about the little men who had turned his feet around for killing for sport, not food.

Encantado

Reportedly river porpoises that are able to shapeshift into human beings, encantados are reportedly residents of an underwater paradise known as Encante. They delight in music, parties, and sex. This is especially of interest to hunters, since encantados are considered by many residents near the rivers of

South America to be their true parents. Encantados are also known for kidnapping humans, be it lovers, their spawn, or even random residents along the river, to say nothing of stories where the encantado can enchant humans, or even turn a human into an encantado like themselves, along with the ability to control weather patterns and inflict disease on an unlucky target.

Nimerigar

A miniature people said to have inhabited the Rocky Mountains, who had a reputation for firing poisoned arrows at trespassers from small but powerful bows. Until recently, such tales were regarded as superstition, until a mummy was found that measured up to 14 inches. Though conventional archaeologists and scientifically minded hunters argue it to be an infant, the fear that a race of miniature killers is roaming the Rockies has sent many other hunters into a race to search for and flush the creatures out.

Squonk

A fearsome critter that inhabits the Hemlock forests of Northern Pennsylvania, the squonk is a fae said to be so ugly that it weeps at the sight of its own face, covered in warts and ill-fitting skin. This appears to be the special ability of the creature, since it has been confirmed to vanish into a puddle when discovered. J.P. Wentling, a member of a cell of lumbermen in the area, said that he had managed to catch a squonk to the end of his days, but his cellmates only found a puddle of water in the leather bag he claimed it was in. Despite this, scientifically minded hunters have given it the title *Lacrimacarpus dissolvens*.

Changeling Courts

In *Lost*, the defining trait of all changelings is their abduction and escape from Arcadia. The changeling's have endured much, and wear their scars openly. Changeling culture is partly a support group and partly a mutual defense against being recaptured by the gentry. At best it can help changelings recover and rebuild their lives. At worst they can normalize all sorts of alien faerie behavior patterns that desparate changelings from their humanity until they are a danger to the mortals around them.

Any organization of changelings larger than a few friends is called a Court. Put a dozen changelings together and somebody's going to ask "hey there's a lot of us here, what if the gentry notice." At that point everyone scatters or they start signing up to courts, because courts are more than just a social organization. Properly designed, courts are a powerful mystical defense that hides their members from the eyes of the true fae. By tying their Wyrds and power to symbolism the gentry cannot understand changelings protect themselves from their former captors.

Defining how changelings construct their courts can define the course of a story, it is a choice you as the Storyteller should consider carefully. Here are some ways a court may be organized:

No Courts

Perhaps there's not enough changelings in town to need courts. Perhaps the locals are just disorganized or untrustworthy. Maybe in your game there's no such thing as courts.

A game with no courts works well if you don't intend to give too much focus to changelings, if you'd rather play each changeling or small group as an isolated incident with no overwhelming structure, or if you don't want faerie politics to detract from badass battles between hunters and the fae.

The Four Seasons

Organizing the courts by the seasons is the default choice in *Changeling: the Lost*. In this system every freehold has four courts formed by ancient pacts with the four seasons. In this system each of the courts is represents a coping mechanism for the horrors of Arcadia as well as one of the five stages of grief.

The Court of Spring is for changelings who seek to keep the past behind them and forge ahead to create a new life of joy. Therefore Spring represents the stage of denial. It's dominant emotion is Desire, courtiers seeking to fulfill their desires and the desires of others.

The Court of Summer is for changelings who seek to fight back against the gentry and protect others from the horrors of Arcadia. Therefore Summer represents the stage of anger. It's dominant emotion is wrath, courtiers angry at what the true fae did to them.

The Court of Autumn is for changelings who have a little piece of themselves that likes being fae; maybe they like the magic, or the glamour or just being part of a secret club. Therefore Autumn represents the stage of bargaining. It's dominant emotion is fear, courtiers trying to understand and use fear, both their own and others.

The Court of Winter is for changelings whose overriding motivation is to hide from the risk of getting hurt again. Therefore Winter represents the stage of depression. It's dominant emotion is sorrow, just another thing courtiers hide from.

No court represents the final stage: Acceptance. It is a personal achievement beyond the system of courts.

The Seasonal Courts work well for a game where hunters often interact with (or maybe even join) the political structure of changelings. It's a pretty solidly defined social system which gives hunters a chance to get some bearings in the mad world of the fae. Network Zero reporters making a feature length documentary, Null Mysteriis sociologists on a long study, Wilde Society artists as mad as the fae they paint or Lord Stewards diplomats representing humanity's interests are all examples of hunters who might wish to interact with a court on a long term basis. Of course, hunters gaining that level of trust among the paranoid fae either requires enormous effort, some rare and unique circumstances or the suspension of disbelief, not that should prevent you from playing such a game if it is what you enjoy.

For more adversarial games a freehold organized on seasonal lines can make an interesting opponent. They will attack during summer, strike with magic from the shadows during Autumn, and hide away during Winter. The changeling's powers might even shift with the seasons forcing the hunters to adapt their tactics.

Weather interactions with the freehold are adversarial or social the metaphor of the seasons lends itself nicely to an episodic game. In Summer the hunters must prevail through strength of arms, in Autumn the occultists and researchers must lead the way, in Spring a hunter's attempts to balance his marriage and the Vigil take center stage. It doesn't have to be just symbolism. For hunters with an adversarial relationship to the courts this could be a shocking discovery that shows just how far faerie magic has infected their town.

Seelie and Unseelie

The Seelie and Unseelie courts come straight from mythology. The Seelie were often benevolent and fair to humans and the Unseelie were their opposite, though neither trait could truly be relied upon. These are the fae after all.

Though the two courts are not quite so simply defined as good and evil they still represent a form of moral dualism that is at odds with the World of Darnkess' usual murky nature. Yet a wealth of options is available to the creative Storyteller. What if the Seelie were helpful to humanity, but every gift came with a pledge of rules and musts and can'ts. Wouldn't you begin to yearn for the wild intoxicating freedom and revelry of the Unseelie? And how many nights of passion and danger before you once again crave the comfort and safety of the Seelie?

And this is how the changelings hide from their former jailers. By creating two courts who's philosophies cannot lead to anything but conflict but have no chance to actually win they confuse their captors. Courtiers do not always realize that their battle is never winnable, and those who do sometimes decry their efforts as meaningless, but that's not true is it? It keeps the gentry away.

Even when changeling's themselves do not recognize the division of Seelie and Unseelie the concept can be a useful to hunters. Dividing changeling into rigid categories of Seelie and Unseelie that really mean "ones I like" and "ones I don't like". It might be wrong to kill humans and even Seelie, but Unseelie don't count do they? The myths say so.

The division also works well for a crossover game with both hunter and changeling players. The clear division allows hunters to join with the "good faeries" against the "bad faeries" without risking the integrity of hunters themes of being for humanity and against the darkness.

A vast Underworld of Independent Courts

In this style courts can be thought of as very very small sovereign nations each claiming their own territory. A vast tangle of pledges and alliances divides the city up and if they don't quite enforcing peace treaties, directs conflicts through safe and acceptable outlets. Treaties that limit the rule of a court monarch even within their own domain serve as the cornerstone of the courts' defenses against the gentry. Such treaties could be as simple as allowing passage to merchants from another court or as vital as every court swearing to outlaw dangerous and forbidden sorcery.

A vast underworld system works well for investigative games that focus on the fae's hidden nature. A variety of courts each with different styles can keep hunters from ever feeling like they understand what's going on. Don't feel like every court needs to have drastic differences, sometimes the most subtle change can be the most confusing: The goblin like fey wearing red, black, red, black, black, red scarves are members of the Muddy Pond Politik, but the ones wearing red, black, red, red, black, red scarves are from the Muddy Puddle Politick. Confusing the two is a deadly insult.

When the courts are not confusingly similar Storytellers are advised to play up the fey's potential for striking imagery. Give each court a theme and play it to the hilt. Whether that theme is a ballroom of graceful elves, a workshop full of industrious dwarves belching steam, or something stranger like an impoverished medieval keep built into a moving train carriage. Consider playing with bizarrely appropriate settings: Inside a bank vault can be found a court (or the entrance to the court's Hedge home) of goblins that resembles the New York stock exchange of the 1920s. Don't be afraid to work with bizarrely inappropriate settings as well: the ballroom is found below the dingiest dive bar in town.

Personal Affinity

Less of a court organization and more of an alternative to courts, under this system courts are not formal organizations but character archetypes worn into the Wyrd by centuries of faerie tales and faerie creatures. The closer a fae is to an archetype the more of the practical power provided by that "court" they can use. A faerie witch may deliberately encourage warts, find a run down thatched cottage, buy a bubbling cauldron and follow other traits of the stereotypical hag to increase her magic. This would be represented by giving her the usual advantages of the Autumn Court

Personal Affinity can stand on it's own feet as an interesting form of magic, but it also makes a nice alternative to having no courts, allowing the Storyteller to benefit from the material written about the courts in Lost without requiring the use of large social groups.

Changelings Alone or Hobgoblins too?

Are the courts only for the benefit of changelings or do they share membership with the hobgoblins native to the hedge? The biggest difference is probably the size of the courts. Even a large city can only support so many changelings trying to interact with mortal society, connect with their old life or forge a new one, before the Masquerade starts to creak at the seams.

Hobgoblins however can only remain on Earth during very specific circumstances, and can rarely come in numbers. In a story where hunters are intended to interact with the courts including hobgoblins can provide the numbers for elaborate political intrigue or the extras to fill the dance floor.

However in games where hunters intend to destroy the faerie courts once and for all hobgoblins can be too much of an advantage. Changelings often have ties to Earth and those ties can be used against them by a patient hunter. Hobgoblins mostly do not, and safely hidden in the Hedge they can fight back from an almost unassailable position.

How the changelings and the hobgoblins relate to each other should also be defined. Are they equal partners? Do the changelings human creativity and access to Earth give them a dominant role? Does a court require the patronage and rule of an ancient and powerful hobgoblin to even function? Is membership restricted to hobgoblins who have at least a somewhat human mindset, and if not how do the two communicate.

A far out option is for the True Fae to be members of the same courts as Changelings. Such beings would probably dominate the courts with their magical might and tyranny. Their mere presence could divide the court along the lines of nobility and commoners, with all that implies.

Benefits of a Court

Once you have decided how the courts are organized it is worth asking what benefits come with membership. The social benefits of belonging to a group are a given, but is there anything else?

Emotional resonance

Did you notice the affiliated emotions next to each Seasonal Court? The fey are often associated with emotions and in *Lost* membership of a court improves a changeling's ability to harvest a certain emotion for glamour. In *Hunter* it could do the same, but harvesting is less important in a *Hunter* game. Perhaps instead the fey gain bonus rolls against people feeling their court's emotions. A small +1 to social rolls and/or Dread Powers, +2 for exceptionally strong emotions or if the fae is the focus of those emotions. Alternatively the fae may get the bonuses if they are the one feeling that emotion. Normally anger would give you a penalty to patient thought, but perhaps the Summer Court knows revenge is best served cold.

Dread Powers

It's no surprise that the fair elf has Dread Powers that makes him an excellent archer, but he can also freeze things with a touch? That's because he's with the Winter Court. One option is to choose Dread Powers that fit an aspect (or several aspects) of a court, be it their namesake, their ideals, their signature emotion. All members of the court are able to learn those Dread Powers in addition to their own faerie abilities.

Conceptual Affinity

When the courts patron is flourishing, so shall the courtiers. Give a small benefit like +1 to all Dread Powers or +4 dice when spending a point of Willpower so long as a courtier is in their element, but should the courtier ever enter their elements opposite then give an equivalent penalty. A Spring courtier gets the benefit in spring, and the penalties during Autumn.

Storytelling The Fae

Changeling and human relations

A relationship between a human and the fae can be many things, but it is rarely normal. Sometimes just by being around a fae can make life literally a fairy tale. The evil stepmother gets the police on her case for abuse, and your fae boyfriend is willing to make you his wife forever more. Sometimes the situation is reversed, and you're beloved step-sisters fall in with a bad crowd and become wicked. Relationships with faeries, like with any human group, is varied and open to interpretation. What may seem like a poor bastard enslaved by a fae princess is a man who, for the first time in his life, has a purpose, and a happily married fae may have been tricked into their relationship by a cruel and petty husband.

First, there's changelings; the faeries who have the greatest ability, and often the greatest desire, to have some kind of "normal" relationship with ordinary humans. Changelings have suffered greatly in *Arcadia*, and their scars mean they will struggle to cope with normality for all their lives. Changelings require stability to an extent that few humans can understand. Even after it's explained, few people could really appreciate just how distressing it is for a changeling when you break the exact wording of a casual promise. No more than a changeling could really appreciate just how frustrating it is when they try to define your friendships in legalistic terms, and hold people to them. What is worse is that when the changeling's need for stability is not accommodated, when she gets fired from a job, or when her girlfriend sends a last minuet text rescheduling their date for next Thursday, a changeling may suffer panic attacks or other psychological breaks which combined with a troll's brute strength or a hag's subtle curses can cause no end of damage.

It might even be best if ordinary humans and changelings kept their distance, but that is rarely the case. Changelings were once human, and it is only natural that they would want to re-establish links with old friends, family or just rejoin the society they consider to be their home, social animals that

they are. There is still lots that ordinary humans can offer them: Unless the changeling has exactly the right tricks they have exactly the same reasons to hire a skilled professional or an accountant as anyone else, any human retainer can help the lost navigate human society and social mores, and the human tendency towards sanity makes mortals especially helpful at counteracting the faerie inclination towards madness. Most changelings are infertile but still wish to be parents, creating a long tradition of faerie godmothers. In every interaction between humans and changelings there is potential for disaster; though many changelings find the idea of using humans as pawns to be uncomfortably similar to their own abductors, their definition of pawn or slave can be rather... unique. More than one changeling has felt that working for days without sleep is the correct thing to do if you agreed on a deadline you can't deliver.

Humans who are in the know can also see many reasons to interact with changelings. The stories of household brownies and shoemaking elves have some basis in fact, given the opportunity many would leap to hire such an efficient worker. Faerie magic can be a temptation: Health, wealth, happiness, a faerie can grant your wishes. However the fae know well that magic always comes with a price, for the fae's own dread powers this price has often been paid in advance through collective bargaining by the faerie race. On a more personal level you could say a faerie's torment in Arcadia was the price. But for mortals, the price must still be paid; it is most commonly written into the Pledge a mortal signs to get that magic, and woe betide any who fails to uphold on their side of the bargain.

If one word could summarize the relationship between humans and changelings it's effort. For any relationship to work both sides will have to work for it; the changeling will have to put effort into accepting that humans do not think of their relationships like a legalistic contract and do see a difference between betraying someone and forgetting to return a book on time. The human will have to put effort into accommodating the changeling's psychological needs.

As for those true monsters, the true fae. The most common understanding of relations between the gentry and mortals is simple; the gentry sees a person it likes, then abducts them to a hellish existence in Arcadia. This case is common, and terrible, but it is not the only way humans and the gentry interact. Did you know that if a true fae gets too curious about some part of ordinary existence it can forget who it really is and lose all its powers, until something reminds it, usually with disastrous results.

When the lords of Arcadia choose to interact with humanity the most important thing to remember is that they have no sense of proportion. In return for the simplest favor a member of the Gentry might hand down untold wealth, but a simple misspoken word can result in a grudge that lasts for generations. Even today there are a few towns and families enjoying the fruits of a faerie's blessing, but only a few, for such blessings are inherently dangerous. If nothing else the increased attention only makes it likely that the true fae will hear something that offends it, but most of these blessings come with a list of musts and cant's that have to be followed with legalistic, even religious devotion. Indeed, sometimes the true fae even present themselves as gods (they certainly have the power) and while it would be foolish to assume that all of the gods in mythology were true fae it would be equally foolish to assume that none of them were.

It is these times, when a true fae binds itself to a community that most of humanities interaction with the true fae takes place (or at least, most of the interaction on Earth; which is where hunters are most able to make a difference). If your town is given great wealth as the surrounding area shuts down and is outsourced, a single delinquent kid going missing might not be considered a very big price to pay. On the flipside, killing a dozen people in a shopping mall because they didn't have the shoes the gentry was looking for might be considered a lucky escape if the fae has inhabited the area for centuries. Either could draw the attention of Hunters.

Changelings as Allies

It's not easy to imagine working with the fae in any capacity. The laundry list of psychological needs that a changeling requires might be too much for any lone hunter cell to contend with, while the hunter tendency to kill anything that looks even remotely monstrous can lead the fae to panic and treat the hunters as dangerous. The work required for both to even become acquaintances would require both to remember that each has been scarred, scared, and unable to become "normal" ever again.

There's a payoff for both sides. The hunters get a fairy ally, or at least an ear to the ground about what the fairies are doing in the area. This knowledge allows hunters to observe on the monsters and, if not eliminate them, to at least keep them under a watchful eye, or gain new allies in uncovering the

secrets of the world if they can really work through all the trust issues. It also allows hunters to look into the psychology of a monster in a very relatively safe manner. The disconnect from typical humanity that many fairies live in is an object lesson in how valuable the culture hunters live in is to mental health, and how the sudden removal of that culture can damage a fae's perceptions of the world. And if they need to, the fairy can be eliminated before it goes too far into the bad end of their minds.

For the fairies, they find a connection to a world they might have thought lost forever. Hunters give the fairies a link to the mortal world, a bridge that acknowledges both the normal and paranormal. A way to interact with the mortals of the world safely, protecting them from fairy threats. They act as an unknown factor; a hunter who has made no deal with a fairy is a wild card that can do what needs to be done.

Of course, there's the issue of trust to work out. Hunters are more than ready to believe that fairies are playing their cell for their own inscrutable ends. Fairies return the thought with fears that once they run out of use for the hunters, their lives will be measured in minutes. Then there are different methodologies. Hunters prefer to put their ears to the ground and might prefer to steer clear of magical methods when the mundane is safer and even more effective. Fairies might prefer to utilize their abilities to look for their clues without even putting themselves in their foe's crosshairs. Yet often the two will argue over which is the safer method, and the smallest arguments between hunter and changeling can sometimes lead to problems.

Changelings as Enemies

Let's get this out of the way; fairies are no longer human. They have strange magic, they look like monsters (if you can see them as they are, which adds another layer of fearfulness), they act in ways that humans don't. For a lot of hunters that's enough, and even if a hunter isn't willing to kill a faerie just because of what it is, it only takes a few bad experiences to start stereotyping.

And the fae have no shortage of bad experiences. Even the most human minded changeling struggles with faerie madness, and others are downright alien. If a faerie genuinely believes (and she might be right) that one day she will be killed by someone in a red dress, well not many hunters would be sympathetic to her explanation of why it's self-defense. The reaction to a broken casual promise. An attempt to help that only makes sense if you think like a faerie. When humans and fae interact there's a lot that can go wrong. Some fae are so far gone that the difference between madness and evil becomes blurred: The toymaker who's forgotten the difference between people and parts, the drug dealer who can't understand how anyone can cope when they're not on an acid trip. That's all before you get to the fae who actually are evil. And there are evil faeries, ranging from changelings who adopt criminal lifestyles with their new powers to semi-willing thralls of the true fae to degenerates who will actually abduct other changelings and humans alike and sell them into slavery in Arcadia.

Certain aspects of faerie reality can also seem very suspect to hunters, further driving up the tension between the two groups. Harvesting glamour from humans may not do any harm to those who are "fed upon", but more than one hunter sees the resemblance to vampiric feeding habits and reacts accordingly. The ability for faeries to literally walk amongst the dreams of sleeping people invites paranoid suspicion - after all, who knows what harm they could do to a person's mind while they are defenseless?

When hunters go up against the fae, one of the first thing to remember is that, apart from the terrifying true fae, most faeries are somewhat lacking for raw might. An ogre might be supernaturally strong, but it's not quite as strong as something like a werewolf. If you locked a hunter with a faerie in an arena then the hunter's combat experience could well be more potent than whatever magic the fae wields.

But what the fae lack in raw strength they make up for in finesse. No one hides like the fae, no one cheats like the fae. In a direct fight a hunter may well have an advantage, so a faerie will do anything he can to make sure he never gets into a direct fight.

Against such a foe information becomes a vital weapon. Plant cameras, tap his phone or just ask the neighbors. If you know enough you can force a battle, and you can win. But if the fae knows more about you, you might never even realize he exists.

Changelings as Innocents

In many ways changelings can be considered the sort of innocents that hunters took up the Vigil to protect. There's really not really any moral difference between being locked up in a vampire's basement and being locked up in a faerie's castle. Sure some hunters might consider the faerie permanently tainted by their affinity for faerie magic in a way that the vampire's dinner wasn't. But other hunters won't.

The biggest challenge you as a Storyteller will have in portraying the fae as civilians is that in many ways a changeling is more capable than a hunter. An ordinary human may end a night of clubbing drained dry, but things are unlikely to end well for a vampire who sinks their fangs into a changeling formed of strange living flames. A changeling might want to live an ordinary life, but if some other sort of monster has the ability to spot him (or the fae's odd relationship to luck shows up) they can defend themselves in a way that civilians never can. This is at odds with the goal of playing changelings as innocents.

Perhaps the easiest solution is to take away changelings (or most changelings) powers. Instead escapees from Arcadia only gain the benefits of the Fae-Touched Merit, but retain all the less mechanical effects: The faerie personality, the relationship to the Wyrd, and the propensity to madness. This would create fae characters who have even more need of protecting than ordinary mortals, as their nature puts them right in the crosshairs of amoral witches and faerie lords wishing to reclaim their "property".

Another solution would be to focus on the issues a faerie's magic cannot solve. The faerie madness that hangs over all changelings is best treated from the stability of a human mind. Many changelings' fondest wish is to build a new mundane life, or regain their old one. Not every hunter (or player) is going to think that helping monsters is part of the Vigil, but for groups like the Long Night's Merciful, Searchlight's Councillors, The Sisterhood of St Wisdom or The Office of the Lord Stewards, changelings can provide interesting characters to center a story arc around, for they so clearly need help yet find it so hard to trust help freely offered.

Storytelling Fate

In the simplest of terms Fate, which may or may not be the Wyrd, is the certainty that some future events will occur and that others will not. In equally simple terms, this is a crock of shit. Fate is real, but it is anything but inevitable.

Occultists and scholars, those with genuine knowledge, often define Fate as a force. A powerful yet subtle force that constantly tweaks probability and coincidence to it's own unknowable ends. No one knows if Fate truly has a plan, some ultimate ending it intends to see come true. What they do know is that here and now Fate is a being of patterns. Through Fate's actions reoccurring patterns and motifs occur in peoples lives and unfinished business comes around to seek it's final conclusion. It's hardly absolute, but it happens far more than coincidence alone could hope to account for.

The Methods of Fate

Just because Fate is in the story does not mean it must take center stage, sometimes Fate can be the most subtle player of all. A cell tracking a faerie into it's woodland hideout face three threats on the way. The man who arranged an secret meeting to ask the cell for help turns out to be one of the hunter's long lost father. A hunter notices that there's always a lot white around the scene of a vampire attack, and decides to investigate. Playing Fate as a background force gives you, the storyteller, a wealth of options. Fate can be a subtle agent that reinforces the themes and mood of your game.

Motifs are one of Fate's simplest tools: An idea that manifests itself in a verity of ways related to the plot. An example motif could be "divided we fall", this motif could manifest as three broken sticks (referring to the old fable). Perhaps when investigating murder victims the hunters discover one had a bill for family counselling and another had a team building exercise in their diary that was crossed out and replaced with a party. One the players have learned that division is linked by Fate to destruction it becomes easy to foreshadow disasters with casual mentions of some recent argument or griping about time wasted on a mandatory team building weekend. If the players are part of a compact or conspiracy then the motif can come closer to home, there could be internal divisions or worse. A bad idea becomes popular, leaving it up to the players if they will create a division. Not every occurrence of a motif signifies

the hand of Fate, and not every action by Fate is a disaster; a trip to family counselling may only lead to an amicable divorce (satisfying another interpretation of “we fall”). Motifs are great for foreshadowing the plot, but when it comes to making practical use of them even the most skilled occultist has to admit that this is fae; you don’t know the rules.

Personas are a little more complex, each persona is a little thread of Fate’s tapestry that wraps around an individual defining the role. It is not quite a destiny, but rather a way of relating to a destiny or perhaps the type of destiny you are suited for. A person who has the persona of a wise scholar may be destined to track down secret knowledge that can change the fate of a nation, or perhaps just sit and advise the king who’s name will be remembered for generations. They could even do both, serving as supporting character in many different destinies while also starring in their own. The merit Wyrđ Image represents the presence of a persona.

A prophecy represents Fate taking a little more active interest than usual in a certain event. When a prophecy takes place, Fate itself is pushing for an outcome. Each prophecy begins with a message given to the major participants, this message could be subtle and hidden behind signs and portents. A single moonbeam shines upon a cat giving birth before dieing. The message could also be obvious, an old bearded man in robes of crow feathers enters the characters’ safehouse while reading prophecies from an Ancient Egyptian scroll at the top of his voice. Once the prophecy is delivered Fate will attempt to make it come true, the effect is subtle but persistent. There is a bonus die on any roll which will help bring the prophecy closer to conclusion, and a one die penalty on any roll which hinders the prophecy. In the scene where the prophecy reaches it’s conclusion (if it hasn’t already been prevented) this effect increases to two dice. Fated paths, as described in the merit of the same name are a similar concept to prophecies but focus on an individual’s personal journey rather than an event that must come to pass.

A decorative border of black ink-drawn leaves and vines frames the text. The border consists of a top and bottom horizontal line, and two vertical lines on the left and right sides, all connected by ornate, swirling floral motifs at the corners.

Derailing Fate for Dummies

Hunters and faeries both have reasons why they might want to escape their own Fate or prevent another from coming to pass. Here are the most common tricks of the trade.

1) Divergence points: Plenty of prophecies have conditions. If a prophecy says the hunter must get the legendary sword or the faerie will win, then there's no need for the faerie to break fate at all. Keep the hunter away from the sword and fate comes down on the faerie's side. This is the most common way of derailing a Fated Path since every use of that Merit creates a new divergence point.

2) Cheat like crazy: You're best friend is fated to die at your hand. That means "die" in the Shakespearean sense right? Prophecies often have twists, they come true but not how anyone expected. Take that tendency and abuse the hell out of it. Make liberal use of a thesaurus. Look for other meanings in slang or alternative languages. Turn the literal into metaphor and the metaphorical into literal. Stretch language to breaking point. Once you've found an interpretation that works for you, make it happen. You won't get bonuses from Fate as you work towards your version but if you pull it off the Wyrd will consider the destiny fulfilled and you pocket a nice full Willpower refresh from knowing you beat Fate itself.

3) Fuck Fate: You're fated to betray your cell. Well no matter how many temptations or threats the Wyrd throws at you it can't actually force you to do anything. You can escape from just about any Fate by stubbornly refusing to go along or making the Fate impossible. You can't sell out your safehouse to the Spider Queen if you burn it to the ground can you? Defying Fate grants you a full Willpower refresh as you assert your control over your life, but the Wyrd does not like defiance. The Storyteller rolls one die in secret for each person who defied Fate (the Fae have it worse, roll Wyrd). Every Success inflicts one disaster upon whoever dared to defy Fate. If they survive they're free to go about their lives.

Fate as the Enemy

Some people might take comfort in the idea that their life is given meaning by its place in Fate's tapestry. Others would resent any force that tries to control them. A game where fate is the enemy can easily go two separate ways.

The first is a cerebral game where occultists play their wits against Fate. They must identify Fate's plans in dusty tomes of lore and through understanding, triumph, tweed jackets and British accents are optional. The second kind is a game of endurance, tough sons of bitches that persevere even though the world is (literally) working to bring them down.

As an enemy Fate can take many forms, from the overt – an earthquake destroys the player's home – to the subtle – the player's enemy overhears her addresses. Fate, of course, does not literally take a body for an end of game boss battle. Instead a conflict with fate will simply result in a character having the most rotten and improbable luck.

In either style if Fate is the enemy it is advisable to give the players a destiny that they have a

genuine reason to avoid, their own death is of course a classic but harm to anything they hold dear or failure on any important goal works just as well.



Fate Storyhooks

Le Morte d'Baseball

Until last week your life was nice and simple. You were the captain of the school baseball team. Your girlfriend was the head cheerleader. Your grades were up and college talent scouts were keeping an eye on you. But ever since you went to buy a new bat, and won one for free by pulling it out of a stone in the sports store's "test your strength" contest, life has been weird.

The changing rooms were redecorated, and somehow ended up with a round table. You encountered the ghost of your girlfriend's mother while on a team hunting trip, which is even weirder because none of you have ever gone hunting before. A woman you've never met claims she's your half sister, and the mother of your child. And everyone seems to want a good fight.

You think you're living out a modern retelling of the Arthurian legend. You're playing King Arthur, your best friend is Lancelot, your girlfriend is Guinevere, the baseball team are the Knights of the Round Table and your staunchly rationalist physics teacher is Merlin. You better learn how to fill your role before your first sword fight, and hope that buys you enough time to figure out how to escape fate entirely. King Arthur's story ends as a tragedy.

All the World's a Stage

You know all the stories. After all you're a professional. A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Tempest, Romeo and Juliet. If the Bard put quill to parchment you've put it on stage. So when the stories started coming to life it didn't take you long to notice. At first it was nothing more than odd coincidences, a similar name here, a turn of phrase there, but thespians do have their superstitions. You found you could encourage the coincidences by acting and even twist things around by going off the script. You're going to need that because it's not longer just little coincidences. Shakespeare's plays are coming to life. Can you improvise a comedy or will you be forced to play a tragedy?

The Hero's Journey

One of the more popular narrative threads deserves special mention, for the hero's journey is an especially relevant fate that might fall upon a hunter.

The Hero's Journey begins with the hero living an ordinary life, before the inevitable event which will call them into adventure. For a hunter this is probably the discovery of the supernatural. The hero may quickly rise to the occasion, or the hero may try unsuccessfully to hold onto normal life. The first stage ends when the hunter overcomes the threshold guardian, the first antagonist of the journey. The threshold guardian may not be an actual enemy of the hero, but it will test the hero's resolve and try

to make the hero turn back towards normal life. Threshold guardians that might test a hunter include authority figures who try to convince the hunter the supernatural isn't real, family members concerned for the hunter's health or social standing, an alternative but mundane opportunity that demands the hunter's dedication in place of the vigil. For actual enemies a hunter might face a mortal pawn of the supernatural or a minor supernatural being, either way it would be someone the hunter knew of before discovering the supernatural, and its place in the hunter's own life will be emphasised over its supernatural nature. The mentor figure may make himself known at any point from shortly after the first call to adventure, to after the threshold guardian.

The second stage of the hero's journey concerns itself with the transformation from an ordinary person into a hero. If the mentor has not yet appeared he will do so now, and allies will show themselves towards the beginning of the stage. In Hunter terms this is the fitting place for the player characters to come together in a cell after each player got a short time to play through their character's call to adventure, in a typical game of hunter every PC will share the role of the hero. As the second stage progresses the hero will face many challenges, discover their true motivation and (hopefully) overcome the temptation to turn to wickedness before claiming the ultimate goal of their quest.

The final stage of the hero's journey is the return to normality. The hero may have trouble readjusting to a normal life after their adventure and could need time to adapt or help from someone who remained in normal life. In other cases the hero may need to return in a more literal sense by escaping from the mystical world; a hunter who rescues someone from the True Fae may need to run all the way back to Earth with hounds at his heels. Sometimes another threshold guardian bars the way to normality, a purely mundane problem that must be solved before the hero can return to normal life. If the hero can overcome this last problem, the journey is complete.

The Fae and Fate

As we've discussed, fae and Fate go together like peas and pods, and in this case, many hunters just want to burn their peas and leave the pod to rot. Only the fae think, sometimes even know, that their place in fate's plan is stronger than many people's positions in it.

Some fae take this realization too far into the extreme. They start treating their abilities as Fate's "nudge" to make things go the way they're supposed to. Someone misses a bus, but ends up falling in love at the cost of their promotion. A man gets mugged, and through it comes to realize that his true strength lies within. Sometimes it gets darker. A child is orphaned in an alley in order to devote their life to vengeance. A young child is placed with a wicked stepmother, it will turn out for the best in eighteen years or so. A good cop has to watch a guilty party walk free, all because Fate decided that the cop needed to be reminded that sometimes the system works when it doesn't.

If only that were the extent of fae manipulation of man's place in fate, it might be the end of it. Other faeries sometimes forget that Fate isn't good or evil, those words only apply to people capable of judgement. Fate just is. When a faerie forgets that she can all manner of trouble. A faerie sees a beautiful girl with two ugly stepsisters and falls into the role of the faerie godmother. Helping the girl win the handsome homecoming prince and devising a suitably horrific punishment for the stepsisters. Never mind that physical ugliness does not imply that you are a bad person, or that the girl already has a happy relationship.

Sometimes it gets a bit more cynical. A faerie who knows the stories might slip a little luck to kidnappers, after all rescuing the mayor's innocent daughter is a good way to earn Fate's rewards. Other's just take on a role, wear a lot of white dresses, blush at any vulgar language, and if you get any trouble a knight in shining armour will probably come and rescue you. Mortals sometimes catch Fate's eye, but the Fae have an easier time doing it intentionally. Hopefully they won't hurt anyone on the way.

Even if the fae try to do good, a cell of hunters isn't always going to agree that Fate should be that obvious in a person's life.

Running a Faerie Story

Advice For Running An Action Game

Sometimes, players might not have the time to go through the daunting task of penetrating the Mask and following a trail of clues. Maybe your ST just doesn't know yet how to make a brilliant tale of intrigue and deceit. Or maybe you just want to have a little lighter tone to your dark tale. Often, this is when you break out the action genre.

Note that action is not anathema to a good story. *Die Hard* is a movie where even the smallest details become vital to understanding the overall plot and most of the important characters have a believable backstory in the plot. Don't let your group imagine that just because you're using the words "Action game" means that it won't be worth it.

First, take into account your players strengths and weaknesses in their characters and playstyles. Just because they're better at gathering information doesn't mean that they're useless in an action environment. Fae have a weakness, after all, and someone has to find it out.

Of course, the key to action games is, of course, action. There's time for investigation and research of course, but action games have spice to them as well. In action sequences, the key is motion and fluidity. Don't have your characters just have a gunfight and then suddenly end it. Give them a running fight through an abandoned building as civilians run everywhere. Have them run from the cops after the fae decided to lure them into a trap.

Make sure that the action doesn't overpower the plot though. Just because a movie has "Action" as the genre doesn't mean that you can neglect the characters or pacing. Remember that your players are looking for a game that entices them, not one that simply goes through the same tired cliches and tropes of other action movies. Again, following the example of *Die Hard*, screw with your players perceptions. Give them a Chekov's Gun that they soon find out is filled with red herring.

Advice For Running An Information Warefae Game

A game of deception, intrigue and trickery is perhaps the most natural setting for the Fae. Faeries specialise in deception, finesse and illusions but if the Hunters can find them the faeries can be at a disadvantage, or at least they lack the more direct advantages of a werewolf's killing prowess or a vampire's array of armed minions. This creates a game of cat and mouse, can the Hunters track down the faeries' identity and location before the faeries can wear them down from the shadows?

If you put a hunter and a faerie in the same room and ask the hunter to pick the faerie out from among the socialising mortals, the faerie has all the advantages. It has magic, the mask grants a near foolproof human appearance, and the fae often have a great gift with words and deception. The trick then, is for the hunter to take it out of that room and into human society where they hold the advantages. Human society consists of such a diverse amount of different skills and environments that even the craftiest fae will stick out somewhere.

How Hunters might track down the fae depends as much on who the hunter is than on who the fae is. The Union may put out feelers asking if certain workers seem a little too fast or produce work that is always slightly odd, or they can question someone's neighbours without seeming suspicious. The Ascending Ones have similar community links, but can also turn to their elixirs. Both Network Zero and Task Force: Valkyrie can use technology, not all monsters are that good at covering their online trail. The secret frequency knows enough about the internet (and some private intranets) to go looking for something odd, while with certain legal privileges Task Force: Valkyrie can draw up anyone's details and put a team of analysts on them.

The biggest challenge therefore, is getting those initial clues. Drawing up a list of suspects small enough to feasibly investigate one by one. The bitter truth is that many faeries can and do live among humans without getting noticed; A hunter is most likely to start their search when something has gone wrong, when someone was struck hit by faerie or breaks a faerie pledge of silence. When this happens the hunters begin with at least some starting point, a crime and a victim. They can look at the victims recent movements, or ask the age old question "who benefits?" Hopefully the fae thinks close enough to a human so that their idea of benefit is understandable enough to find them. If not, well there's always a

few specialist hunters with The Sight or the knack of understanding faerie logic themselves. Though such hunters tend to be a little (or very, in the case of the Wilde Society) odd themselves.

The hunters shouldn't expect the faerie to be passive, and wait to be uncovered. Faeries have many tools at their disposal, they can fake illusions with influence, trick witnesses into pledges of silence or perjury, or weave subtle influences to guide hunters down the wrong path. Such techniques are imperfect, a pledged witness may break their oath, or find a loophole. A hunter may see through an illusion, or prove it to be false with deductive work. As the chase grows to a close the faeries countermeasures might prove the that, yes, it is a faerie even as it obscures evidence.

And of course, the faeries have their final countermeasure. Vanish, and reappear in another city. Though many hunters would consider that a success, they have driven the faerie away from their community.

Appendix A: Enchanting Freedom: Philadelphia

I once spent a year in Philadelphia, I think it was on a Sunday.
–W. C. Fields

Philadelphia isn't a fairy tale city. If the city was like the ones in fairy tales, the Continental Congress wouldn't have had to bolt the second the British came up to reclaim it. If Philly were more fairy tale compliant, the drug battles that tear through the streets might just be resolved with an impassioned speech and a call for action.

But if Philadelphia were a fairy tale city, it wouldn't be Philadelphia.

Hunters who take the Vigil against faeries are confused by Philadelphia, and question often how the city's hunters haven't all gone mad yet. They call for peace, or for negotiations, or for a simple cease-fire. They try to remind many Philadelphia hunters that the fae are sometimes still human, and that they can even be saved.

Philadelphia hunters often tell them to fuck off and back up their threat with a shotgun missing it's serial numbers.

Because as much as other hunters think that they know monsters, they don't know Philadelphia. It is a gritty city where people know you have to earn your happy ending. It is a city that struggles to wake up each day sometimes and keep going, and raises it's fist in triumph when it claws it's way to the top. It doesn't want pity, it wants to work, and if fae get in the way, well the hunters of Philadelphia will take the fight to them.

Stories of the Delaware

The Lenape have no fairies. To them, the creatures they dealt with were beings that lived in the forests, completely natural, no more bizarre than the rain or tides. Their knowledge of what would be called faeries by the English was only related in stories and myths that have become nearly forgotten, except by those who know such tales are more real than could be believed.

Immediately, one character jumped out at researchers who looked into the legends of the Delaware Valley. The Anglicized translation turned his name into "Crazy Jack", a trickster figure of the Lenape who reminded the people to be careful with their words, and that if they said something, that it could always have two meanings, as well as showing great wisdom and luck in escaping from danger. Whether Crazy Jack was a single figure, or a group of similar looking fae who protected the Lenape, there has been no evidence.

A more terrifying figure was the "mhuwe", a giant of ice who would consume men entirely out of its madness. However, unlike the windigo of the Ojibway, the mhuwe could be saved by offering it a civilized meal and basic human kindness. The dwarf-like wemategunis, strong for their size and mostly mischievous, would show favor to those who would tolerate their actions and act as the messengers for the Great Spirit.

What is vital to remember is that many Lenape stories are more valuable for information than the actual characters and creatures mentioned. "The Greedy Maiden", "The Hunter and the Owl", "The Girl

Who Joined the Thunders”, all immediately struck hunters who focused on fae as almost horrifyingly similar to the fairy traits of abduction, deal-making and obfuscation. Those hunters who are actually Lenape scoff at such ideas, but do admit that there are similarities.

The Immigration Boom

When the potatoes died in Ireland, and fighting between the Italian states was just too much, thousands of millions came to America, bringing their own traditions and beliefs along for the ride. These immigrants, these thousands of unwashed, uneducated, and desperate refugees flooded the Eastern seaboard. Though hard working, they found hatred and abuse as well, as the “native born” Americans insured that these new immigrants found only the worst work and the coldest of scorn. Mobs of Americans torched immigrants’ homes and churches, as the authorities turned a blind eye.

Fairies didn’t exactly make things easier. The flash-point between the Irish and Nativists was in 1844, when Nativists rallied against the Philadelphia Irish because of controversy over what version of the Bible was to be taught in schools. Surprisingly, it was because the Catholic priests wanted to remove the Bible from the schools due to differences in the wording. Organizations like the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Sons of Cu Chulainn were still in their formative years, and resistance to Nativist actions was primarily street level fighting rather than political action. At first, the Nativists merely held rallies, but at one rally in Kensington on May 6, the crowd felt it’s anger boil over, and with assaults on the Nativist speakers, a full-blown riot erupted in the area. Two churches were destroyed, and the Nativist forces claimed the fighting was completely caused by the Irish, never mind the fact that they held an anti-Catholic rally in a heavily Irish neighborhood.

Maybe the hunters could have written the whole thing off as another riot between the Irish and Nativists, but another riot started in July. This time, the riots were between the state militia and the Nativists, and more deaths were reported. The city hunters took notice, and realized that something had probably manipulated the second series of riots into existence; two separate riots like these were too much to ignore as simple coincidence. They searched the areas of Kensington and Southwark to find a small man running around in multi-colored patchwork clothes, giggling incessantly about the fighting fulfilling some kind of contract. The hunters couldn’t see him for the wrinkled, scabby mess that he really was, but they knew enough to shoot him and burn the body.

What many Irish today forget to mention is that freed blacks were targets of their own anger. There were other riots previous, race riots, Irish fighting the freed blacks that threatened to take their own work. Some hunter scholars theorize that something had been manipulating both the Irish and the blacks, but what had never been determined, until hunters started to notice the proclivities of fairies in the modern era for causing public disorder. Then, there are hunters who claim that many are trying to whitewash history from another angle, and that no monsters were responsible for the riots in the 1800s. These opposing hunters point out that no fairy would be that public, and that their precedent is to keep low from the radar. The debate continues to rage on, though everyone can agree that, monster or not, the riots were truly monstrous.

Helter Skelter

The 1960s in Philadelphia were a strange time indeed. The factory closings made their economic impact felt, and the civil rights movement took on a new life with Dr. King preaching for equality, a fight many black Philadelphians felt was vital. The city did it’s best to handle calls for equality, including one measure where white and black cops were to patrol the black neighborhoods of North Philadelphia in pairs.

It was at this time that the hunters started to notice fairies in their midst, in part thanks to a coalition of cells led by the Hounds, who pointed out likely fairy hiding places in the city, if not the fairies themselves. The fairies had their hands in everything from the drug trade to prostitution, and the hunters could abide their actions no longer. In the humid summer of 1964, hunters plotted, striking down fairies one block at a time.

Slow going would be an understatement, and each day it seemed like every fairy hideout burned would lead to two more springing up to replace it. The hunters had no unified front, just small agreements and running battles trying to oust the fairies from their holes. Small cells patrolled their blocks for newcomers, as larger groups like the Malleus and the Sons used their clout in the city to force known fairy hideouts into the open and into oblivion. But things still moved too slowly for many hunters, and patience wore thin. They needed a break, and badly.

They got it when a pair of police officers, a black man and white man, arrested a woman for a parking violation in North Philadelphia. What the black officer didn't know was that his partner was an officer in the Hounds, and saw the woman for what she really was; a human-shaped facsimile of wood and leaves. Maybe they could have just taken her away to interrogate later, but a "friend" of hers, a non-hunter patsy who knew what she really was, tried to save her. The officers arrested him too, and thought that things were all in line with procedure. What the young Hound didn't realize that the rumor mill had turned the arrest into the beating and killing of a pregnant black woman. That one spark lit the tinder that turned North Philadelphia into a riot.

With the police concentrating on quelling the riots, the hunters saw their chance and went for the throat. In the space of the two days of the riot, the structure of Philadelphia's fairy society disintegrated. From Kensington to South Philly, the fairies were hunted down and eliminated, with only the goblin market in FDR Park spared. The four rulers of the city's fairies were killed each by a hunter faction. What would become a Union cell killed a fairy wearing gaudy party clothes at a Temple university frat house. Malleus inquisitors killed a fairy with a chill around it's body trying to hide on a subway train. The Abbey made sport of a fairy that was busy trying to scare mothers into giving up their children. The Sons managed to take down a great dragon-man in a battle on the waterfront.

The fairies backs had been broken, at the cost of the city's northern neighborhoods.

Philadelphia Tonight

Now, the fairies in Philadelphia are lost and leaderless. What few remain are scattered into small gangs and hidden groups, scrounging through the trash and debris of the battles between hunters and other monsters.

Aegis Kai Doru: *Watching.* With the wolves on the top of the list and witches on the backburner, the Shield and Spear don't have much time devoted to sniffing out fairies. So they're taking a back seat for now, busy focusing on their own issues.

Ashwood Abbey: *Curious.* Vampires and werewolves, they're old news to the Philadelphia chapter of the Abbey, though always steady entertainment. But now they'd like to sample the stranger side of things. The Abe wants to see, and experience, a fairy in it's most basic nature. They've put out offers, and can't wait to see what replies.

Ascending Ones: *Shopping.* Goblin markets exist in Philadelphia, selling the fruits the alchemists so sorely desire. With the gangs almost always buying from Crescent suppliers, the Southern Temple always has money and supplies to burn at the markets.

Cheiron Group: *Very Interested.* With corporate so keen on getting fairy bodies, Keystone has started to expand their operations to include the tagging and retrieval of the fairies. The costs are starting to pile up, and the benefit isn't yet showing, but the board in Philadelphia is hopeful that something will come of it. Eventually.

The Long Night: *Offering Help.* The abused fairies of the city, to the Long Night, are something they can save. Isaiah Bellamy has instructed M5:5 to start making offerings of peace to the fairies, to show them, and M5:5, God can be as merciful as He is wrathful. With their on-the-ground leader Trey wrapped up in his own issues, M5:5 has accepted Bellamy's order, but only tentatively. Trey still leads the ground, and if he makes a new call, so be it.

The Loyalists of Thule: *Worried.* The Loyalists of the city are wondering why the fairies are staying so quiet all of a sudden. They fear that it's a gathering storm in the earliest stages, but the Indebted don't have the resources to handle this kind of snipe hunt. They've petitioned the Three Old Men for assistance, but so far, no deal. There's concrete proof, or there's no help.

The Lucifuge: *Care Less.* They're not demons, they're not witches foolishly summoning demons, they're not men who turn into wolves, they're not tempters who suck blood...really, as long as the fairies keep their heads down, no reason to make waves.

Malleus Maleficarum: *Searching.* The Witches Hammer is looking for something, anything to bring in support to the city. So, cells are searching high and low for prisoners, trying to convince Gallaher that, yes, Philadelphia is a city worthy of the attentions of the larger hierarchy. Should Gallaher find out, though, a whole wave of Malleus will swarm the city. All it would take is the right fairy.

Network 0: *Frustrated.* If they could get their hands on footage of a fairy or goblin in action, hell, the NetZos in the city would have a chance to maybe, just maybe, put the truth out. Unfortunately, their searches almost always end up going bad. It's wearing on the Secret Frequency, and the seams are starting to show.

Null Mysteriis: *Cautious.* Maybe there are mutated humans who could be considered "fairies" in the literary sense of the word. Maybe the rumors are simply there to belittle a group of people who are just as normal as you and me. Whatever the case, the Misties aren't taking a leap of faith without proof.

Sons of Cu Chulainn: *Firm.* The Sons still have a clubhouse in Kensington, and the suburbs of Philadelphia are literally dotted with club houses and meeting halls. Lately, they've had to calm their hunting in favor of community service, but a few older Sons still want to drive the last of the fairies out of their holes and away from the area.

Task Force: VALKRYIE: *Holding On For Dear Life.* It's getting to be almost too much for Liberty Unit, with wolves and vampires running rampant. They need to prove to command that they're still a viable cell in the area. So it's come down to the final quarter in their game as far as they're concerned. Fairies are now enemy number one, and bringing back the bodies has become the play of the day.

The Union: *Scornful.* So what if they keep to themselves? The markets, the feeding on the people around them, it's just too damn suspicious. The Union has started to take a new message to the fairies; get out of the city, and you won't wake up dead.

Welcome to the Neighborhoods

The Dragon of the Rust

There is a creature that stalks the graveyard of America's declining industry. A monster of scrap metal, broken machinery and economic decline. It is a being of great power but it's touch is light. An innocent maiden becomes a snack here, an unemployed mechanic is taken as a slave there.

For such a powerful monster the damage it causes is small, but is it not a hunter's mission to battle for one life as well as one hundred? If a hunter is true to the Vigil is it not their duty to fight The Dragon of the Rust?

Appearance: In its true form The Dragon of the Rust resembles nothing more than an enormous pile of scrap machinery in the shape of a dragon. As it walks it whirs and clicks as pieces of broken scrap try to fulfill their old functions. Its roar, the sound of a thousand engines revving and a car crash, is loud enough to shatter eardrums.

To those who cannot see its true form The Dragon of the Rust looks like nothing more than a beaten up old truck driven by an old factory worker who's fallen on hard times and homelessness, belching smoke and the bangs of engine misfires as it drives. However it is seen, the Dragon of the Rust has such an Aura of Dread that most flee at the first sight of him.

In its native Arcadia The Dragon of the Rust is mightier still. A cathedral sized monster of half broken machinery stalking a desolate city half burred beneath sands and time. Its slaves live within his body, endlessly toiling to keep the jury rigged mechanisms as functional as they can. A process half way between slave labor and being digested.

Storytelling Hints: Let's not beat around the bush, the Dragon of the Rust is a dragon. This is not the sort of monster that one lone wolf hunter with a shotgun full of iron and balls of solid brass is going to kill. This is the sort of monster that could go head to head with entire cells. However if you get

enough Hunters together and point enough cold iron (or anti tank weaponry) at it, the Dragon of the Rust will go down.

Therefore the first hint is simple: if the players get into a fight with the Dragon of the Rust, go all out. Use his contracts creatively and to their full potential, making the players work for every inch, and if they win, shower them with rewards. Rumors spread among the Vigil, and the team who killed a dragon is going to get respect. Be creative and be generous. If the players are Loyalists of Thule the dragon may babble occult secrets in it's death throes. For Network 0 handwave a reason why the Dragon's Mask falls as it dies, then have it stagger into a crowded street... on camera. Dragon teeth, dragon hearts, the pearl from a dragon's forehead, the Aegis Kai Doru or Ascending Ones could butcher the corpse for relics or alchemical ingredients.

Yet even with such rewards going against a dragon is a dangerous prospect, have a second look at the Bans. These are specifically designed so a lone cell who knows the rules can take on the Dragon of the Rust and win. Taking advantage of it's bans gives a cell a safehouse the dragon cannot threaten, a way to hear it's movements and even a way to control the dragon if they're willing to make some unethical choices (remember, monsters can be virgins too). Iron rounds out the Bans by adding a combat weakness.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 6

Physical Attributes: Strength 9, Dexterity 5, Stamina 9

Social Attributes: Presence 7, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Crafts 3 (it's own body), Investigation 2, Occult 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 6 (claws, teeth), Firearms 5 (breath) Survival 2

Social Skills: Intimidation 8

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Wrath

Wyrd: 9

Willpower: 9

Initiative: 8

Defence: 5

Armour: 5 (0 against Iron)

Speed: 19

Size: 20

Health: 29

Contracts: Rust, scrap, urban decay, unemployment, dragons, pollution, homelessness, ruined factories, fear.

Bans:

- The Dragon of the Rust cannot enter or project it's powers into any factory, garage, mechanics shop or other industrial building which has turned a profit in the last complete financial year.

- The Dragon of the Rust must flee from any union membership cards held by an employed member of a trade union in a blue collar job.
- The Dragon of the Rust's Aura of Dread cannot affect anyone who has ever taken Damage from the heat of a working steel furnace.
- The Dragon of the Rust must do one favor to anyone who offers it a virgin sacrifice. It must fulfill this favor in both word and in spirit.

Dread Powers: Dread Attack 7 (claws), Dread Attack 9 (teeth), Dread Attack 6 (poisonous pollution breath), Gremlinize 8, Scrap Harvest 4*. Unholy Attribute 5 (Strength), Unholy Attribute 4 (Stamina), Aura of Dread 3**

* As Shadow Harvest but requires scrap metal and broken machinery rather than shadows. Roll Stamina + Crafts + Scrap Harvest.

** As Terrify, but it reflexively activates the first time anyone sees The Dragon of the Rust in a scene. There is no cost for this ability.

North Philly

North Philly became the Irish section of the city in the 1840s, as hundreds poured in to take work in the factories and mills in the area. Since then, these third and fourth generations still tell of the old stories their forebears brought from Ireland, of creatures under the hill and beautiful people from beyond the sea.

The Heavy Bags

Named after one of boxing's most famous training tools, the Heavy Bags follow Thornton as loyally as a soldier follows their general. They've taken it on themselves to patrol Kensington for any fae when Thornton is either too busy to or simply unable to make the time. Each one a poor white kid, they all consider themselves lucky that Thornton trained them and gave them a purpose, and consider him a better father than their own most of the time.

The Heavy Bags know the following Tactics: Cripple Claws, Corral, Dentistry, Moral Support. Their safehouse (Really Thornton's gym) has the following stats: Size 3, Cache 2, Secrecy 0. The handle to the basement door is electrified (Trap 1) and opening the weapons safe improperly will trigger a crude nailbomb (Trap 2), it is also equipped for interrogating faeries (Torture Suite 1)

- Sean Thornton: A boxer who travelled from Ireland to compete in the golden ring. After unknowingly competing with a faerie Thornton's luck went sour. Literally. At his lowest the Son's of Cú Chulainn helped Thornton turn his life around, and he now runs a boxing gym; using sport to help kids turn their life around. Often he points those lives straight at the fae.
- Kenny Wilkinson: A mother who tried so hard and a father dead on the job on the docks, Kevin grew up trying to act like a man but without a role-model to show him the way. A few fights and a graduation from Catholic school that nearly didn't happen, Kevin found his way to Thornton's gym when a cop dragged him there after yet another fight. Since then Kevin's eased his anger and redirected it to the fae, taking his anger out on the agents of what he believes of the Fate that decided to kill his father.
- Frank O'Hanrahan: Born to a white father and black mother, he never fit in comfortably in either side of his family, though it wasn't that his parents didn't love him, but rather neither side of his family did. Dejected, he found solace in exercise, and from there found Thornton's gym. For the first time, it didn't matter who his parents were, only what he could do, and now Frank's decided

that he'll do whatever he can to keep his new family, and also helps Thornton running the business side of the gym.

- **Bill Hagan:** Bill's brother ran away from home early in Bill's life, but his parents didn't believe him when he tried to tell them that the thing in his brother's place was just a few scraps of newspaper and a trashcan body. It took Billy a round in therapy to "realize" that he was only seeing things, and accepted the trash-brother as his real brother Dan. It wasn't until years later when the Heavy Bags broke into his home while his parents were out that Bill was finally vindicated. Asking all the questions he could, he soon joined the Heavy Bags, simultaneously comforting his parents as best he can, waiting for the day he finds the real Dan again.

Sean Thornton

Sean Thornton was born the son of a quiet, peace loving man in the small village of Inishfree. His father was an ex-boxer from Pittsburgh, who returned to the land of his birth to escape a horrible accident in the ring. William, however, took to the ring with a passion, and despite his father's initial misgivings, was ready to strike out on his own.

Hoping to make it big in America, Sean Thornton crossed the Atlantic and took to the smaller rings, honing his skills in order to build up a repertoire as a hard but fair fighter. A chance bout changed his life, though, in the form of a large man with fists like concrete and a face like a misshapen boulder. It was the hardest fight Sean had ever had before or since, and that night he suffered his worst defeat ever. As he lay on the canvas, gasping for breath, barely able to see straight, he saw that his opponent had changed. Instead of skin, he was more like a walking wall of copper, teeth of silver grinning out from a crooked mouth. At first, Sean shook it off as being punch drunk, and a few days later, was ready for his next bout. It was another disaster.

So it followed, bad match after bad match. What was supposed to be a charmed rise to fame instead became a sidebar in the sports section, one promising boxer whose luck didn't hold out. The second "Fighting Thornton" gained nothing except for a few weak condolences and some low paying matches where he fought desperately for the little money offered. He was destitute to the point of taking on bare-knuckle brawls in the back alleyways, eventually finding his way to Philadelphia because, frankly, nowhere else let his bad luck keep going.

Finally, he found himself being dragged to the hospital from his latest bout by a member of the Sons of Cu Chulainn, and was told that his bad luck came from a monster, a fairy from his bedtime stories, stealing away his luck. Of course, Sean didn't believe, why should he have? He finally started to believe when the Hound brought in the same boxer, in his real state. That was Sean's first kill with his fists. That was when he became a Son.

Since then, he's pulled his life together, becoming the owner of a small boxing gym in Kensington, which doubles as the meeting house for the Hounds in North Philadelphia. He's since gotten married, but it's started to fall apart as Sean spends more and more time at his gym, planning assaults and battles with fairies and goblins.

His wife and a few others have noticed it though. Sean's eyes go dead sometimes, like there's nothing to interest him in daily life anymore. There are only two times when the light comes on again. Usually, when he's working the heavy bag or sparring with another fighter, he's his old smiling self. The other time is when he's lopping off heads with his sword and shooting the fleeing fairies in the back.

He's also gotten into hot water recently in the wider city. A bad hunt in South Philly has earned his cell the enmity of the Joey Carcione and the Union, and he's convinced that they're under the sway of a fairy themselves, as great bird-thing soars from block to block. His cellmates are still investigating, but Sean's had enough waiting around. He and a few other Hounds are ready to strike now, before they can cause any more trouble in their city.

Frankly, Sean treats the Vigil like another match. You need to be faster on your feet than your opponent, and strike harder where it hurts. His cell is merely an extension of his own body, the legs and fists of his Vigil. Sure, there's some injury, and Sean has more than his fair share of scars, but as long as the foe hits the mat, that's what counts, right? Damn right.

Appearance: Thornton is built like a concrete bunker that's starting to show it's age in the cracks at the edges. His muscles are losing their tone, and his hair is nearly gone all gray. His face is mashed up and sports several impressive scars, and anyone who boxes can tell they weren't gained in the ring.

Storytelling Hints: Thornton is a dangerous enemy not only to fae, but to other hunters. With his direct nature and the unwavering loyalty of those in his cell, as well as the ear of the local police, Thornton can easily turn a hunter's vigil in Kensington into a nightmare if one gets on his bad side, which is increasingly becoming all of them. That said, Thornton is also a possible ally if he's sufficiently impressed with whoever tries to convince him to help their cause. He also reacts violently to those involved with the drug trade, however, after hearing rumors of some bastard named "Two-Wrongs" pushing shit in the area.

Profession: Athlete (Athletics, Medicine, Brawl)

Compact: Sons of Cú Chulainn (Red Branch Knights)

Mental Attributes: Intelligence: 2 Wits: 3 Resolve: 3

Physical Attributes: Strength: 3 Dexterity: 3 Stamina: 4

Social Attributes: Presence: 3 Manipulation: 1 Composure: 2

Mental Skills: Medicine 2, Occult 2, Politics 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 4 (Boxing), Drive 2, Firearms 2, Weaponry 2 (Iron Broadsword)

Social Skills: Empathy 2 (Locals), Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 2, (Kensington), Socialize 2, (Boxers, Locals)

Merits: Allies 3 (Local Cops 3), Brawling Dodge 1, Barfly 1, Contacts 4 (Boxers, ring managers, high school gym coaches, locals), Fighting Style: Boxing 5, Professional Training 3, Resources 2, Status Sons of Cu Chulainn: 3, The Sight 2, Warrior's Code 5.

Willpower: 5

Morality: 4 (Suspicion)

Virtue: Fortitude

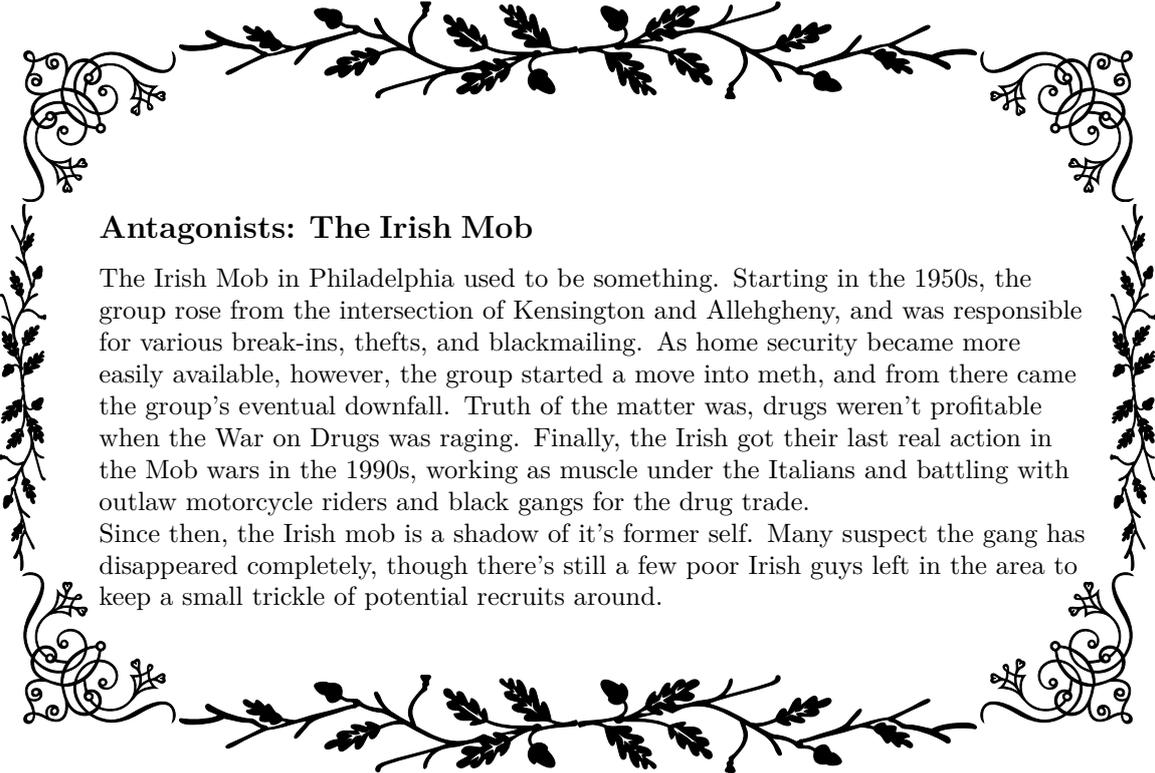
Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 6

Defence: 3

Speed: 11

Health: 9



Antagonists: The Irish Mob

The Irish Mob in Philadelphia used to be something. Starting in the 1950s, the group rose from the intersection of Kensington and Allegheny, and was responsible for various break-ins, thefts, and blackmailing. As home security became more easily available, however, the group started a move into meth, and from there came the group's eventual downfall. Truth of the matter was, drugs weren't profitable when the War on Drugs was raging. Finally, the Irish got their last real action in the Mob wars in the 1990s, working as muscle under the Italians and battling with outlaw motorcycle riders and black gangs for the drug trade.

Since then, the Irish mob is a shadow of its former self. Many suspect the gang has disappeared completely, though there's still a few poor Irish guys left in the area to keep a small trickle of potential recruits around.

Story Seeds

A news report catches your eye one day; "Accused Hitman Released on Technicality". Reading, it says that he was an accused hitman for the Irish Mob, but the police were forced to release him when a crucial piece of evidence went missing. He says that he just got lucky. Maybe it was nothing, but then the cops who arrested him turn up dead, shooting each other in what the paper's are calling "A tragic accident". Something let that hitman out of jail. Why?

You're hearing the word; a criminal group is teaming up with fairies in the Northeast. They're skirting past even federal authorities because they always have airtight alibis. As the police keep watching, drugs keep flowing, and people keep dying. Then, there's a break in the case. One of the men is seen, on camera, giving drugs to an undercover. Only that same guy was at a sports game that night, captured on the big screen. What the hell is going on?

St. Katherine Drexel Shrine

St. Katherine Drexel is well known to Catholics around the United States, especially in Philadelphia. Her name has been associated not only with the same Drexel family that founded Drexel University, but with her aid missions to the blacks and Native Americans in the Western and Southwestern states, constantly calling for racial equality and fair treatment. Her considerable wealth helped her in this task, building missions, schools, and even establishing an order, the Sisters for the Blessed Sacrament. She never knew about the Malleus, and if she had, she would have had stern words to say to its leadership. As it is, her order is now a favorite choosing ground for the Sisterhood of St. Wisdom, who scan the S.B.S. for only the most driven and merciful of sisters to accept into their secret path of protecting the flock.

Subsequently, her shrine is now considered their biggest priority in Philadelphia. Secluded in a small group of trees in neighboring Bensalem, its brick walls a museum, housing for the religious, and a wide open patch of land that includes a modest garden and a small graveyard. It also houses religious relics of St. Katherine within, priceless especially to the sisters of her order.

In secret, the cell of the Sisterhood that works within its walls uses the shrine as both a base and a hideout. They take both victims and monsters from Philadelphia into their care, doing their best to

rehabilitate them and give them a new chance at life. It's rough, with other Malleus cells in the city more focused on fighting calling for their backup. But the Sisterhood strives on, trying to make some small difference in the lives of their victims.

Sister Maria Olivier

Background: Sister Maria, born Jess, has been surrounded by Catholicism all her life. As a young girl she was taught by the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament at a missionary school in her native South Africa. Jess loved to learn and when she was approaching the end of her education she approached the sisters to ask about taking her vows and becoming a teacher herself. What Maria didn't know was that the sisters were already thinking about suggesting Maria might enjoy a career as teacher. What the sisters didn't know was that their thoughts had crossed the desk of the Sisterhood of St. Wisdom whereupon it was upgraded to a scholarship to study theology. At best the Shadow Congregation gained a new member, at worst the Church gained a new nun. Either way it would be a home run for Heaven's team, and she took the name Maria on her entrance into the S.B.S.

Fresh into the Hammer of Witches and now Sister Maria, she was given one of the more common tasks for the Sisterhood: Helping the thralls and blood addicts left behind after the Order of St. Longinus dragged another vampire into God's sunlight. About a year into her duties Maria caught the eyes of her superiors with a daring feat of heroic bravery. When a blood addict she was helping with fell back into addiction she walked unseen right into the vampire's lair and talked him into following her out over several days. But Maria felt that the skills of the Malleus were being under utilized. She had already been given the explanation for why the Malleus Maleficarum kept the Benedictions secret, but she's never been in favor of that policy personally. She got her chance to do things her way after she was reassigned to Philadelphia, where the constant fighting and tensions meant laxer oversight. There she would seek out good honest members of the Church, those who could be trusted to keep quiet, and quietly teach them useful "prayers", without revealing exactly what she was teaching.

Appearance: Sister Maria is an African woman usually found in conservative Christian dress. She keeps her body fit and strong and it shows, but she passes it off as nothing more than the benefits of good diet and lots of hard work, and speaks with a heavy Afrikaner accent.

Storytelling Hints: Outside her immediate cell no one in America knows that Sister Maria is a member of the Shadow Congregation. A safety precaution for the non-combatants in the Sisterhood, but a precaution that gives Sister Maria a good deal of freedom. Most of the time she keeps herself busy and visible doing the work of a nun to keep her cover strong. At the St. Catherine Drexel Shrine she is the woman to go to for school tours. On the weekends she tours Philadelphia going to different workshops for the clergy and laity, and when she finds a group that fits her criteria she begins teaching them the same benedictions she learned without word getting back Baudolino or Gallaher, calling her teachings "little used prayers". Her usual curriculum covers The Hands of St. Luke and the Blessed Protection of St. Agrippina, The Maternity of St. Bridget and the Fortitude of St. George.

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Envy

Conspiracy: Malleus Maleficarum (Sisterhood of St. Wisdom)

Profession: Religious Leader (Academics, Occult, Medicine)

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Skills: Academics 3, Computer 2, Medicine 2, Occult 4 (Catholic Apocrypha), Athletics 3, Drive 2, Larceny 2, Stealth 3 (Sneaking Around), Empathy 3 (Monster victims), Expression 3 (teaching), Persuasion 3, Socialize 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2 (cover story).

Merits: Allies 1 (Sisterhood of St. Wisdom), Benediction 2 (The Apostles Teachings, Fortitude of St. George, The Hands of St. Luke, The Maternity of St. Brigit, Blessed Protection of St. Agrippina), Contacts 3 (Support Groups, Local churches, Catholic Schools), Danger Sense 2, Direction Sense 1, Holistic Awareness 4, Iron Stamina 2, Language (Latin), Meditative Mind 1, Professional Training 2, Quick Healer 4, Status 1 (Malleus Maleficarum).

The Ashcribs

If you ask hunters about the Ashcribs half will tell you that they're just another gang, profiting of illegal drugs and human misery. The other half will tell you that they're one of the largest cells of hunters in town, a disorganized rabble who viciously protect their turf, whether it's from rival gangs or monsters.

The truth is that they are drug dealers, they are hunters, but they are far from disorganized. The typical member of the Ashcribs is a disaffected and impoverished African American young man who hopes to work his way up from dealing on a corner to the luxurious position of drug lord (use the stats for a Gangbanger, WoD core p205). What the soldiers don't know is that their little gang is just one small part of a much larger organization: The Cult of the Phoenix.

As part of the Jagged Crescent the Ashcribs serve the Ascending Ones in a small but useful capacity, selling drugs for profit and maintaining trading relationships with a couple of local hobgoblin merchants. Only the three leaders know the gang's true allegiance. They're smart, dedicated and keep the Ashcribs tightly organized.

The Ashcrib keep their safehouses moving. With both monsters and the police interested it's a matter of survival. Normally they have a few Size 0 or Size 1 Safehouses containing a Cache (often hiding as much or more drugs than weapons) along with one primary Size 2, Cache 5 (drugs, elixirs and weapons) safehouse where Jordan Wise runs an alchemy/drug lab. Secrecy is usually around three dots. Only the primary safehouse is routinely trapped, usually with some alchemical concoction designed to slow down intruders long enough for Jordan to grab what he can and burn the evidence behind him.

The Ashcribs know the following Tactics: Controlled Immolation, Disappear, Searchparty and Moral Support. Their leaders also know Identification.

- Russel Blakeside runs the Ashcribs. He was a collage graduate but he felt so out of place working a white collar job that he returned to the old neighborhood and began forming his own criminal fiefdom. The management techniques he learned in collage let him run an efficient and profitable gang, and impressed his suppliers enough that when they wanted a permanent operative in Philadelphia they chose Russel. For his part Russel is a ruthless, dedicated man who works with the Jagged Crescent for the the money, the connections, and the justifications.
- Jermaine Carr sits at Russel's right hand. An introverted bookish man, Jermaine was nevertheless demotivated by the culture of his school. Unable to cut it in either the straight and narrow or the criminal underworld Jermain floundered until he was discovered by Russel. Russel offered Jermaine his protection and a purpose. Now Jermain serves the Jagged Crescent loyally, in the Ashcribs he handles everything from organizing duty rotas to the finances. Of the three leaders he is firmest believer in the Ascending One's mission to guard the night, and with Russel's blessing Jermaine uses Ashcrib cash to help in the local community.
- Jordan Wise sits at Russel's left hand. Jordan was born with a natural gift for chemistry and botany. He has been loyal to Russel since they were just a small gang controlling a small row home. When Russel was inducted into the Ascending Ones he knew he could not use elixirs to their full potential without his best chemist, and so Jordan joined the Cult of the Phoenix alongside his boss. Most of Jordan's time is spent in an Ashcrib safehouse brewing drugs or lixirs but he also serves as the cells general purpose expert on the occult.

Russel Blakeside

We were born in the ashes of a dying city.
Our mother's milk turned to dust in our mouths.
To survive we became strong.
If you don't back off our turf we'll show you how strong we are cocksucking motherfucker!

Background: Russel has been fighting since he was just a kid. First he fought to escape the old neighborhood, now he fights to control it.

When he was young Russel promised himself that he would escape the old neighborhood, fighting against bad schools and disinterested teachers to get into college. In college he fought against feelings of alienation to pass with a solid GPA. Russel fought all the way into a good white collar job, then after three months he left. Unable to cope with feeling entirely out of place in the middle class culture he went back to his old neighborhood and started his own drug ring.

The management techniques and business theory Russel learned in college translated well to crime and Russel's empire grew. On the street he kept an iron fist upon the reins, favoring profit over feuds and revenge while he drove a hard bargain with suppliers and used market research to identify potential customers. His success and loyalty earned him the respect of his suppliers, including the Jagged Crescent. They met Russel and made him a pitch: He joins and does the Ascending One's work, in return he gets all the benefits of membership: Stable supplies for drugs and weapons, allies and even elixirs. Ever the intelligent businessman, Russell wasted no time saying yes.

Appearance: Russel is now approaching early middle age, yet he still cuts a powerful muscular figure and walks with perfect self confidence. He usually dresses in street clothing but from expensive designer brands to advertise his wealth and success. Tattoos and jewellery display his allegiance to the Ashcribs and threaten with hints of mystical badassness, though they are positioned to be invisible on the occasions when Russel needs to appear in a suit.

Storytelling Hints: Russel thinks of himself as old school nobility. The gang leader and the turf are one. If the leader is well, then the turf and all upon it are well. In his own opinion Russel is a ruler, a law giver and a judge who brings peace and prosperity to his domain through military strength.

In many ways Russel's views are true, perhaps more true than he knows. Like the tyrants of old all the benefits of protection and governance that Russel gives his "subjects", he takes back through taxes. That is, he sells drugs to his own people. Perhaps the truest thing you could say about Russel's morality is that given all the drug gangs and small fry monsters who might have ended up holding his turf, Russel is the best of a bad bunch.

While you can criticize Russel's morals, it is hard to fault his competence. Russel rules his turf completely, and violence or crime that he hasn't sanctioned is quickly suppressed. Encroachment by rival gangs or monsters is met with a swift and brutal response. Even the people on his turf who don't like drugs or gangs know that they can report crimes to Russel or ask him to judge a dispute. Admittedly Russel doesn't have much interest in the parts of governance unrelated to enforcing his order upon the turf, but he has Jermaine for that.

Though Russel is the ultimate law upon his turf he is actually no one of importance within the Ascending Ones. A petty baron ruling a few blocks in Phoenix's name, selling drugs and keeping relations sweet with a couple of local hobgoblins. Russel knows what he is seen and does not mind. As part of the Jagged Crescent Russel gets a reliable supply of merchandise, equipment, alchemical Elixirs and a cause to justify his actions. If a monster with a little too much mojo for a bunch of gangbangers tries to set up shop he can pass the word along. So far no body's drawn a connection between the "nobody gangbangers with no connection to the occult" and the "Arabic assassins from out of town who kill monsters in their sleep".

Let the Crescent call him a tool. Russel isn't greedy, he has his turf and the Ascending Ones give him everything he needs to keep it. For that he will serve them loyally.

Profession: Criminal (Academics, Larceny, Streetwise)

Conspiracy: Ascending Ones (Jagged Crescent)

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 2 (Marketing), Crafts 1, Investigation 2, Politics 4 (Street), Science 1, Occult 1 (Alchemy)

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

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Persuasion 3, Intimidation 4 (On his turf), Socialise 2, Streetwise 5 (Territory), Subterfuge 3

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Wrath

Willpower: 6

Morality: 3

Code: Murder is okay if it's done on Ashcrib turf under Ashcrib law (modifies murder)

Tells: Calling Card (The Ashcribs' emblem)

Merits: Allies 2 (Jagged Crescent), Allies 2 (Knife of Paradise), Contacts 3 (Local community, drug dealers, arms dealers), Elixir 2, Iron Stamina 2, Professional Training 3 (Criminal), Status 5 (Ashcribs), Status 2 (Ascending Ones), Resources 3, Toxin Resistance 3, Wyrd Image (Resolute Barron)

Our Lord of Mercy Gospel Church

Located among the urban decay and gang violence of North Philadelphia, Our Lord of Mercy Gospel Church remains a refuge of charity, friendship and good Christian values. The congregation are mostly middle aged or elderly African Americans and those children too young to dodge Saturday services. For most of the congregation the church is vital. It provides a community apart from the drugs and the gangs, and it provides faith and hope to people who have little else.

Yet the church has a secret. A sinister secret? You decide. Sequestered among the enormous church hats and rejoicing music is a cell of the Long Night. With the church as their base, and the congregation as potential recruits they welcome the coming apocalypse with open arms and joyful music. The leaders subscribe to the Doctrine of Mercy and the cell spend as much time trying to help drug addicts and victims of urban poverty as they do battling monsters. The Faithful and the Hopeless both hold a presence among the rank and file.

For most of their Vigil Our Lord of Mercy Gospel Church has battled against human ills, with mercy, and the more obvious supernatural predators, with mercy or with a gun. Now they've changed track. The latest member to join is Shauna Williams, a recovering drug addict and a former member of the Wilde Society. Shauna's insistence that the fey were separate to hell, and the casual ease in which changelings would swear away any intelligence to the devil has led Billy Dee Richards to the theory that the fae were the angels who took no side in the war between God and Satan. After several years of slowly loosing ground Billy Dee feels that he needs help, and if they could redeem a member of the gentry, who better to help the Lord's soldiers than an angel?

Our Lord of Mercy Gospel Church knows the following Tactics: Moral Support, Corral, Deprogramming and Exorcism. They meet in their church, Safehouse Size 3, Cache 3.

- Billy Dee Richards is the Pastor at Our Lord of Mercy Gospel Church. He follows the Doctrine of the Merciful and is the official leader of the Church's hunter cell. His position puts great strain upon him, more so in recent years where the church's influence and territory have been gradually eroded. Now Billy is looking for a silver bullet to reverse his cell's declining fortunes, and he believes redeeming a faerie lord into a true angel to be that silver bullet.
- Sonia Armstrong is the most respected member of the cell. She fought for the Long Night during her youth and retired when the last of her cellmates fell. When the Long Night moved into her church she walked right in. Sonia stands at 4 foot of iron determination, common sense and superstitions. She is a figure of strength and experience to her cell, and though her old age limits her to light duties she can still point a shotgun with the best of them when trouble comes knocking. Sonia follows the Merciful Doctrine.
- Shirley Adams is the lead singer for Our Lord of Mercy Gospel Church, but she is also one of the church's most dedicated hunters. As one of the Faithful Shirley rouses her Cell to battle with her singing voice and brings the Lord's vengeance to the spawn of Satan with her gun.
- Alec Black worked at a secular charity running a soup kitchen, but he had no issue with taking donations from the local church. But when Billy Dee showed him what was behind so many of his client's poverty and suffering he knew he had to do something. Though he lacks the religious convictions seen in most of the Long Night he's starting to be convinced. How else can you explain the monsters walking the night? Alec follows the Merciful Doctrine.
- Christian Dennis is one of the church's success stories. A former gangster who has renounced his wicked ways to follow the teachings of Jesus. Christian does not believe he can ever truly redeem himself for human death stain his hands, but he does truly believe he can use what he learned in the gangs to protect others from his own fate. Christian follows the Doctrine of the Hopeless.
- Daniel Parks was a hunter before he joined The Long Night. He and a couple of buddies spent three weeks fighting the vampire who used his block as her personal blood bank. By day they'd take down the vampire's servants and slaves one by one, by night they'd hole up in a different hiding spot. Of the three Daniel is the only survivor, and he wouldn't have been if Shirley Adams and Christian Dennis didn't overhear the commotion of the final confrontation. Though he was not originally religious Daniel has started to see the hand of God in every victory and near escape, leading him to follow the Doctrine of the Faithful.
- Shauna Williams was once a member of the Wilde Society, until her family staged an intervention with the help of their church. They managed to get her clean from drugs, but nothing they tried would dislodge Shauna's cravings for faerie inspiration. When Sonia realized why they couldn't help Shauna further the group instead decided to make use of her abilities. Though Shauna's grasp of Beautiful Madness is limited, it was enough to catalyze the group's recent focus upon the fae.

Billy Dee Richards

Background: Billy Dee Richards grew up in a time when mercy was impossible to find for a poor black kid growing up in the ghetto. His father lost his job when the factories closed down, and his mother was always sickly. Young Billy took to books, but knew that he had to appear tough to keep from being beaten by his peers. He made himself look tough, but anyone who knew him knew that the giant was softer than any man they knew.

With such a caring nature, his parents were surprised that their son drifted to becoming a pastor. A few years study in the seminary, and Pastor Billy Dee Richards was sent back to his old home in Philly. If it was possible, things seemed to have gotten worse. The gangs had taken over entire neighborhoods, drugs running everything. Billy Dee did his best to preach his gospel, but the youth he so desperately wanted to reach out to kept slipping through his grasp. He was at the end of his rope when one of the older couples in the church asked him to help them save their possessed grandchild. At first, Billy Dee thought they were merely unable to explain or accept a mental illness, and decided to at least humor them to ease their pain. Three buckets of holy water and a singed hairline later, and Billy Dee found out what really there.

It wasn't until Shauna joined the cell that Pastor Richards noticed that maybe the fae could be an answer to his city's troubles. Reading through Christian apocrypha, he believes that there had to have been angels who chose no side in the war that tore Heaven apart. If the fae were such angels, they could act as the messengers of God people would need to show them their wicked ways, and force the gangs in his area to repent. This does not fit perfectly with the path Isaiah Bellamy, the leading Long Night member in Philadelphia, who wants to just reach the changelings on the streets. To Billy Dee, the changelings are only a symptom of the larger disease, and he will do what he thinks is needed to return the angels that took them to their former glory. And then, just maybe, an angel could take his burden from him.

Appearance: Billy Dee is a middle aged black man with short executive style hair and a full mustache that can only be done justice with the word awesome. He usually dressed in a reasonably priced suit or his robes, as appropriate to the occasion. In public he still moves with passion and energy, but in private he walks with his shoulders hunched under the weight of the world.

Storytelling Hints: In a word: Tired. Billy Dee is a tired man. He never joined the clergy to fight monsters in the night. He thought his life would consist of preaching the Lord's word and helping members of the congregation across any spiritual stumbling blocks in their lives. But what man of god could close his eyes once they had seen the truth of the world? And so Billy Dee leads his cell on, he does so because in his heart he knows his actions to be the Lord's work, and on his shoulder he carries the weight of every bad decision a scholar inevitably makes while trying to teach himself war.

Profession: Religious Leader (Academics, Occult, Persuasion)

Compact: Long Night (The Merciful)

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

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 1, Stamina 1

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 5, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Computer 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 3, Occult 4, Politics 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Drive 2, Firearms 2, Larceny 1, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Empathy 4, Expression 2 (Gospel Singing), Intimidation 3 (Fire and Brimstone) Persuasion 4 (Religious Rhetoric), Socialize 4 (Questioning), Streetwise 5 (North Philly)

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Pride

Willpower: 8

Morality: 5

Merits: Allies 2 (Lord of Mercy Church), Contacts (gospel churches, Christian youth workers) Danger Sense, Fame 1(North Philly), Holistic Awareness, Meditative Mind, Professional Training 2, Resources 2, Status 2 (Long Night).

Krummi

So I popped his eye, and then I flew over and took a shit in it! You should've seen their faces!

Background: Who, or what, Krummi was is not important. Krummi can't remember, and there's never been a real attempt to find out by either fairies or hunters. She (or he, no one's even sure if it even

has a sex) is one of the mad ones, unable to really tell apart her humanity from her fairy nature. Utterly without morality, it seems to live only to torment mankind. All anyone who knows about Krummi is sure of is two things: That it has been utterly devoted to devouring any sheep it can, and delights in causing misfortune for any Irish or Scandinavian around the world, including Philadelphia.

The Hounds have quite a file on Krummi, so when it was spotted in Philadelphia the worst was assumed. Thornton and his cell were alerted and moved to try and stop it. In typical fashion, Thornton thought this meant kill the thing and leave a smoldering corpse for the police. Unfortunately the information on Krummi's movements wasn't to a hideout. It was to a Union negotiation with some witches in South Philly. When the dust cleared, two witches, a Union member, and a Hound were wounded. The only sign that anyone had been there that wasn't a human were a pile of black feathers.

If Krummi has a purpose, the Hounds are worried about the one clue that's been left behind. Despite trying to capture Krummi, the fairy always escapes with one last parting sentence.

"The Morrigan is waiting for you in the Thorns, little dog."

Appearance: In its human guise, Krummi appears as an androgynous human being with shoulder length black hair and a mischievous look, commonly dressed in worn silk shirts and loose suit pants. In the fairy form Krummi grows a headful of black feathers and gains wings, a short beak that somehow still allows for human speech on the face. Talons shoot out of the toes and anyone who's gotten up close to Krummi knows the feathers are also razor sharp. The only possible clues to who or what Krummi might be are a strong Icelandic accent and the fact that somehow Krummi has an astoundingly detailed knowledge of Celtic and Norse myth.

Storytelling Hints: Krummi is NUTS. This cannot be stressed enough. Every action has a purpose that makes no sense except for sheer survival. Whatever the mission of Krummi is, the fact that it references the Morrigan, ancient goddess of death to the Irish people, is just as vital. Anything else is quite literally up in the air.

That means that Krummi can also be manipulated. Krummi loves sheep, and any hunter that provides enough of it (especially eyes and tongues) might actually have a chance to turn Krummi to their side, but also turn any Hounds in the area against them. If a hunter doesn't pay up, there is a chance Krummi will take what it wants by force. And what it wants might not be sheep's eyes or tongue anymore.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Occult 4 (Raven myths)

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 3 (Talons), Stealth 2 (Hide in shadows), Survival: 3 (Homeless)

Social Skills: Animal Ken 3 (Ravens), Intimidation 2, Streetwise 3

Merits: Contacts 1 (Ravens), Danger Sense 2, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 3,

Dread Powers: Confuse 3, Dement 3, Hypnotism 2, Lurker in the Darkness 4, Strange Form (Massive Raven) 3, Terrify 2, Knock-Knock 1, New Face 2

Wyrd 2

Contract 4: Ravens, Madness

Bans: Compelled to watch fights that do not involve itself.

Willpower: 5

Morality: 3

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Envy

Initiative: 5

Defence: 3

Speed: 10

Health: 8

Center City

Center City, where handshakes and deals make or break Philadelphia. Here, politicians and lawyers wage battles of words, and agreements and contracts are created and destroyed often. It was where the most famous gentleman's agreement of the region was agreed on; no structure would ever rise above Billy Penn's statue on city hall. This agreement was once broken and now that Penn is back atop the tallest building in Philly, only time will show whether or not the Curse of Billy Penn is truly broken.

The Magic Garden

The Magic Garden is possibly the largest collective art project in the city, started by one man. Isaiah Zagar moved to South Street during the years when the then-dangerous neighborhood was slated for demolition by the city to connect I-95 and I-76. While his wife managed the art gallery they both opened, Isaiah made mosaics, buying up entire buildings to make his work of art. What resulted can only be called an artistic mess. Glass bottles embedded in concrete. Painted faces on cracked plaster. A six-armed, three-headed statue that isn't an Indian deity. Through it all, Zagar still works, maintaining the work and adding where he can.

To some, the mosaics are artist pieces of individuality, each coming together into a whole to form a masterful collage of different art styles and ideas, using entire buildings as the backdrop. To others, the whole thing looks like a hodgepodge of junk thrown together to disguise declining property values under art. It's also a gathering point for the Wilde Society members that move through Philadelphia, as well as the fairies they commune with. The Zagars only know they have a few eccentric artists in their midst, but Hunters with the Sight know differently.

For once, Philadelphia Hunters didn't go for their guns when they realized what was going on. Instead, they tried to use economic tactics. One of the more financially stable groups (No one knows who yet) tried to finagle their way into buying the property off the absentee landlord, intending to demolish the block and put up a community center in its place. Instead, the Zagars managed to wrangle up the hundreds of thousands of dollars to save their art, and the Garden remains, like the rest of South Philly, a beacon to fae hungry for a feast on artist endeavor.

Event: New Years Day Mummers Parade

The Mummers Parade has a tradition reaching back far into colonial history. The Swedes, the area's original European settlers, had a tradition of "Second Christmas Day". They would parade through their small towns and villages, visiting neighbors and calling for hospitality. Eventually, the idea of a costumed parade through the streets of Philadelphia was enough for unofficial crowds to start roving the streets in the late winter season. These groups would often have one leader, who made a special dance and rhyme.

"Here we stand before your door;
Like we did the year before;
Give us whiskey; give us gin,

Open the door and let us in!
Or give us something nice and hot
Like a steaming bowl of pepper pot!”

In time, the other ethnic groups of Philadelphia also latched on to the tradition, and organized their own clubs and groups to parade through the city, organizing primarily in South Philadelphia. The Europeans brought their extravagant costumes and instruments, while freed slaves from the South brought their own songs and dances. Despite the nuisance the festivities often made to some, the majority of the city loved the New Years celebration, and the first official parade was held in 1901. Today, though the parade has had some struggles for funding, the city’s population is loathe to even consider ending it. Even celebrities native to the area have come out for the Mummies. There are four main parts to the parade; the Comics, groups of revelers reminiscent of the original Swedish style, marching down Center City in fun costumes and makeup with healthy amounts of booze in their systems; the Fancies, who use small elaborate floats and dance routines; finally, the String Bands, whose large numbers, elaborate costumes and set pieces finish up the parade on the street. The Fancy Brigades do not perform on the street; instead they take their massive props and numbers into the Pennsylvania Convention Center.

Both fairies and hunters know the parade well. In the early years of the tradition, hunters found that the abundance of guns being fired off was the perfect cover to use their own weapons on a hunt when the Mummies were out. In more recent times, cells often use practicing for New Years as an excuse to step out from families and friends to take up the Vigil. Fairies have a different reason for their love. The parade seems to call to them, like it’s a source of energy to their magic and sorcery. Often, after the parade winds down Market or Broad street (Depending on where the city decides to let the parade travel), hunters have to contend with fairies, high on magic, running loose through the city. Both sides have had a running tit-for-tat battle over who has control of the parade for decades.

There’s a wild card in all this though; Oscar Rizzo, the Blood Mummer (Hunter: The Vigil Core Rulebook, p. 359). Oscar stalks the backstreets of the city too, and in the time during and immediately after the parade, he can dress in his Mummies suit without suspicion, meaning that if he finds the right victim, he can kill and leave without arousing suspicion. After all, it’s just a man in a Mummies costume, how could he kill anyone without getting any evidence on his suit?

Story Hook: Oh, dem golden slippers!

A group of fairies has decided they want to control the magic of the parade all for themselves. To that end, they’ve created a new club consisting of themselves and duped mortals, practically kidnapped from the other clubs. They call themselves “The Golden Slipper Motley”, and over the past few years have won prize after prize, edging in on first. A cell of hunters says that to let them win first prize would mean they can control the parade, and with it the magic that comes off it, and the ability to warp the city as they see fit. What now?

Philadelphia Cuisine

At first glance, this might seem a little odd. Cuisine? What could Philadelphia offer to the culinary world? Hell, why should it even matter what a person eats in a Hunter game?

In Philadelphia, it could mean everything.

First, there’s the iconic cheesesteak, sold anywhere and everywhere, from the brutal rivalry between Pat’s and Geno’s in South Philly, to Tony Luke’s near the Sports Complex, and even made on the small grill of Mr. Joey Carcione. The cheesesteak is to Philadelphia as being cruel to others is to New York, a ritual that has formed over many years.

First, one steps up to the cashier, saying what kind of cheese they want, and whether they want any additional toppings. In Philadelphia, the usual order is “Whiz wit”. Improper etiquette results in the customer being sent to the back of the line to order again. Payment is usually given when the person orders, since giving them a sandwich before they can pay is foolish, after all.

The pepper pot is another long standing meal. A stew of beef, peppers, vegetables and seasonings, the pepper pot has been a part of Philadelphia since the Revolutionary War, since the soldiers of Washington’s army had to make do with any food they had available. Out of this desperation, the pepper pot was born.

The hoagie is a disputed claim, but many attribute it's creation to ship workers on Hog Island, during World War 1. It's blend of meats, cheeses and vegetables, as well as it's connection to the city, led to it being declared the official sandwich of the city in 1992.

Snack foods come in three distinct flavors. Most days of the year, the soft pretzel is the way to go. Created by Pennsylvania Dutch immigrants, the soft pretzel is an enduring treat in the area, and few are the people who don't know the taste of the soft, warm, salted bread. In the hot summers, though, the Italian water ice takes the stage, cooling people down all over the city. Finally, for those times when you just need sugar, the Tastykake snack cakes are what a person will get.

Why so much detail about food? Fairies often don't know the cultural norms of where they wind up, and many a hunter unsure of whether or not they're chasing a fairy will just ask whether they want Pat's or Tony Luke's. They'll see whether or not they know to say hoagie. It's not the most reliable method, seeing as these are terms native to the area, but sometimes, a little paranoia can go a long way.

Then there's the fact that food is powerful to fairies, almost more so than other creatures. A witch can cast a spell on some bread and call it a day, but fairies messing with food are something else entirely. Many hunters point to a short week in 1987, when several missing persons reports cropped up after a new diner opened in Olney. A cell of Ascending Ones went in to see what was happening, and that night set fire to the building, the horned and hooved owners still inside. They never recovered the missing. Food, in the hands of a fairy, is a potent weapon indeed.

Story Hook: Whiz wit' fruit

A new cheesesteak stand has opened up in North Philly, and somehow has become an overnight hit. People are lining up for blocks to get a taste, and the taste can only be described as "orgasmic". Food critics are already raving, and rumors of a second location are flying.

The area Ascending Ones, however, remember 1987, and are worried that the disappearances will start anew. They've tried to put the word out about the danger, but they've found several area cells under the thrall of the new stand as well. They want to make sure there's no cancer cells able to warn the fairies, because yes, they're sure there's fairies, they've seen them. There's gonna be blood either way with this.

Location: Reading Terminal Market

Back when Philadelphia was first founded, the city was a center of commercial activity in the colonies. Markets of every kind hawked wares from cheese to machines to farm animals. In the early decades this served the city well, and open-air stalls stretched down what was once High Street (today Market Street) from the Delaware six blocks into the city proper. The early colonists made the best use of this massive block of merchants, but slowly issues over sanitation and traffic forced the city government to close this outdoor commercial center. Not willing to lose their livelihoods, the merchants opened two indoor centers on 12th and Market streets in Center City.

Come the Reading Railroad in 1891, and the Market was born in the Reading Terminal and Trainshed to cater to travelers and make a profit from the shipping the railroad provided. The refrigeration area in the basement made it possible for merchants to store their goods across seasons, and the market was almost always full from its founding to World War II. But with the decline of America's industry, the railroads lost business too. The Market floundered, and that's where the fae stepped in. In the 60s it was a fae hideout, the business owners inside unable to escape the cruel bonds that had enslaved them to paying their profits to the fae. During the battle against the city's fae, the hunters swept the market utterly, clearing out the area for mankind again. Or so they thought.

Like the rest of Center City, the Market is now neutral ground for all of Philly. Most of the merchants are human, with a few others mixed in. The stalls selling everything from sweet smelling baklava to roasting meats to cool, sugary ice creams. Some are owned by hunters, some by fairies. While there are sometimes harsh fights with words after hours, and at times with fists out on Market St, both groups realize that to go to war in Reading Terminal would destroy both their profits and the area's neutrality.

Story Hook: Stalling For Time

Tensions are rising. Hunter groups are calling for the fae presence in the market to be removed, but you know better. The removal of the neutrality means other threats will move in and start a massive battle

over a new possible territory in Center City. You're sick of hunters shouting that all the monsters need to die. Someone needs to learn that sometimes, a monster has a place in the world.

Thrupkin Durmont

Background: Thrupkin was just a humble engineer working SEPTA's subway system when the gentry took him. He was traveling through the tunnels on what should have been a routine maintenance job when he noticed the tunnels were getting smaller, the concrete walls were giving way to bare rock. Obviously he knew something was wrong but by then it was already too late, a burly troll like overseer saw Thrupkin and ordered him back to work. Oblivious to Thrupkin's protests that he didn't belong here.

Toiling for years in the dark, sightless mines changed Thrupkin from a man into something other. His body grew strong and tough, even as it shrunk to fit into those tunnels. His eyes adapted to the darkness. Yet it never crushed his spirit. Thrupkin always knew that one day he would be free or die trying.

Yet Thrupkin found his greatest barrier to freedom was not the guards, or his unseen master, but the other slaves. Deep within the mines he found himself among elaborate hierarchies of slaves. A complex Byzantine web that seemed to have no purpose but to give the slaves at the top someone lower than themselves to look down upon. Trying to form some sort of unified resistance only earned him beatings, sometimes from the guards, sometimes from his fellow slaves. In the end he accepted that if he wanted freedom he would have to win it all on his own. Thrupkin threw himself into an abyss, not exactly caring if he survived or not, and far beneath the other slaves and overseers began the long process of tunneling to freedom.

Appearance: Thrupkin looks like a dwarf from just about every Tolkien want-to-be hack to ever put a map in the front of the book. He's short, has an enormous beard and speaks in an Israeli accent.

Storytelling Hints: If Thrupkin brought one thing back from the mines with him, it's a hatred of doing the Gentry's dirty work for them. He cannot stand changelings standing divided, becoming easy pickings for the others. In fairness he also can't understand why changelings choose to stand divided; no matter who points out to him that maybe generations of accumulated changeling wisdom knows something the new guy doesn't.

Even as more experienced changelings criticize Thrupkin for failing to realize the vital mystical advantages they get for dividing the freeholds into several courts, his impassioned firebrand oration has drawn the loyalty of a small but dedicated band of followers favoring his common sense ideals of solidarity and sticking it to the gentry.

Though Thrupkin's band is small they poses a single potent advantage that has kept them safe even as they play in the big leagues; Thrupkin's pick axe, taken with him from Arcadia itself. While wielding this pickaxe Thrupkin can tunnel as fast as he can walk through solid bedrock. Combined with his own legendary sense of underground navigation his band can strike from below, anywhere at any time. If they get in trouble, there's always an escape route down and the option to collapse a tunnel behind them for a nearly invisible bolt hole.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts 3, Occult 2, Science 1 (Geology)

Physical Skills: Athletics 3 (Splunking), Brawl 2 (While drunk), Firearms 2, Stealth 1, Survival 5, (Underground) Weaponry 2 (Pickaxe)

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 3 (Firebrand speeches), Intimidation 2 Persuasion 3, Socialise 2 (pubs), Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Allies 3 (His followers) Direction Sense 1, Iron Stomach 3, Inspiring 4, Resources 2, Toxin Resistance 2

Dread Powers: Dreamwalker 1, Dreamshaper 2, Dwarven Constitution* 1, Emotional Harvest 1, Knock Knock 1, Impress 2, Mechanical Repair 3, Relic (Thrumpkin's Pickaxe) 4

* Thrumpkins' Stamina is 3 dots higher for the purposes of drinking large amounts of alcohol.

Wyrd 2

Contract 2: Mining, Oration

Bans: Thrumpkin cannot resist any freely offered alcohol, unless it qualifies as a "girly drink".

Flaw: Dwarf

Willpower: 6

Morality: 4

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Gluttony

Initiative: 5

Defence: 2

Speed: 11

Health: 8

South Philly

With markets and merchants plenty, South Philly still has a few hidden gems of a local store or two ready to make a good deal for whatever a buyer might need. Caveat emptor rules here, and so do a few other unwritten laws.

Philadelphia Sports Complex

The Sports Complex is the place to be in South Philly during the sports seasons. The Philadelphia Phillies are the city's National League baseball team, playing in Citizens Bank Park. The Eagles, the city's perennially championship-less football team, play out of Lincoln Financial Field, the "Linc". Both the 76'ers basketball team and the Flyers hockey team play out of the Wells Fargo Center, along with many of the city's smaller sports teams. Philly's soccer team, the Union, play in PPL Stadium in Chester County, but maybe if their popularity grows, they can join their older brothers in the Complex.

Often, the Phillies and the Eagles take up most of the limelight, while the Flyers come in when they're having a particularly good season. In recent years, the "Sixers" have had some hard times, but they're slowly regaining some love from the city.

All of the stadiums are relatively recent constructions, and all have some tributes to Philadelphia sports legends. Statues of third baseman Mike Schmidt and radio announcer Harry Kalas stand over the fans in Citizens Bank, as Wilt Chamberlain makes a dunk for eternity outside the Wells Fargo Center.

What really matters, though, is the fans. Anyone from Philadelphia will tell you that the teams only stay because the fans would riot otherwise. The city is notorious through the US, and even the world,

for having the downright worst and rowdiest fans in sports. In Philadelphia, the fact that the fans threw snow balls at Santa is a point of pride, not disgrace. Even when a man is punched simply for wearing the other team's jersey, fans will shrug and say, "Who're we playing next".

For decades, the Sports Complex has been a rallying point for all of Philadelphia. Philly fans for decades swarm the stadiums, in years good and bad, to cheer on their teams (Especially when a team from New York is in town). What flows through the Complex is emotion. Emotion fairies love.

If you put a fairy in the Complex, you'll see them get high enough to burst sometimes. Often, they come into the area as street musicians, and they'll make a few bucks, but that's small change compared to the feelings of triumph, sorrow, and victory that they feed on. Do they manipulate the games to get these emotions more? Maybe, but they never do it during a championship season to hear them tell it. Even they don't know what the Curse of Billy Penn really was.

Hunters who patrol the area are always worried, because the fae love these emotions. Their magic becomes stronger, their illusions more powerful. Many Union cells are taking the fae infiltration the complex as a rub, and want to take their sports teams back.

Story Hook: Going for the Goal

It's finally happening. The Birds are finally closing in on the big win, and there's no chance of them losing now. The entire city is setting up for a parade in February, and the talk is all over the place that with the win will come better players for next season.

Of course, your good cheer died the second you heard about a group of fairies coming in with plans of their own. Seems they love to feed on sorrow, and a loss after a season of football that good is just what they want to charge up their magic.

Lt. Joshua Wozniak

"C'mon, 'music man', get outta here so real people can watch their games in peace."

Josh Wozniak learned at the feet of the greatest. When he was twenty-two and fresh out of the police academy, he witnessed Joey Carcione leading a hunt through his hood in South Philly with a Union cell, taking down a man who was ranting and raving about some "gentry" or something. When he confronted Carcione the next day at the man's deli, Carcione took Wozniak in, and showed him the truth. Wozniak was awestruck at two things. One, that such creatures as in his grandparent's old stories actually existed, and two, that the area police weren't actively marching through the streets cracking monster skulls.

That was ten years ago. Now, Wozniak is one of the police officers in charge of keeping peace on game day in the Sports Complex. He has a group of about ten officers under his lead, and he uses them well. During the pre and post game festivities/mourning, he and his men are making sure that the crowd follows the city's ordinances, behaves properly, and don't do anything overtly illegal, every inch of him a calm, professional cop that many in the city wish walked a beat in their neighborhood. Then, when everyone's attention is on the games, he cracks down. His men only think they're shooing away the homeless bums who try to panhandle a few bucks, but Wozniak knows different. Anyone playing a trumpet or scurrying around the parking lots without a valid ID or game ticket is out, no questions asked.

It has also earned Wozniak a dossier with Internal Affairs. He stands accused of arresting and imprisonment without cause, excessive force, and abuse of authority. So far, Carcione and his own men have made a strong case for Wozniak, but the lieutenant wants to go further; he wants to make it that any fairy that comes around the Complex is tagged and bagged.

Appearance: Out of uniform, Wozniak prefers simple, practical clothes, though a wedding or funeral will force him to don a nice suit or tux. He likes his hair short and keeps his body in above average physical condition. What appears to be baby fat is actually a thin layer of cellulose hiding rock hard muscles that can break a man.

Storytelling Hints: Out of uniform, Wozniak is quiet and observant, always able to make time for his ever-present Polish family, and always in the mood for a hearty meal. In uniform, he becomes gruff, taciturn and observant. He doesn't have the Sight, but he has become adept at telling the real vagrants from the freaks based on their actions. The humans ones are usually smart enough to scam when the cops say so. The freaks think their magic can help, and so they stand their ground.

He's also gotten a rather noticeable penchant for being rough with the fairies, which thanks to the Mask he doesn't know is there, has earned him that I.A. heat. It doesn't help that he's also suspicious

of the Sons of Cu Chulainn after that incident in Sou' Philly, thinking them a dangerous cult that's making a mountain out of a molehill. He's becoming increasingly agitated when he's not out on patrol or at home, and his superiors may decide on a temporary leave if they see fit.

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Pride

Compact: Union (General Strike)

Profession: Cop (Streetwise, Firearms, Investigation)

Mental: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Computer 2, Investigation 3, Medicine 2, Politics 2 (Campaigning, Local Area)

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Drive 3, Firearms 3, Larceny 2, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Intimidation 4 (White Shirt), Persuasion 2, Streetwise 4 (Sports Complex)

Merits: Allies 2 (Police Department), Allies 2 (Union), Brawling Dodge 1, Contacts 4 (City Neighborhood Watches, Homeless, Fairy Hunters, Slasher trackers), Common Sense, Disarm 2, Language 1 (Polish), Professional Training 3, Quick Draw 1, Status 3 (Union)

Morality: 5

Flaw: Paranoia: Wozniak fears that any homeless, panhandlers, and scalpers near the stadiums are fae, and must roll Composure to prevent himself from going after them without cause.

Story Seed: Stop Where You Are!

You're escorting a fae through the Sports Complex to FDR. He's promised that if you get him there, he'll give you a stake that will always make it through the vampire's heart. But as you're almost through the parking lot, a group of cops ask to see your tickets. You tell them that you're just cutting through to get to the park, but then a lieutenant walks up, and the second that white shirt appears, your fairy screams and collapses to the ground. The lieutenant claims that you were cooperating with a known felon, but he'll let you slide for this time. As the ambulance and police escort drive away, questions are running through your mind. The biggest; how do we get that stake now?

Location: Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park

Situated in South Philly, right next to the Sport Complex, the "Lakes" are an area of municipal parkland made for the benefit of the city's inhabitants. With tennis courts, baseball and soccer fields, a golf course, and a wrap-around path for cars and pedestrians, the park is a gathering area in South Philly for urban picnics, small events, and even miniature markets for many ethnicities, particularly those from Southeast Asia.

Come night, however, and the park changes. The locals just ignore the strange calls and shouts they hear from the park, and police called in on reports of strange smells and bizarre sights just write off the calls as lunatics. Because that's what the fairies, and the hunters, want.

It's because FDR park is the biggest goblin market in the region. Objects, immaterial concepts, impossible mathematical equations, and anything at all can be bought, sold, and traded in the FDR market. Strange bird-things soar through the trees, as water fairies swim through Meadow Lake. Massive rock-men stand guard at all the entrances, throwing out anyone who causes trouble, if the troublemakers are lucky. The tables are run by any manner of creature, as slaves are herded about in chains, and fae sell their enemies (or anyone they want really) into fates worse than death for a few rotten apples.

So why do the hunters let this continue? Usually, because the hunters are looking for something too. That secret the vampire has been keeping? It's on the table under the I-95 overpass. Want a way to make a witch scream in pain? You can find it for a bargain, only three days of memory, and you even get to choose which days. Edge to edge tables of the strangest, most bizarre items are setup, only to vanish by morning, or if someone is dumb enough to do something worthy of police attention.

Since it is neutral ground, it's a valuable place for a hunter to move in relative freedom, but everyone there knows who is in charge. If the hunters were to break up the market, one of their best, though by no means safest, resources in the city would vanish.

Location: Italian Market

On 9th St, there's still a trace of Philadelphia's original outdoor market culture. Since the area was not a part of Penn's original plan, immigrants took the area as their own during the mid- to late 1880s. Primarily from Italy's dozens of states, shops opened soon after to cater to these often picky Italians for their culinary tastes. Dozens of stalls became the primary source of grocery for these newcomers.

It was during the rise of supermarkets that the location gained the name of the "Italian Market". Despite other immigrants arriving during the 1900s like Latinos and Asians, the market still retains the Italian roots that made it such a thriving force. Though the years the area has become a Philadelphia landmark, immortalized in the movie Rocky as the title character trains through it. Even through winter and snow, the market remains open and ready to do business.

Like most of South Philadelphia, Joey Carcione and his Union allies keep as firm a grip they can on the area. At least one out of every four employees in the area is a hunter either in a lone cell or in the Union, and the Catholic presence in the area has ensured that the Malleus has at least a small ear to the street as well. Any monster would find it difficult to slip into, but due to the bartering nature of the cultures involved few are able to truly gain any patsies or slaves in the area, and rumors of a strange stall selling bizarre merchandise is quickly removed and the owner sent packing.

Story Hook: Buyout

Someone's got an eye to develop the Italian Market. A big property concern has decided the area would make prime condo development area, and the fae want in. Suddenly coincidences start to roll against the market owners. A planned protest was cancelled due to hurricane force winds and hail. In Spring. One of the community leaders that opposed the development has suddenly been spotted driving a new Benz around the time he said that it would revitalize the neighborhood. The only thing that would remain is the mural to Rizzo, and no one wants that alone in a neighborhood. Some of the business owners want to fight with force of arms, but Carcione knows that'd be suicide. He wants your cell to handle not the fairies, but a different foe. Stall the company before they can develop without killing anyone. If the fairies can't follow through on their end of the bargain, it would be disastrous for them. And anyone who dealt with them.

West Philadelphia

West Philly has the majority of the city's colleges, meaning it has the majority of the city's young and naive kids who know nothing about the big city. Easy pickings for fairies who want to grab a slave who won't know which way's up by the end of their servitude. Drugs flow easily here, and the fairy proclivity for selling them makes it easy for the manipulation of the population of users.

The Dutchy of Fragments

In the decades since the summer of 1964 Philadelphia's faerie communities has been in disarray. The Changelings who survived the riots went to ground. Some masqueraded as ordinary people, some fled Philadelphia and others were hid by friends in groups like the Wilde Society, the Long Night's merciful or even the Ascending Ones. With the Vigil's attention focused elsewhere the Changelings survived, their numbers grew slowly with fresh escapees from Arcadia. In time the old systems of mutual support and fears of reabduction began to emerge. The lost yearned for a true Freehold.

These yearnings became the Duchy of Fragments, an alliance formed under the leadership of Philip Greyback. A Duke of the prosperous New York Freehold who was sent to Philadelphia after a local Changelings petitioned New York for assistance. The Duchy is yet to become a true Freehold and doesn't even hold the majority of Philadelphia's Changeling population. Philip divides his time between reaching out to independent Changelings, establishing a proper Freehold and defending his followers from both hunters and rival monsters.

Duke Philip Greyback

You invade my home, threaten my subjects and then you call me the monster!

Background: Philip Greyson was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and he loved every moment of it. When he was young he slacked off in school. When he was grown he blew off collage and employment to live the high life on his enormous trust fund. This wasn't purely sloth or hedonism, it was to Philip a simple statement of fact: He already had more money than he could ever need.

All this changed one night at a quiet garden party. Philip was alone for a moment refilling his glass when he was approached by the most stunning woman he had ever seen. She was gorgeous, he broke out into a sweat from watching the sway of her walk, her scent made his head fuzzier than the wine, and she was wearing a dress that left very little to the imagination. That was the first thing that made Philip suspicious, this was a formal party. How did she get in wearing that?

The fair lady walked right up to him, hooked her arm through his and proposed they slip away somewhere quieter. If something seems too good to be true it probably is, and though he was a layabout Phillip wasn't a fool. Though he guessed her to be a golddigger, he politely declined, and she chose a proportionate and measured response: Drag him to Arcadia and turn him into an animal so he could spend the rest of his life begging and performing tricks for table scraps. One humiliation for another.

For an undefinable length of time Philip was a mindless beast in Arcadia, but as they say beauty can tame the savage beast. One morning he noticed the roses were just coming into bloom and it reminded him of a girl he had unsuccessfully courted for some time. He would have to get some new clothes, if the roses were blooming her birthday would be soon. This was such an unusual thought for an animal that he was stunned with confusion, after some thought he concluded that he must be human. Knowing that during high tea nobody paid attention to the animals he painfully squeezed himself back into a human shape and ran as fast as his legs could carry him.

His first weeks as a human did not go well. The mere act of thinking was still hard for Philip, and he wondered in a daze trying to understand the simplest things and remember how to use reason. He did however find the birthday party at a country club. He didn't meet the girl though, he met someone much like himself but with a haughty jeering arrogance where Philip had genuine kindness. The real and the fake began an argument over who was the real Phillip Greyson. The fetch used deriding wit, insults and the support of the other guests, all with a hidden undercurrent of desperation and doubt. The changeling used half reasoned wild ranting backed only by an animal immunity to persuasion. It was the fetch who first laid hands on his counterpart, but he didn't get a chance for a second blow. Philip fled the party over his fetch's dead body and hid in the woods.

By the time the news of Philip Greyson being killed by some stranger who looked just like him reached the nearest freehold Philip had almost reverted entirely into an animistic mindset. Patient work was able to restore him to a mindset half way between man and beast. Intelligent enough to speak, polite enough to act human at court if he kept is mouth shut, and loyal enough to Summer whenever the trumpets sounded the call to battle.

It was at this point of his life that Philip met his Beauty: Gretchin Melnitz. Gretchin was special. She had The Sight, and by chance or by fate she was living on the same street as the home the courts

found for Philip. Gretchin was always curious as to why she saw things differently to everyone else, who wouldn't be, but where as before she could go months without seeing a faerie now she was seeming one almost every day. The curiosity drove her nearly mad until one day when she incorrectly assumed Philip to be away she broke into his house to look around.

Philip's home was a mess. There were almost no furnishings at all and half eaten animal carcasses and chewed bones lay where they fell. Gretchin would have left in disgust if Philip didn't appear there and then demanding to know what she was doing. Terrified Gretchin grabbed the largest bone in reach and made a few threatening swings as she retreated towards the door. This Philip could not allow, and in a single bound he had moved from the other end of the corridor to sitting on Gretchin's chest, screaming accusations and threats into her face.

What followed was an incredibly confusing fifteen seconds wherein Philip's actions were controlled by his frailty and Gretchin's by her fear. When everything had settled it turned out that rather than simply swearing not to steal from Philip's home, she had sworn to never leave in all her life. Philip for his part was Pledge bound to kill her if she ever broke her word and he made it clear he would do so but gave her most of the house to do with as she pleased and even volunteered to fetch her belongings.

The beginning of her new life was both incredibly lonely for Gretchin. Her greatest comfort was that Philip seemed to avoid her for months at a time and in time the fear was eaten away by familiarity. As for Philip, for the first time since he killed his fetch he was once again making an effort. He forced himself to walk upright, instead of walking on all fours when alone. He started wearing clothes and stopped hunting live prey, instead sneaking down in the middle of the night to eat Gretchin's leftovers. He even ate with a knife and fork. At the freehold he began practising how to speak English beyond a simple yes and no, he made an effort to be sociable and to actively work in the interests of his court. Philip discovered that he had a keen bestial cunning and animal magnetism that made him just as skilled at strategy and leadership as his claws had made him in combat.

There was a reason, through living with Gretchin Philip had developed an enormous crush on her. He remembered the fear in her eyes when they first met and was determined to become more than the beast that terrified her. It was not until he was bestowed the title of Duke and his own estate than Philip was first able to make his affections known.

Appearance: Philip looks mostly like a blend of lion and human – it suited his abductor that he should be a proud beast brought low – he basic shape is human but with fur all over and a very lion-like mane of hair. His face is a mixture of the two, again the basic shape is human but he has a pronounced cat like nose and ears with a wide fanged mouth. His canine teeth are pronounced and extend outside his mouth, though they aren't quite sabre teeth.

For clothing Philip dresses like the word "Duke" sounds. He's normally wearing regency clothing to white tie standards in bright colors, usually the summer court's green, red, and gold. He usually has an emblem of the summer sun somewhere upon his person.

Storytelling Hints: Philip is a Duke, and that means something. As a Duke of Summer it is his responsibility to protect the changelings he outranks. Sometimes he does this with words, some negotiations backed up by the possibility of force, though Philip usually leaves diplomacy to the specialists. Far more often he protects his people through strategy and by leading them in battle. Once upon a time duke also meant a military commander. Though Philip is not noticeably intelligent he is incredibly cunning and has a keen knack for predicting his opponents. He's even picked up a thing or two about faerie magic and has quite a skill in animating gargoyles. There's usually a few around wherever he makes a claim.

In person Philip presents himself as a proper blue blooded noble. Always elegant, polite and impeccably mannered. This even carries over to his attitude towards war: To Philip there is the proper way to conduct war, and the improper way. He never targets civilians and always treats his prisoners with dignity and respect. His foes may be felled by blade, guns, claws or even sorcery but he'll target their flesh and never the mind or soul. Even as he uses every trick of faerie secrecy, illusion and misdirection to outmanoeuvre his foes he won't even attack without warning or a deceleration of war. That a warning can come seconds before the shot at an unaware foe is considered perfectly acceptable by his code of etiquette. Yet kept safely chained by rules and etiquette is a true beast within, taking a good blow or a witnessing threat to Gretchin can unleash the animal. He'll drop the sword, abandon the fancy footwork, bear his fangs and leap for the throat.

Normally Philip works as part of a team, with fellow nobles whose strengths compliment each other and under a king who leads in the name of Summer. This time it is different, and he's leading alone. The petitions of the disorganized changelings in Philadelphia have travelled as far as Philip's native New York asking for protection. Though the New York Freehold could hardly spare their entire senior membership, they could spare at least somebody, and that somebody is Philip. He has therefore relocated to Philadelphia, a process that was admittedly as simple as adding a couple of doors to his mansion leading to strategic locations.

The situation in Philadelphia looks like pure madness to Philip, and as a fae that's an educated opinion. Not only is there at times near open war between the humans and the supernatural, there's frequently violent clashes between hunter factions as well. It's a far from the fights he is used to, where conflict was quick, decisive and above all over before mortals might notice something.

Philip knows of course that he can't go on the offensive with a rag tag group of changelings, not in such a militarized environment. His response is to hunker down and fortify. Normally Philip's year is split into four. In Spring he tends to the morale and loyalty of his men, and makes recruitment pitches to unaligned changelings. In Summer he goes on the offensive with his own band of changelings from New York, favoring quick surgical strikes to make up for his lack of manpower and force projection. He either targets a foe who's losing ground on other fronts or attacks to prevent an enemy from rising to prominence in a way that could unite the hunters (or any single faction of them). In Autumn he builds defences, the parts of Philadelphia where he shelters the changelings and proudly display the reds, greens and golds of summer. He's practically daring his foes to attack his fortifications, where networks of doors let him maneuver changelings instantly and silently while any inanimate object could be a loyalist spy. Finally, in Winter he and those loyal to him hide away in the defences they built during Autumn. This might make him a little predictable to his foes, but there is a reason to his madness. The seasons are rather important to changeling magic.

If Philip has a vulnerability, it's Gretchen. She is the lynchpin of his emotional and mental wellbeing, as well as privy to almost all of his secrets. More than enough for hunters to go on the offensive against Philip's followers, while simply killing her would cripple Philip's effectiveness. Forcing her from their shared home would break their old pledge, and demand Phillip kills her himself, destroying him utterly, his self destructive rage most likely bringing down his followers with him.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 1 (Military history), Crafts 2 (Gargoyles), Investigation 1, Occult 2, Politics 3 (Faerie)

Physical Skills: Athletics 3 (Climbing), Brawl 5 (Claws, fangs), Firearms 2, Stealth 1, Survival 2, Weaponry 3 (Rapier)

Social Skills: Animal Ken 4 (Felines), Empathy 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 3, Localise 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Danger Sense 2, Language 1 (French), Language 1 (Italian), Brawling Dodge 1, Disarm 2, Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Finesse (Rapier) Giant 4, Iron Stomach 2, Inspiring 4, Resources 5, Status 4 (New York Changeling Freehold), Status 2 (Philadelphia Changeling Freehold), Striking Looks 4, Wyrld Image 1 (Handsome Prince)

Dread Powers: Beastly Command 3, Dread Attack 3, Dreamwalker 1, Dreamshaper 2, Emotional Harvest 2, Enhanced Senses 4, Fury 2, Impress 2, Knock Knock 1, Mirage 3, Terrify 2.

Wyrld 4

Contract 4: Lions, Nobility, Summer, True Love

Bans: Philip cannot let anyone take anything from his home, not even gifts, unless they have given him goods or services of an equal or greater value.

Philip cannot bring himself to harm any mortal woman wearing a freshly picked (one hour or less) red rose in her hair.

Willpower: 6

Morality: 5

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Gluttony

Initiative: 7

Defence: 3

Speed: 13

Health: 10

Duchess Gretchen Greyback

My love, don't be so terrifying. I don't know if I would prevail over the competition.

Background: Gretchen Greyback, nee Melnitz, is the kind of woman they would make a coming of age comedy about. Quirky, socially isolated, but with a hidden heart of gold and a secret talent. The Sight. Unfortunately what makes a good story often makes for a harsh life. The first time Gretchen saw a faerie, at nine, she asked her parents and soon ended up in front of psychiatrists. That didn't last long, the medication made Gretchen feel gray and lifeless (a common reaction for those with The Sight) and her parents were caring enough to stop the medication.

In place of medication it was arranged that school would keep an eye on Gretchen. No one ever saw anything amiss, since The Sight is not a mental illness. But all the same the result was a disaster that destroyed any academic potential Gretchen might have had. Her teachers were bad enough, discouraging her through well meaning idiocy every time they told her not to tax herself. The students were worse, and though the school was policed well enough to quash any overt bullying the other students still shunned her for being crazy. Gretchen left education with minimal qualifications and socially isolated.

Through it all Gretchen clung to her Sight as the one magical thing in her otherwise disappointing life. She would promise herself that she would introduce herself to the next supernatural being she could see. She read every book that started with the heroine seeing something no one else could see before being whisked away to adventure. Yet every time she saw a faerie her nerve let her down. It was not until she was in her 20s and working unhappily as a waitress when she got her chance. A changeling by the name of Philip Greyback moved into her street.

Even though Gretchen never worked up the courage to approach Philip, she did however eventually work up the courage to break in to his home when she incorrectly believed him to be out. Exploring Philip's home was an ordeal, the place closer to the den of a wild beast than the abode of a man. Half eaten animals and cleanly picked bones lay where they fell. Gretchen's nerve soon gave out, but not before Philip found her and demanded to know why she was in his house.

Terrified Gretchen grabbed the largest bone she could and swung it in what she hoped was threateningly as she backed towards the door. This was the wrong move, as Philip could not allow theft of any sort within his home. Not even of something as valueless as a bone. In a single bound he pounced upon Gretchen, roaring accusations. With Gretchen's actions controlled by her fear and

Philip's actions controlled by his ban what followed was confusing for all, and by it's end rather than simply promising to leave empty handed and never return she promised to never leave at all.

On the first day Gretchen locked herself in the bathroom. On the second and third day she only crept out to try and find some food other than raw meet, finding that Philip had filled the fridge with sandwiches. On the fourth day she actually saw Philip and asked to leave, and he made it clear that it was never going to happen, but then he explained how he was magically bound to his word in a slightly less threatening tone. On the second week Philip knocked on the door of the spare room Gretchen had claimed as her own and offered to fetch her things. He was as good as his word. Two weeks after that he gave her his debit card, saying he hardly had any use for it.

As time passed familiarity ate away at Gretchen's fear, but in it's place came isolation. It was harsh but it was an old enemy Gretchen knew how to cope with. Only the changing of the seasons and the gradual changing of Philip himself marked the passage of time. His mannerisms became more human and his home first began to receive visitors and then expand into a hub of the local freehold. Yet it was not until Philip was awarded the title of Duke and his own estate within the Hedge that he, by now an entirely different and altogether better person, first asked Gretchen to dance.

She had her faerie tale romance after all.

Appearance: With the important exception of Philip few people would actually consider Gretchen a beauty. She's got a somewhat flattish face and a rounded body, still retaining her baby fat well into adulthood. She makes up for it with the sweetest slightly shy smile and on formal occasions faerie fashions and faerie beauticians can turn anyone into a radiant beauty who puts supermodels to shame.

Storytelling Hints: Gretchen is living the life Disney princesses have been marketing to little girls for over seventy years now. She resides in a vast mansion, is married to a handsome Duke and lives in the lap of quiet luxury. Idling away with the sweetest foods and her books in-between hosting formal balls and soirees for the freehold.

Even the life promised by Disney is not ideal, but at least it is an interesting and luxurious unideal life, instead of the dull unideal life she lived before meeting Philip. Chief among her complaints is that her pledge still holds; she cannot leave Philip's estate. Gretchen has actually figured out a loophole, in that she cannot leave while she "still draws breath". Magic or even medicine could keep her alive without breathing for long enough but she knows how Philip would take it. He's still scared of feminine wiles, and when one is married to a changeling allowances must be made for the scars they carry from Arcadia.

To hunters Gretchen represents an enormous opportunity. Removing her from play (or just abducting her from her home, the pledge still stands) would neutralise a key changeling in both New York and Philadelphia, and she knows more than enough to threaten the changelings of both cities. Though she is loyal to the freehold she wouldn't last that long against a vicious interrogation. To those who don't know better Gretchen also represents a mortal woman held prisoner by monsters, and many hunters would consider it their duty to rescue her. If she protests, well it's hardly the first time a monster had the power to control people's minds (Philip can't, his powers over the mind only affect anger, but tell that to the shotgun wielding cell holding her). With effort the Deprogramming Tactic works just as well against honest loyalty as it does against mind control, it could forcibly bring Gretchen round the hunter's side. This would of course provide the hunters with a wealth of information on the changelings of two cities.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 2 (Literature), Crafts 1, Occult 2, Politics 1 (Faerie)

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Firearms 1, Stealth 1, Weaponry 1 (Rapier)

Social Skills: Animal Ken 2 (Felines), Empathy 3, Expression 2, Persuasion 3, Socialise 3 (Formal events), Subterfuge 2

Merits: Resources 5, The Sight 2, Status 2 (New York Changeling Freehold), Library 4 (Classic literature, paranormal romance, biographies, history)

Willpower: 6

Morality: 7

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Lust

Initiative: 5

Defence: 2

Speed: 10

Health: 7

Dr. Victor Marsella

The digestive system here appears to work in reverse. Gives a new meaning to the term ‘talking shit’.

Background: Victor Marsella grew up in a heavily Catholic household. So heavy, that his grandmother was adamant that he “protect himself from the demons” with prayer. Nearly 24/7 prayer according to her. The other kids laughed at him, covered in rosaries and religious medals when he went to school. It only got worse as he grew up. His grandmother became almost obsessive with her religion, one time dragging Victor to his local priest for an exorcism. The police found the grandmother trying to force the priest to perform the exorcism, Victor huddled under a pew crying.

In such a climate, few in his family and friends were surprised that he drifted towards a scientific background. His grandmother, for her part, screamed and ranted for hours at him, telling him that the creatures would take him without God’s protection. That was the first time that Marsella told his grandmother to, “Fuck off with your Goddamn superstitious bullshit”. He hasn’t talked to his family since, preferring the comfort of a lab to their noisy and crowded gatherings.

Only his grandmother had a better argument than he imagined. He was studying for his graduate degree when he found his first fairy. The monster had tried to slip Victor drugs, but when he turned the creature down it kept trying to force him. Things got physical, and Victor saw the truth when the creature sprouted a third arm to force the drugs down his throat. Thanks to the friend he’d made named Malcom Yee, he managed to fight off the creature, and saw it all. That was when Malcom offered to let him into Null Mysteriis.

He’s become the closest thing the Rationalists have to an expert on Homo Sapiens Aculeus, the biologist the group turns to when they find a body that doesn’t add up. Sometimes, it’s not a fae, and he sends it off to another Rationalist, uninterested in the results. When it is a fae he gets down to business with his scalpels.

Appearance: Victor isn’t overweight, but he’s no featherweight either; he’s healthy in his extra pounds. Outside of the lab, he’s a foul-mouthed joker who loves tearing into religious zealots and the current (to his mind) anti-science climate in the political world. Inside the lab, his eyes narrow, he throws on his scrubs, and starts going to town on whatever sample he received that day. He can’t explain where they come from, and he doesn’t care. His focus is the changes they undergo.

Storytelling Hints: Victor has come to admit that maybe his grandmother had the right information, but clouded it with religion that prevented her from taking proper action. Instead, he

wants to cut through the ages of folklore and myth that surround fairies, and burn down the aged beliefs that have harmed other children, both from fairy predations and human stupidity. Victor's vendetta doesn't preclude being an actual scientist, however. His meticulous record keeping has allowed Null Mysteriis members to find out as much about fairies as they could need. He's their best source of biological information on the fae, but he won't get his own hands dirty if he can help it. He's a biologist, not a killer, meaning that if a hunter wants Victor to get them something useful, they'll need to bring him something in return.

Virtue: Persistence

Vice: Gluttony

Compact: Null Mysteriis (Rationalists)

Profession: Scientists (Investigation, Science, Occult)

Mental: Intelligence: 3, Wits: 3, Resolve: 2

Physical: Strength: 2, Dexterity: 4, Stamina: 2

Social: Presence: 2, Manipulation: 2, Composure: 3

Mental Skills: Academics: Parapsychology: 3, Computer: 3, Medicine: Anomalous Autopsy: 4, Occult: 2, Science: Homo Sapiens Aculeus: 4

Physical Skills: Athletics: 1, Drive: 1, Weaponry: Surgical Tools: 2

Social Skills: Intimidation: 2, Socialize: 2

Merits: Eidetic Memory, Holistic Awareness, Language: Italian, Contacts: 3: Microbiologists, Virologists, Anthropologists, Allies: Null Mysteriis: 1, Status: Null Mysteriis: 3, Fame: Rationalists: 2, Resources: 3, Professional Training: 3
Morality: 7

Story Seed: Body Snatchers

A rumor is circulating; there's a doctor at U Penn who's paying good money for a confirmed body of a fairy creature. The more intact the specimen, the more money there is. Cells across the city are stacking up fairy bodies like cord wood outside the medical building. You thought about getting into it, but you're hearing that the bodies are drying up, and that there's cells starting to fight each other over bodies. Even with this, the "nutty professor" still won't give up the money.

Samantha "Sam" Cassady

The Waldensteins have three kids. Franklin, Susan and Helena. Susan is a faerie, she doesn't like going out much. All she does is watch her spiders while her family does everything for her.

Background: There are two people who have influenced Sam's life more than any other. The first is her mom, Rachel Cassady, a reporter for University City Review who gave Sam her love of writing. The second her full time au pair is Glinda Moonsdaughter (real name Catherine Johnson), a practising neo-pagan "witch" who knows practically nothing about real magic but quite a lot about alternative lifestyles and who's desire to broaden Sam's horizons gave her a healthy open mind and awakened her latent Sight.

That Sight appeared before Sam even knew about Philadelphia. It first manifest when she was six years old in Ohio, and she happily recorded the small fairies and sprites onto her blog / online secret

diary (“it’s secret if no one you know reads it”), “Things I see by Samantha Helena Cassady”. Her big break came when she witnessed a minor formal duel between two fairies that was also recorded by a popular member of Network Zero. Writing about the same incident caused her blog to show up on the google searches of several Network Zero members, a few of whom stayed as fans of her innocent just-what-I-saw style of reporting the daily life of the fae. Though one of her regular commenters did take it upon themselves to hack Sam off Wordpress then offer to set her up on a new and much more secure site, for her own safety.

Then her mother moved to Philadelphia to write for the Review, and things have...shifted somewhat. Philadelphia isn’t like the quiet farm fields of her home. The big city is new and exciting, but infinitely more terrifying as well. She peeks at her mother writing stories about shootings and drug murders. Her father comes home from work tired and a little grumpy. Even Glinda seems on edge, always looking over her shoulder and talking about how the fringe community in the city is more gritty than she’s used to. Sam hasn’t noticed anything herself, only that there aren’t as many fairies as there are back home.

What she has noticed, though, is that some of the Network Zero members commenting on her blog seem a lot more nervous about a young girl on the Vigil. Of course this is Network Zero, so for every concerned commenter there’s at least one other who finds the idea of a young girl at large in the battlefield of Philadelphia to be awesome or hilarious. The Vigil in Ohio’s farms might have been a mystical adventure, but in Philadelphia, the Vigil isn’t quite so happy-go-lucky.

Appearance: Like most girls of 11 Sam looks adorable. She has a narrow face with widened features that dramatises her expressions. Sam normally wears glasses with no lenses to make herself look smarter and simple practical clothing found in charity shops, which is as far Glinda can push things before Sam’s parents put their foot down.

Storytelling Hints: Sam lives in a much more innocent world than most hunters would believe possible, a world where the Vigil is actually fun and requires nothing more than a short detour on the way home from school. A world where the monsters exist on a comfortable gradient covering boring white collar professionals like her dad on one end, quirky but nice alternative types like Glinda in the middle, and the fae on the far end. A world where the monsters always seem to be in the middle of strange faerie domestic life or preparing for some otherworldly ball, never patching up bullet wounds or plotting curses and Earth to their enemies. A world where it’s actually safe for a child to go spying on faeries with nothing more than a notebook.

Most of this is situational. Even with Glinda’s very relaxed attitudes towards discipline Sam only gets to go spying during midday and she lives right in the middle of Philip Greyback’s strongest territorial holding. For the sake of his people’s safety Philip tries to keep the violence and unsavoury business away from his own backyard. The part which is not situational is down to the Wyrd. When Sam awakened her Sight the Wyrd became convinced that she was an “innocently curious child”. Ever since that moment the world has tried to keep her that way, with as much power as minor coincidences can manage. Even the fae are affected; on a couple of occasions she has been spotted by the fae and dismissed as no danger, in stark contrast to the fae’s usual paranoia.

The word “child” is built into the Wyrds perspective of Sam, but time will tell what happens when she gets older. Either the Wyrd will adapt, forget about her, or Sam will be unable to grow mentally, physically, or both.

Even with the protection of the Wyrd Philadelphia is taking it’s toll on Sam. The kids in school are still nice, but they’re rougher around the edges than Sam’s old friends. There are few wide open spaces to run through in bare feet. The streets are dirty with litter and filth, compared to her nice little town, and the Wyrd is a lot better than protecting her from faeries than it is from humans. She hides her feelings mostly, but her grades are suffering and she’s become more prone to aggressive outbursts.

Profession: Journalist (Investigation, Expression)

Compact: Network Zero (Record Keeper)

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 1

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 1

Mental Skills: Academics 1 (Journalism), Computer 1 (Multimedia), Investigation 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Stealth 2 (spying into buildings), Survival 1

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Empathy 1, Expression 2 (Writing), Persuasion 1, Socialise 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Contacts 1 (University City Review), Direction Sense 1, Fast Reflexes 1, Favoured Weapon 2 (her notebook), Mentor 1 (Rachel Cassady), Mentor 1 (Glinda Moonsdaughter), Professional Training 1, The Sight 2, Wyrd Image 1 (innocently curious child).

Willpower: 2

Morality: 7

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 5

Defence: 2

Speed: 8

Health: 5

Flaw: Still a child (-1 Size, fewer starting Attribute dots, many social effects)

A decorative border of black ink-drawn leaves and vines surrounds the text. The border is composed of a top and bottom horizontal branch with small leaves, and two vertical branches on the left and right sides that curve inward at the top and bottom. The leaves are simple, rounded shapes, and the vines are thin lines with small curls and loops.

Sidebar: Innocents

If you have the book *World of Darkness Innocents* and wish to use it's rules here's an alternative statblock for Samantha Cassady. As *Innocents* gives less value to each Attribute dot her stats appear significantly higher – she's an exceptional woman by the standards of her age group – where possible Merits have been used to try and keep her advantages synchronised.

Profession: Journalist (Investigation, Expression)

Compact: Network Zero (Record Keeper)

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Study 1 (Journalism), Computer 1 (Multimedia), Investigation 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Stealth 2 (spying into buildings), Survival 1

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Empathy 1, Expression 2 (Writing), Socialise 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Contacts 1 (University City Review), Direction Sense 1, Favoured Weapon 2 (her notebook), Fleet of Foot 1, Mentor 1 (Rachel Cassady), Mentor 1 (Glinda Moonsdaughter), Professional Training 1, The Sight 2, Wyrd Image 1 (innocently curious child).

Willpower: 5

Morality: 7

Asset: Creative

Vice: Brash

Initiative: 5

Defence: 3

Speed: 8

Health: 6

Suburban Philly

In the suburbs and associated townships around Philadelphia the Vigil is somewhat quieter. Hunters are able to pursue the vigil on their own terms, focusing on the issues that they personally care about.

Haverford Township Searchlight

Few compacts are as personal as Searchlight, nearly every member of Searchlight joined the Vigil because of something that happened to a member of their family or circle of friends. In Philadelphia the local chapter of Searchlight has based itself in Haverford in Delaware County. With enough distance from the turf wars and violence of Philadelphia itself the cell is free to search for their missing relatives. The Cell is led by Madison West, one of Searchlight's longest serving hunters, a pillar of the community and a Stalwart who will stop at nothing in her hunt.

Madison's second in command is Anthony Jullian, a Prior seeking to rescue his brother from the fae. Anthony is the brains behind the cell, both for faerie mythology and for managing what little infrastructure they use.

Lance and Bree Oswald are a husband and wife team both Stalwarts. They witnessed two of their children walking into a small corpse of trees and never saw them again despite the corpse being barely bigger than a house. They have turned to Searchlight for help in finding their children, and help with balancing the Vigil and their responsibilities to the rest of their kids.

Ashley Brown is the group's Councillor. Originally a Stalwart himself, he has come to some form of closure ever since the true fae that took his wife mysteriously stopped it's periodic appearances and the trail went cold. Now he helps keep the cell together when Madison is "leading from the front".

Destiny Washington is the only one of the cell who's sure there's no faeries behind her sister's disappearance. The pair fled their abusive family together, but living on the street Destiny's sister fell into drugs and was eventually trafficked abroad. Or so Destiny believes. In fact she has willingly joined the Jagged Crescent and is perfectly safe transporting various "products". She's not even taking any drugs, not for recreation anyway. Time will tell if the two can reconcile or if their respective secrets will drive their factions to war.

The group meet in a Safehouse below Anthony's bookshop. Size 1, Cache 2, Secrecy 0. It has a couple of Traps: A spring loaded iron knife is built into the door (Trap 2), and a false section of the floor is rigged to collapse into an iron spike pit (Trap 4). The Safehouse is equipped for integrations and examining loved ones to see if they're a Fetch (Torture Suite 1) and contains the books too useful to be put for sale (Library 2, Faerie Tales, Medieval Superstitions)

The cell knows the following Tactics: Arson, Moral Support, Search Party.

Madison West

Background: Madison's story begins only one week into the life of her first and only child. Her husband was at work. She was alone at home feeding the baby when a sudden and enormous sense of deja vu came over her. When it was over the baby felt alien and wrong against her breast. Madison couldn't understand what had happened and when she raised her concerns with her husband he was supportive but thought the problem was Madison, not the baby. When the poorly designed fetch died not a week later, unable to take sustenance from human food no matter what the doctors tried, Madison's feelings were reinterpreted as a mother's intuition.

To fill the gaping hole where her son once was Madison threw herself into every aspect of motherhood other than actually raising a child. She pushed her way onto school boards, volunteered with children's charities and ran after school activities. One of these charities was Searchlight. Madison has been a member for a long time now, she was assisting the New York cell when the compact first invited Professor Everett to present his theories. The professor's lecture reminded her uncomfortably of her own experiences. Returning to Philadelphia in the dead of night she exhumed her baby's grave to discover nothing but assorted household junk. Realising her son could still be alive she began to form her own chapter of Searchlight, surrounding herself with allies and loved ones of the vanished.

Appearance: Thanks to Searchlight's emotional training life on the Vigil hasn't outwardly changed Madison's appearance. She's always seems to find the time to clean her blond hair and do her make-up tastefully and subtly. For clothing she favours smart casual and often sporty clothing during the day, with tough practical gear for hunt.

Storytelling Hints: You could make a case that Madison is clinically insane by now. She has perfected Searchlight's emotional training to the point she's practically two different people. By day the horrors of the Vigil seem to have left her entirely untouched. She comes across as, even is, a happy healthy individual who genuinely cares about her charitable and community work.

On the Vigil Madison seemingly has no identity or feelings unrelated to her son at all. She is icy cold and driven with occasional bursts of berserker rage. She leads her cell through a mixture of reassuring certainty and bringing her daytime self to group meetings.

Recent events in Madison's personal life have driven her further into her dual identities. Originally one of her greatest supporters and the first recruit into her cell, Madison's husband recently left her after she broke several of his ribs for expressing concerns about her sanity. To him this was a wake up call. He left Searchlight, shed the emotional training and started a new family in Seattle. To Madison this marked the loss of her final link to her natural self.

Profession: Socialite (Politics, Socialize, Persuasion)

Compact: Searchlight (Stalwart)

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Computer 1, Crafts 2 (gunsmith), Investigation 2, Politics 2 (School, parenting), Occult 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 4 (All out), Drive 1, Firearms 3 (Rifles), Stealth 1, Survival 1, Weaponry 3 (Anything big and blunt, Improvised)

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Expression 4, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 3, Socialise 2, Streetwise 2 (Missing people, drug culture) Subterfuge 2

Merits: Allies 2 (Searchlight) Contacts 5 (Teachers, Mothers, Homeless Shelters, Charities, Social Services), Fast Reflexes 1, Fleet of Foot 2, Inspiring 4, Iron Stamina 2, Moral Compartmentalization 5, Resources 1, Safehouse (Cache 1, Trap 3), Status 4 (Searchlight).

Willpower: 6

Morality: 9

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 5

Defence: 2

Speed: 13

Health: 8

Code: It's OK to kill faeries, modifies murder. Collateral damaged is justified to rescue family, modifies manslaughter. Leaving a hedge gate standing is a Morality 5 Sin, replacing intentional mass property damage. Not supporting a victim is a morality 8 sin, replacing injury to another. Minor selfish acts can

be excused if you're having a bad day, modifies Minor selfish acts.

Tells: Calling Card (major, the words "For Cory"), Overkill (major), Sadism (minor)

Safehouse: Madison's "Safehouse" is really nothing more than secret storage space for weapons. She has kept Cory's nursery unchanged ever since he died, except for the addition of a weapons safe hidden under the floor. Opening the safe improperly might trigger a crude home-made bomb.

Anthony Jullian

Backstory: When Anthony was young he and his brother Stewart went picking blackberries after supper. They were so engrossed in picking and eating the delightful fruit that they didn't notice how the thorny blackberry briars had grown around them into the walls of a maze. The two brothers wondered terrified when they came across an old gnarly begger-woman who asked for some food. Wordlessly the two boys handed over some blackberries and in return she told them they could get home safely, all they had to do was follow three simple rules.

"Don't leave the path."

"Don't speak to the faeries."

"Don't fall asleep."

Even at a young age Anthony always delighted in books and he knew that in the stories it all turned out ok if you could just follow the rules. Stewart didn't know about books and found it more comfortable to laugh at the very idea of faeries. Only one brother made it out, but when Anthony arrived home distraught to tell his parents what had happened Stewart was there waiting for him.

At first Anthony was relieved, but as the weeks became months he noticed Stewart was subtly different, but if anyone else shared noticed his concerns they were happier to ignore them, and tell Anthony to ignore his own.

Time passed, Anthony grew up, he became a moderately successful proprietor of a bookshop but he never forgot that fateful night and spent many hours wondering just what had happened. Answers came in the form of one of his most regular customers. Madison West, a member of Searchlight. She would buy anything he had on faeries and faerie tales. In time he began to place special orders for her, getting out of print texts and limited edition translations of foreign faerie tales. Their conversations became sprinkled with increasing hints of their own tragedies. When the truth came out Anthony was invited to join Searchlight.

Appearance: Anthony is a man who appears "bookish" in every way. He is middle aged, balding and bespectacled and appears to have a fine layer of dust upon him no matter how well scrubbed. When on the Vigil he appears to be a different person. He walks differently, he talks differently. Gone is the impression of dust, in it's place is a visible anger that has been festering since his childhood and finally given direction with the knowledge of what happened that day.

Storytelling Hints: By day Anthony is a quiet reserved bookseller. He delights in reading and is always willing to share a literary pun and a quiet chuckle with his customers. Only Searchlight's emotional training keeps the quiet friendly man intact; on the Vigil Anthony is beginning to go off the deep end. He has little hope of finding his brother, the trail has been cold for decades. He tries of course, Anthony dedicates a lot of time to reading through faerie tales and faerie mythology looking for some hint as to how he might rescue his brother but that just isn't emotionally satisfying so he joins his cell on the street tracking down leads for their much warmer trails and actually delights in every opportunity to put a bullet in some faerie creature. Some small measure of self restraint remains. Anthony spares Changelings for are they not also someones family? That is, he spares Changelings if he believes they were once human and he's not above aiming for the kneecap if they are getting in the way of his search.

Profession: Professional (Academics, Persuasion, Investigation)

Compact: Searchlight (Prior)

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 3 (Faerie tales), computer 2, Investigation 2 (rare books), Medicine 1, Occult 2, Politics 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Firearms 2 (Shotgun), Stealth 1, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Intimidation 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2 (Not a Hunter honest)

Merits: Contacts 2 (Booksellers, Libraries), Emotional Compartmentalization 2, Professional Training 2, Resources 2, Status (Searchlight) 2.

Willpower: 5

Morality: 7

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Wrath

Initiative: 6

Defence: 3

Speed: 10

Health: 7

Code: Killing born-Faeries doesn't count, replaces murder. Leaving a hedge gate standing is a Morality 5 Sin, replacing intentional mass property damage.

Tells: Overkill (minor), Sadism (minor).

Bristol Borough Sons of Cú Chulainn

Michael Corcoran, Division 19, Bristol, PA, has been a centerpiece of the Irish-American community in suburban Philadelphia for decades. From supporting the area's local Catholic schools (no easy task with the lack of new families sending their kids to the Church's educational services) to providing meals for the shut-ins and disabled of society, only a select group of officers and members realize their duty to protecting their homes from the predations of monsters in their communities.

It's tough going lately for the club in general, however. Fewer new members seem to join each year, as the more experienced get older and succumb to the predations of time. Only a small cell is carrying on the Vigil now, but they're safely able to say they're more "clean" than many other urban cells of the organization.

Mark Coleman: For most of his life Mark was a son in only name, preferring the company of his fellow academics at Philadelphia University where he taught anthropology. That changed when chance

placed him in the clubhouse at the same time as another member was intentionally exposed to the fae. Now Mark is reforging his ties with the hounds, and making up for lost time with a passion. To the Son's Mark's background in anthropology makes him something of an expert on monsters other than the fae, but his real interest is in the son's hidden village. Mark spends most of his free time living in the hedge, trying to document as much of celtic culture as he can, even if the son's vows of secrecy means he can never publish. Mark sings the Song of Erin.

Johnny McDermot: Johnny's a young buck with a lot to prove. He's fresh out of high school, but he's staying in the area because he doesn't want to go to college just yet. His mother doesn't know a thing, but Johnny's dad doesn't want his son focusing only on fighting this early in his life. Johnny, for his part, just wants to fight some monsters and make his father proud. Johnny is a Red Branch Knight.

Thomas McDermot: Johnny's father didn't have an easy life without a college degree, and seeing his son putting it off is wearing at him. He understands the importance of the Vigil, especially in getting people back on their feet after the monsters tear their lives apart, but he can tell his son only wants to fight. So Thomas is trying to have his son's geasa secretly annulled by Garvin until he goes to, and graduates, college. Thomas follows the Hand of Ulster.

Br. Lawrence Tierney: "Brother Larry" teaches at the local Catholic high school, but he's a Hound first, simply because he doesn't want to distance himself from those he's taught over the decades, including nearly every member of the cell. Not only does he know the area homeless, he also knows that the Malleus can't be fully trusted, and reminds McCallister of this often. Brother Larry follows the Hand of Ulster.

Molly Mitchell: Molly took up her father's Vigil after his death on the local police force led to her getting his diaries and files, as written into his will. Molly trusts Garvin to do the right thing, but secretly fears that one day, something will throw the entire cell into chaos. Molly is a Daughter of Cú Chulainn.

Tommy McClusky: There's a reason the cell is so successful against the fairies; Tommy can sing like no one else can. The Bristol Sons challenge every fairy they come across to a singing contest with Tommy, and they always force the fairy out of the area by the end. But Tommy's keeping something from them all; a case of throat cancer from years of smoking. So far, though, he's kept it under wraps and still sings like an angel. Tommy sings the Song of Erin.

Garvin McCallister

I don't care what you say, you're not welcome around here. We'll point you in the right direction, but you can't ever come here again.

Background: Garvin's been fighting for those around him for longer than he's been on the Vigil. A working man since he graduated high school, he worked with his father in the Bethlehem Steel plant until 1987. He became heavily involved in the United Steelworkers, a firebrand for keeping the bosses out of the worker's paychecks no more than was necessary. He gained a small following of fellow workers in the plant, but didn't want trouble. What he did want was the owners and bosses to realize that without the worker, their mills wouldn't even have a chance.

Around 1975, he joined with the Sons in their Bristol house, but didn't realize that there was more to the world until he was nearly run off the road on his way back from work by a six-foot tall bird-man. Telling his friends at the club what happened, they took down his story, and came back later with the body. Thanks to that night, he became all the more concerned for his brothers in the mill. The bosses at the mill were still his favorite targets, but the fairies gave him a way to really let loose.

He still has a family life, though with his daughter out of the house, his wife is finally starting to ask questions about his late nights now that she has the time. He also has to negotiate with the cells and Union contacts he has in the area, never mind the strong Malleus cell that watches over the area's Catholic schools. Philadelphia's problems are spreading to its suburbs, and Garvin doesn't particularly like what that entails.

Appearance: Garvin is the very definition of aged blue collar, usually wearing t-shirts, jeans, and steel-toed boots. His short hair has started graying, and he has to start taking pills his doctor prescribes with names he's given up on trying to pronounce.

Storytelling Hints: Garvin just wants peace. The spillover from Philly proper is starting to appear in towns like Bristol all along the border between Philadelphia and it's neighboring counties. He doesn't want to fight the other organizations, recognizing that to stand united is to stand strong. But seeing a group like the Union unwilling to even try to reach across the aisle and stand by "Workers First" mentalities is driving him further to drink. He's a voice of reason shouting into a whirlpool of chaos and anger, and he's about to fall in himself if he's not careful.

Virtue: Justice: Wrongs must be punished, and the wicked made to pay...

Vice: Wrath: But sometimes it's easy to go over the edge when dealing justice.

Profession: Labourer (Athletics, Crafts, Persuasion)

Compact: Sons of Cú Chulainn (Hand of Ulster)

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Crafts 3 (Steelwork), Investigation 1, Occult 1, Politics 2 (labour laws), Science 1.

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Larceny 2, Drive 1, Firearms 2, Stealth 1, Weaponry 3 (Iron broadsword).

Social Skills: Empathy 1, Expression 2, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 3 (Oration), Streetwise 1 (Homeless), Socialise 1.

Merits: Allies 3 (Son's of Cú Chulainn), Allies 3 (Steelworkers), Contacts 4 (Steelworkers, labour unions, construction workers, mechanics) Inspiring 4, Professional Training 4, The Sight 2, Status 4 (Sons of Cú Chulainn),

Willpower: 6

Morality: 7

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 4

Defence: 2

Speed: 11

Health: 8