

Motor City Breakdown

A chronicle-setting created by Super_Dave for *Changeling: The Lost* (1st Edition)



Speramus meliora; resurget cineribus.
(“We hope for better things; it will arise from the ashes.”)

~official motto of the City of Detroit

For the fae of Detroit, the American Dream has become a nightmare. Squatting in the ruins of what was once the wealthiest metropolis in the wealthiest country in the world, the remnants of the Courts of the Wheelhouse ravage each other and their city in a war of attrition which has lasted more than half a century.

But after decades of mismanagement, cartoonish levels of corruption, and the largest municipal bankruptcy filing in United States history, the city that put the world on wheels can finally turn its attention to licking its wounds and staggering to its feet. Land is cheap, law enforcement is almost nonexistent, and for good or ill, the abandoned lots of Detroit’s urban prairie have become the Wild West.

Detroit was America’s vanguard on its way up. Will it also lead the nation on its way back down? Or has Fortuna’s wheel, after decades of rusting in Detroit’s abandoned factories, finally begun to turn once more?

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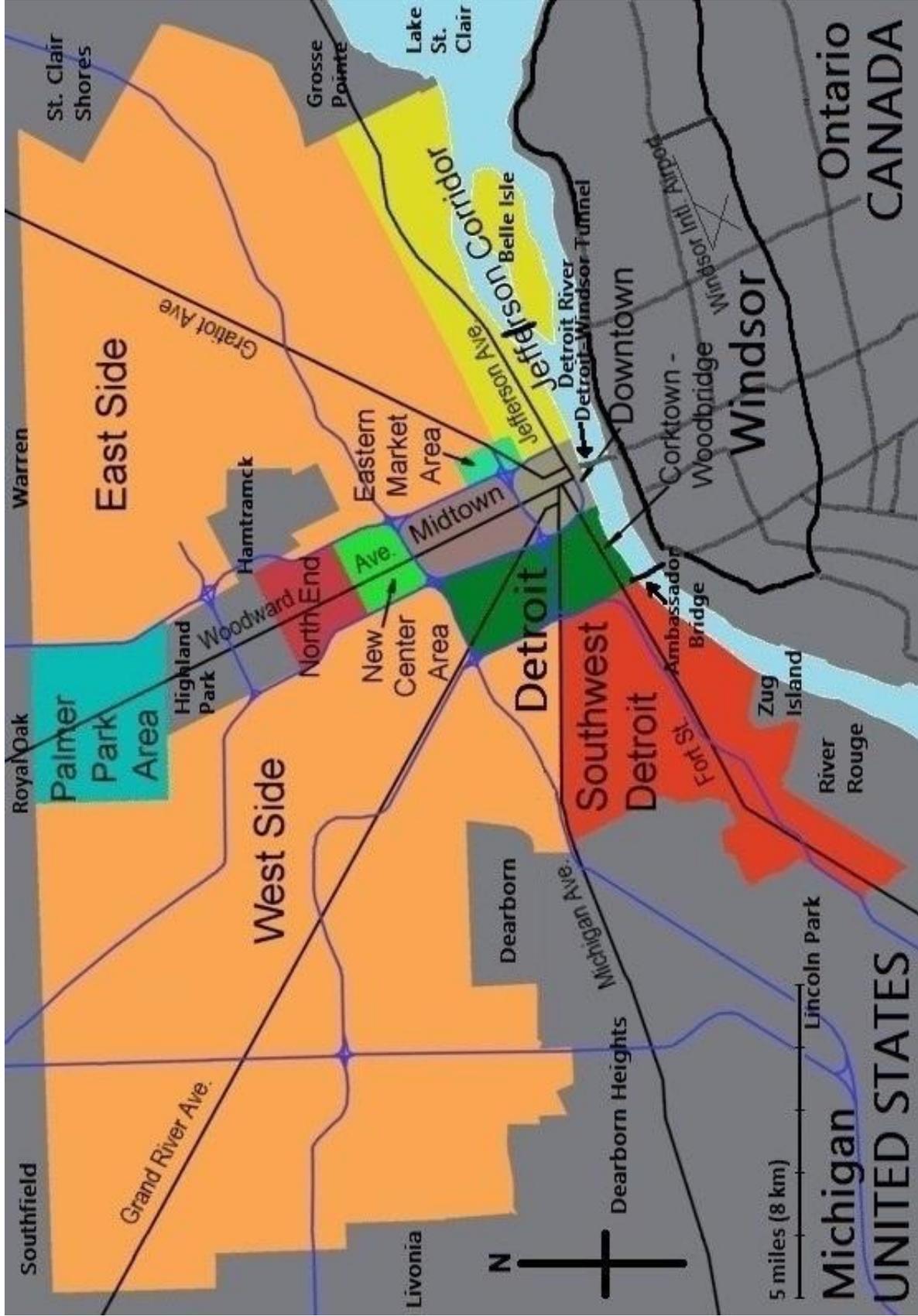
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Introduction: Great Wheels Are Turning



Bright were the halls, many the baths,
High the gables, great the joyful noise,
Many the mead-hall full of pleasures.
Until mighty Wyrð overturned it all.

Slaughter spread wide, pestilence arose,
And death took all those brave men away.
Their bulwarks were broken, their halls laid waste,
The cities crumbled, those who would repair it
Laid in the earth. And so these halls are empty.

- "[The Ruin](#)," anonymous Anglo-Saxon poet



nce upon a time, there was a great city on the banks of a mighty river. Its people worked in huge factories to build all manner of vehicles, which were sold across the land for handsome prices. Jobs were plentiful in this city, and any man who was willing to work for an honest day's wage could simply reach out and grasp the American Dream with both hands.

But one hot day in July, "the Negroes" just went crazy (for no reason at all) and burned the whole thing down, and the poor white folks had to run away to the suburbs to save themselves, The End.

At least, that's the story you were told in school. And by your parents. And by the people on the news. So it *must* be true, right?

Changelings should know better than anyone not to take fairy-tales at face value.

Although it was once the wealthiest city per capita in the United States, and one of the largest by both square mileage and population, Detroit today rattles in the shell of its former greatness. The Motor City now contains enough uninhabited land to more than equal the entire area of the city of Boston, and barely half of its streetlights are operational. More than two-thirds of its homicides go unsolved, and 9-1-1 callers frequently wait thirty minutes for police or firefighters to arrive, if they show up at all. The city's arson-gutted remains contain more than 100,000 abandoned homes and empty lots. An average of fourteen acts of arson are committed in Detroit each day, and firefighters lack basic safety equipment to combat these blazes. Paramedics routinely arrive on-scene with nothing more than a defibrillator and a dirty blanket, because the city can't even afford first aid kits. Corruption is deeply entrenched at every level, and the government is rife with bribes, incompetence, and juicy no-bid contracts for work that may or may not actually get done. For a city which prided itself on being the birthplace of the middle class, the very embodiment of the American Dream, the last five decades have been a series of rude awakenings from that dream.

This is not the Detroit you may know. This is a cockeyed distortion, a slanderous falsehood, the punchline of a tasteless, cynical joke. This is the Detroit of the *World of Darkness*, where every cop is crooked, every abandoned home hides a dark secret, and the mere possibility of hope is a resource that's worth killing for.

Great wheels have been set in motion, and none know where they may take us.

["Welcome to Detroit, motherfucker."](#)

The Purpose of this Book

This book is meant to provide information about the City of Detroit in the context of running a *World of Darkness* chronicle; specifically, a *Changeling: The Lost* chronicle. It is meant to give inspiration to the Storyteller and players of such a chronicle, and to provide some historical and factual background about the city.

This book is *not* meant to convey an accurate or realistic picture of the City of Detroit, its history, or its citizens, nor should it be taken as a substitute for actual research. And most importantly, **this book is not meant as a challenge to any existing copyrights or trademarks:** *The World of Darkness*, *Changeling: The Lost*, *Vampire: The Requiem*, *Werewolf: The Forsaken*, *Mage: The Awakening*, *Promethean: The Created*, *Hunter: The Vigil*, *Geist: The Sin-Eaters*, *Demon: The Descent*, *Mummy: The Cursed*, *Beast: The Primordial*, and "White Wolf" are all trademarks of CCP North America. This book is a fan-written project that makes no claim to the intellectual property of the trademarks above. All work

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This book makes reference to rules and concepts in the *Changeling: The Lost* corebook, as well as several other supplement books (including *Autumn Nightmares*, *Winter Masques*, *Rites of Spring*, *Lords of Summer*, and *Goblin Markets*). However, it is not necessary to own or to have read any supplemental books in order to play or use the concepts contained herein. If you see a rule, mechanic, kith, or Contract that's not in one of the books you already own, feel free to ignore it or swap it for something else. Have faith in your creative abilities. ;-)

Special Thanks to Admiral Squish, AWildSquirtle, Caligo Mourningstar, ShadowKnight1224, TheKingsRaven, wyrdhamster, and Legal_Eagle.

Theme: Decay and Rebirth

There's no question that Detroit is bleeding money and residents, but in some ways that can be a good thing: every building that burns down is one less potential crackhouse, every person who flees the city is one less potential victim, and every politician jailed is one less person taking bribes from criminals under the table. Detroiters no longer fear that the worst might happen, because in many cases it already has. Now that Detroit has (hopefully) hit rock-bottom, the big question is whether it'll be able to claw its way back out of its hole and into the light. It's a long climb and a steep one, but Detroiters are a tenacious bunch: if they weren't, then they'd be living somewhere else.

Detroit represents an uncommon opportunity for players: a chance to make the *World of Darkness* a slightly better place. Maybe not in big or dramatic ways — an entire chronicle might focus on catching a single arsonist, or sending one corrupt politician to prison, or keeping one kid from getting coerced into joining a gang — but in a city as damaged as Detroit, almost *any* change is a good one.

Mood: A City Gone Mad

Whether it's good or bad, there's nothing, *absolutely nothing*, that's too insane to happen in Detroit. This is a city which cannot even provide basic civic services (like street lights, or firefighters) for most of its populace, but it's also a city where fed-up residents form their own semi-competent firefighting departments, neighborhood watches, lawnmower brigades, and dog-catching operations. In a city where the education board steals more money from its students than the bullies do, there are entire charter-schools dedicated exclusively to pregnant teens and young mothers. When the city refuses to tear down a crack-house, whole neighborhoods come together to knock it down (or burn it up). Detroit is a city where political candidates promise to *demolish* homes instead of building new ones; where the unclaimed dead pile up for years in the city morgue; where being a minority means you're actually in the majority; and where you go *south* to get to Canada.

Special & Modified Rules

Abandoned Structures: The vast number of abandoned buildings in Detroit (more than 70,000 of them) means that a place to hide is never far away, and that you can almost always find a building to suit your purposes. Whether you're looking for somewhere to stage a drug drop, treat a friend's wounds, dispose of a body, or build a meth lab, you can probably find the perfect place without too much effort. All dice pools to discover or locate an abandoned structure in Detroit receive a three-die bonus. However, there is no guarantee that the structure will be conveniently located, structurally sound, or not already claimed by someone (or something) else.

At their discretion, the Storyteller may simply allow all such checks to succeed automatically, unless the searcher requires a building with specific features (such as "more than three stories tall," or "older than living memory"). One easy way to randomly generate stats for abandoned buildings (such as their Size and Structure, Durability, age, number of years abandoned and types/amount of structural damage) is to simply roll a d% for each attribute.

The Blighted Hedge: Urban blight is so common in Detroit that the local Hedge has incorporated elements of man-made structures into itself, to such a degree that dots in Streetwise can be substituted for Survival in most dice pools related to navigating and understanding the Hedge or avoiding dangerous areas. Additionally, seasons in the Hedge reflect the Court which currently controls the adjacent mortal world, bearing no relation to the actual current season.

Literacy: Detroit's schools are some of the most dysfunctional in the United States: just under half of the adults in Detroit are functionally illiterate. By default, characters who received most of their education in Detroit, Hamtramck, Highland Park, and some of the rougher suburbs take the "Illiterate" flaw: although they may be able to read street signs and sign their name, attempts to derive meaning from complex documents fail automatically. This can be negated by purchasing the two-dot "Literate" Merit, which grants fluent literacy with the written word. Older mortals – and changelings who were taken prior to the city's decline – may be exempt from taking this Flaw.

Please note: being illiterate is *not* the same as being unintelligent. Characters who possess this Flaw may still be extremely shrewd, they just didn't earn their hard-won knowledge from reading books.

Money in the D: Jobs are scarce in the 313, and jobs which are both stable and legal are even scarcer: one-third of Detroit's populace lives below the poverty line. Purchasing the "Resources" Merit costs (New dots x 4) experience points for characters who dwell within the City of Detroit, Highland Park, or Hamtramck.

Wildcraft on the Urban Prairie: Approximately one-third of Detroit's land has gone unused and un-maintained for so long that it has reverted from brownfield to "urban prairie". These open green spaces are home to a surprising variety of wildlife, including feral dogs and cats, raccoons, red-tailed

hawks, peregrine falcons, foxes, ducks, Canada geese, snakes, groundhogs, pheasants, rabbits, white-tailed deer, coyotes, beavers, and even the occasional bear. On the urban prairie, players can substitute their dots in Survival for dots in Streetwise in most dice pools, for actions such as hiding or moving unseen, moving silently, finding shelter, foraging, or hunting. Furthermore, urban prairie counts as a natural setting for the purposes of nature-dependent Contracts, catches, and kith blessings.



A Trod leading out of Detroit

New Flaws

- **Cop-Killer:** You were responsible for the death of a police officer; whether or not there were extenuating circumstances is irrelevant. Police treat you as if you had the “Notoriety” Flaw and will actively hunt you down and attempt to apprehend you, even when off-duty (and perhaps even beyond the bounds of legal apprehension).
 - **Resolution:** You gain at least two dots in the “New Identity” Merit and abandon your old identity, or you conclusively prove in a court of law that you were in no way responsible for the officer’s death. Moving to a new city may be sufficient to negate this Flaw, as long as your case was not very heavily publicized.
- **Diabetic:** You suffer from Type 2 Diabetes, likely (though not necessarily) because you are overweight and/or lead a sedentary lifestyle. If you go too long without food (roughly 4 to 6 hours, depending on a variety of factors), you begin to starve (see “Deprivation”, *World of Darkness Rulebook*, pg. 175), except you suffer bashing damage on an *hourly* basis instead of daily; this damage continues until you either eat food, receive medication, or die. Diabetes also decreases resistance to disease (-1 on Stamina rolls to resist infection or disease), causes numbness in the feet (-1 to Athletics rolls involving the legs or feet, -1 against frostbite), and may result in a loss of sexual performance for both sexes. A changeling with diabetes is less able to resist the march of years: when determining longevity or rolling decrepitude (*Changeling: The Lost*, pg. 174), reduce the changeling’s effective Wyrd score by one, to a minimum of zero (i.e., changelings with Wyrd 1 age at the same rate as regular mortals).

- **Resolution:** While diabetes can be treated and its symptoms kept at bay with good diet and regular exercise, modern medicine cannot yet completely eliminate it. Powerful healing or restorative magic may be able to cure diabetes, at the Storyteller's discretion.
- **Debtor:** Like many Detroiters, you are up to your eyeballs in debt. Unfortunately, you went into debt with (or your debt was sold to) the kind of people who don't take "broke" for an answer. Creditors are constantly hounding you for payment, forcing you to live off-the-grid or on the fringes of society to avoid their notice. While you possess this Flaw, you cannot gain or possess any dots in Resources; you cannot legally own, rent, or purchase any form of shelter, or any vehicle more expensive than a used bicycle; you cannot purchase anything on credit; nor can you apply for most legal forms of employment (all of which, ironically, makes it extremely difficult for you to pay back your creditors). Depending on the exact nature of your debt, even your Hollow and any Tokens you possess may be confiscated by your creditors and sold at the next Goblin Market to the highest bidder.
 - **Resolution:** Either you pay off your debt in full, someone else pays it off on your behalf, or you begin working for your creditor (which may confer a new Flaw, such as "Criminal").
- **Felon:** You have been convicted of a felony offense (e.g. murder, arson, rape, grand theft, and some types of assault) in a court of law. You may be required to serve jail time, pay a hefty fine, or wear a location-monitoring device (which likely will not function in the Hedge). Few legitimate employers will hire you, and you can be denied loans and access to housing on this basis alone. You are legally barred from owning or possessing any firearm and most forms of weaponry, though you are allowed to carry tools of your trade (if you have one), such as hammers, nail guns, and wrenches. If you are on parole, you must meet with your parole officer on a weekly basis, and you may be required to do community service or attend anger management classes.
 - **Resolution:** You are exonerated, proven innocent, or have your criminal record sealed or expunged (which may be easier if you were convicted as a minor).
 - **Note:** American citizens who have been convicted of felonies are barred from entering Canada (this can be bypassed with the New Identity Merit), and Canadians who commit serious crimes in the States may find it difficult or impossible to return home.
- **Minor:** You are (or appear to be) younger than 18 years old. You cannot legally own property, sign contracts or leases, rent an apartment, purchase or imbibe alcohol, vote, inherit, sue anyone, consent to medical treatment, or have sex with anyone over the age of 18. However, you are fortunate in two respects: you cannot be sued, and you can be tried as a minor instead of an adult (depending on the nature and severity of the crime in question).
 - **Resolution:** You reach the age of 18, or you buy some extremely convincing ID (represented by the "New Identity" Merit).
 - **Note:** the legal drinking age is 21 in the United States and 18 in Canada.
- **Obese:** You are extremely overweight; more than a third of your body weight is fat. You find it difficult to engage in strenuous activity (-2 to any action which requires extensive physical exertion, such as running, fighting, etc.), and you become Winded afterward (at the end of the scene, take one point of bashing damage per Physical roll made while Winded; this damage does not roll over into Lethal, and you are no longer Winded after the scene ends). You also move more slowly than normal: your Speed is reduced by 2.

- **Resolution:** Persistent adherence to a healthy diet and regular exercise during downtime (which may require an extended Resolve + Composure roll), gastric bypass surgery, or powerful body-altering or healing magics can remove this Flaw.

Motor City Is Burning: Systems for Fires and Arson

(special thanks to ShadowKnight1224)

Fires are so common in Detroit that arson has devolved into a form of revenge, and even entertainment. It's not uncommon for long-simmering feuds to result in one party tossing a Molotov cocktail through the other's front window in the dead of night. Detroiters no longer find this strange, it's just something that happens when people are angry with each other. Some disturbed individuals will taunt the fire department by lighting repeated blazes in the same house on consecutive nights, or lighting several nearby fires in quick succession. A few truly sick souls derive pleasure from tricking firefighters, telling them that there are vagrants or children trapped in a burning structure, only to laugh as the honor-bound firefighters brave death and horrendous injury to save nonexistent victims.

Effects of Fire

Turns take much longer when dealing with structural fires than they do when simulating fast-paced combat: when simulating or combating fires, each turn represents approximately one minute of activity. When a building catches fire, the fire begins with a Size equal to 1 + the arsonist's successes on their Arson roll. If any characters attempt to fight the blaze, then the fire occupies the lowest slot in the Initiative order. At the start of its turn, the fire deals Structure damage equal to its Size (minus the building's Durability), then rolls a dice pool equal to its Size; any successes on this roll increase its Size by 1 (meaning that it will be larger, and therefore deal more Structure damage, on its next turn). If the fire scores an exceptional success on this roll, then a neighboring building begins to catch fire as well (the new fire begins with a Size of 1).

When a building has lost half of its Structure points to fire it begins to collapse, halving the Speed of all those inside and imposing a -3 to all Physical dice pools. When a building has taken its full Structure in damage, it collapses entirely, dealing bashing damage with a dice pool equal to the building's Size to everyone inside it and burying them alive, which may begin to cause suffocation after a few minutes (either roll 2d10 for randomness, or use Storyteller's discretion).

Obviously, a burning building will be full of smaller, localized fires: see page 180 of the *World of Darkness* rulebook for details on how fires deal damage to objects and living creatures, as well as rules for catching fire and putting out burning clothing.

The interior of a burning building quickly fills with choking black smoke, which — depending on its concentration — imposes a -1 to -3 penalty to all actions. Dropping to a prone position (*World of Darkness Rulebook*, pg. 164) can lessen these penalties by up to two points, but makes movement and other physical maneuvers more difficult. Crouching allows characters to move at half their normal Speed, but only reduces penalties from smoke by a single point.

Arson

While anyone with a match or a cigarette lighter can start a fire, setting one that doesn't burn itself out requires a roll of **Intelligence + Science - Durability** rating of the structure's most common material, plus any bonuses or penalties for favorable or unfavorable conditions and any equipment or accelerants. If the arsonist wishes to make the fire seem accidental, they may roll **Intelligence + Larceny** before they begin; successes accumulated on this roll become the target-number of any arson investigators' **Intelligence + Investigation** roll to detect foul play.

***Example:** Peter the Pyromaniac attempts to set fire to an abandoned two-story house, which has 80 Structure points and is made mostly of brick (Durability 2). Peter has Intelligence 2 and Science 1, and a can of lighter fluid (+1 equipment bonus). After subtracting 2 for the building's Durability, Peter rolls his dice pool of 2, and comes up with 2 successes. His fire therefore begins with a Size of 3, and deals 1 point of Structure damage to the house every minute it burns (remember to subtract Durability from damage). After five minutes, his fire has grown to Size 4, and is dealing 2 points of Structure damage every minute. At this point a neighbor notices the fire and calls 9-1-1, but by the time the firefighters arrive (five minutes later), the fire has grown to Size 7 and has already dealt more than 40 points of damage to the house, which begins to collapse just as fire engines arrive.*

Dice Pool: **Intelligence + Science - Durability** of the most common material in the building. The roll represents one minute of fiddling with kindling, accelerants, and matches.

Common Modifiers: accelerants (+1 to +5, contains flammable objects or substances (+1 to +3), depending on effectiveness and quantity), dry conditions (+1 to +2), windy conditions (+1 to -1, depending on intensity), wet conditions (-1 to -5).

Dramatic Failure: Not only do you fail to start a fire, but it becomes immediately obvious that arson was attempted (scorch marks, burnt smell, etc). Any Wits- or Investigation-based rolls on the nature of the attempted arson become exceptional successes with just 3 successes instead of 5. At the Storyteller's discretion, you may simply set *yourself* on fire instead.

Exceptional Success: Attempts to fight your fire (but not to rescue people from it) take your Intelligence as a penalty on all rolls.

New Merit: Instinctual Arsonist (• to ●●●). You are instinctively gifted at starting fires, despite your lack of formal knowledge on the subject. You may roll **Intelligence + Wits + Instinctual Arsonist dots** to start a fire instead of the normal dice pool.

Firefighting

To extinguish a fire, each firefighter rolls a single dice pool every minute that best represents their current efforts. Any successes are added to a communal pool of successes. A failure on a roll subtracts 1 success from the communal pool, while a dramatic failure removes up to 5 successes. An exceptional success prevents the building from taking damage the next minute (i.e., for one round). Firefighters who wish to rescue trapped civilians or perform similar life-saving actions cannot contribute to the main extended action, though they can join in later once they are free to do so. When the firefighters reach a total number of successes equal to the points of Structure damage which have been dealt to the building thus far, the fire is contained and the building stops taking damage (and neighboring buildings no longer run the risk of catching fire). When the total number of successes equals the building's total *original* Structure points, the fire is fully extinguished.

Common Life-Saving Dice Pools

- **Dexterity + Athletics** to avoid fire hazards while inside the building.
- **Strength + Athletics** to force down doors and other obstacles.
- **Strength + Stamina** to carry survivors and perform extended or demanding physical tasks.
- **Presence + Persuasion** to convince reluctant survivors (esp. children) to trust you.
- **Wits + Intelligence** to find alternate routes when one exit becomes blocked.
- **Strength + Weaponry** to break down doors with axes, battering rams, and Halligan bars.

Common Firefighting Dice Pools

- **Intelligence + Science** to determine type of fire (electrical, chemical, etc.) and develop firefighting plans accordingly.
- **Dexterity + Stamina** to aim giant hoses at the correct areas.
- **Intelligence + Persuasion or Expression** to use comms in order to coordinate diverse firefighting efforts and other logistics efficiently.
- **Composure + Expression** when reacting to unforeseen catastrophes during firefighting in order to maintain the group's calm, refocus them and avoid losing progress.

Environmental Modifiers

Deep snow (-1 to -3), high winds (-1 to -3), darkness (-1 to -3), rain (+1 to +3), low water pressure (-2)

[Sidebar: Fighting Fire with Contracts]

Changelings have a number of advantages over mortals when it comes to firefighting. Contracts of Elements (Fire) is obviously useful in combating most blazes, but “Cloak of the Elements” will be useless if the fire was started with the intent to harm (though the invoker might still be shielded from accidental fires, and arsons committed purely for financial gain or entertainment).

While they might not be very flashy, Contracts of Hearth and of Elements (Smoke) can help one to get out of a blaze alive. Contracts of Communion is useful when investigating arson: just ask the

building what it saw or felt. Contracts of Shade and Spirit can obtain useful information about an arsonist from his victims (or even give them a chance at revenge). Virtually all of the clauses of Contracts of Stone, the third clause of Contracts of Separation, and the Goblin Contract “Fair Entrance” can be a godsend for any firefighter who needs to get through a locked or jammed doorway *right now*.

Although Contracts of Eternal Summer’s “Son of the Hearth” clause is incredibly helpful when you’re roasting alive in a burning building, it is the Contracts of the Winter Court which are most prized among fae firefighters—particularly the first, third, and fifth clauses of Eternal Winter, and the first clause of Sorrow-Frozen Heart.

Perhaps the most valuable tool in the changeling firefighter’s entire arsenal is the fourth clause of Contracts of the Wild (“Calling Wind and Weather”), since it can easily extinguish an entire building in minutes... once the rainstorm arrives, that is.

Firefighting Equipment

Weapons and Tools

Type	Damage	Size	Cost	Equipment Bonus	Special
Fire hose	4 (B)	n/a	•••	+5	Str + Athletics to aim. Knockdown ¹ , Stun ² , range 40/80/160. Requires two hands, Strength 3, and access to a fire hydrant.
Fire axe	2 (L)	2	••	+1	Deals one extra point of damage against objects/structures.
Halligan bar	1 (L)	2	••	+3	Can be combined with a fire axe into a one-handed weapon known as “the Irons”.
Pike pole	1 (L)	4	•	+3	Knockdown, can be used to break windows, rake through ashes, and remove solid objects from flames. Requires two hands.
Fire extinguisher	n/a	2	•	+3	Dex + Athletics to aim. Range 5/10/20. Can reduce Size of a fire by one point per turn. Contains 1 to 3 charges.
Kwik-Access (KA) tool	2 (L)	2	•••	+3	Ignores Durability of structures and objects (but not armor). Can be used to cut holes in drywall, aluminum siding, trailers, etc.

¹ *World of Darkness Rulebook*, pg 168

² *World of Darkness Rulebook*, pg 167

Jaws of Life®	5 (L)	4	••••	+4	Ignores Durability of structures and objects (including armor). Requires two hands. Cannot be used in combat.
Deluge gun	4 (B)	5	•••••	+5	Knockdown, Stun. Mounted to fire engine, range 50/100/200. Requires two hands.

Protective Gear

Fire helmet: Protects the head against falling sparks and debris.

Fire Proximity Suit: this aluminized full-body suit prevents up to 4 points of fire damage per turn. Each time the wearer suffers lethal damage (regardless of how many points of damage were taken), this protection decreases by one point.

CABA (Compressed-Air Breathing Apparatus): negates all penalties related to smoke inhalation. While it can only be worn by one person at a time, the firefighter can let a survivor to take a “hit” from the mouthpiece, allowing the survivor to restart the clock on holding their breath (*World of Darkness*, pg. 49).

Life Net/Jumping Sheet: used to catch falling people as they leap from windows or balconies. Prevents up to 5 points of falling damage.

Name	Rating	Strength	Defense	Speed	Cost	Special
Fire helmet	1/0	0	0	0	•	Prevents hair from catching on fire, and limited protection against falling debris.
Fireman’s coat	1/0	1	-1	-1	••	Prevents one point of fire damage per turn.
Fire proximity suit	1/0	2	-2	-2	•••••	Prevents three points of fire damage per turn.

Vehicles

Ambulance: Durability 1, Size 16, Structure 17, Acceleration 13, Safe Speed 103 (70 mph), Max Speed 169 (115 mph), Handling 0. Turning on sirens and lights grants +3 on Drive rolls to avoid collisions with other vehicles. Grants a +3 equipment bonus on Medicine rolls related to triage and stabilization.

Fire Engine: Durability 3, Size 21, Structure 24, Acceleration 10, Safe Speed 88 (60 mph), Max Speed 147 (100 mph), Handling -1. Turning on sirens and lights grants +3 on Drive rolls to avoid collisions with other vehicles.

New Merit: Disaster Coordination (•• or •••). You are trained in coordinating groups of professionals during disasters. You gain a +2 to Expression or Persuasion rolls during emergencies of any type. Any people under your coordination during a disaster gain a +1 to their rolls to fight the disaster or perform rescue operations. If you have the 3-dot version of this merit, you achieve exceptional successes on Expression or Persuasion rolls during disasters with just 3 successes instead of 5; if you have the 4-dot version of this Merit, the bonus you grant increases to +2.

Working for Scraps

Amateur salvage operations, or “scrapping”, is an extremely common (and extremely dangerous) occupation for the poor and underprivileged of Detroit. In a city where regular and legal jobs are few and far between, and access to reliable transportation (either a car or a bus line that runs on schedule) is rarer still, scrapping is one of the most in-demand and profitable occupations, and it carries a slightly smaller criminal penalty than most extra-legal jobs. It’s important to note, however, that *scrapping is not always illegal*. Most scrappers operate entirely within the law (though their businesses are often unregistered and unofficial), picking up stray bits of metal from places where they have every right to be, and doing what anyone has a right to do: picking up trash and turning it into money. *Illegal* scrappers garner the most media attention because their actions do the most damage.

Almost everything in scrapping, from the tools to the trucks, is jury-rigged. Virtually all scrappers are amateurs who know next to nothing about power tools, electrical work, or structural integrity. As such, most don’t even consider taking basic safety precautions like wearing goggles, earplugs, or hardhats. Given that they handle sharp, heavy, and awkwardly-shaped pieces of metal for a living, injuries and infections are very common among scrappers.

An **Intelligence + Streetwise** roll may be necessary to locate a job-site, especially if you want to find one that’s not occupied by someone you don’t want to meet, and a **Dexterity + Larceny** roll may be needed to get inside. The Storyteller may choose to make the first roll in secret on the player’s behalf.

Before work commences the scrapper(s) must survey the building and roll **Intelligence + Science**, applying any bonuses for specialized tools or construction/architectural expertise, and any penalties for inclement weather, poor lighting, and picked-over sites. If the roll succeeds they have surveyed the building well enough to avoid unpleasant surprises. If they fail then they only *think* they have.

Then, the scrapper(s) makes a **Strength + Stamina roll, adding successes from the first roll to this dice pool as bonus dice**, to determine how much metal he is able to remove from the building in thirty to sixty minutes of work. Each success on the roll nets the scrapper(s) one single-use dot of the Resources merit, and deals one point of Structure damage to the building. Storytellers may assume that most modern buildings contain enough metal for players to extract X temporary dots of Resources from them, where X equals 25% to 50% of the number of Structure points which the building had when the scrapper(s) first found it.

If the scrappers failed the Streetwise roll, or did not achieve enough success when surveying the building the Storyteller should introduce some complication: a hobgoblin nesting in the basement, a meth lab or homeless family squatting in the building, or the building is far more structurally unsound than anyone expected and cannot take the strain.

The average modern building will lose about 1d10 Structure points per year of abandonment, assuming no other forces (such as arsonists or scrappers) act upon it. When a building has lost half of its Structure points it begins to collapse, halving the Speed of all those inside and imposing a -3 to all Physical dice pools. When the building has **taken its full Structure in damage** (or when scrappers score either a **dramatic failure or an exceptional success on a Strength + Stamina roll after the building has partially collapsed**), it collapses entirely, dealing bashing damage with a **dice pool equal to the building's Size³** to everyone inside it and burying them alive, which may cause suffocation after a few minutes (either roll 2d10 for randomness, or use Storyteller's discretion).

d10 Result	Size (example structures)	Age	Time Abandoned	Examples of Damage	Inhabitants
1	20 dots (shed, 1-car garage)	~10 years	Six months	Infestation (rats, bats, pigeons, raccoons, or wasps)	Homeless person(s)
2	40 dots (2-car garage, semi trailer)	~20 years	One year	Broken or missing windows	None
3	60 dots (small apartment, shipping container)	~30 years	Five years	Under surveillance by police or neighborhood watch	None
4	80 (large apartment, small loft)	~40 years	A decade	Graffiti tags (may be considered turf for a gang)	None
5	120 dots (single-story home)	~50 years	Fifteen years	Structurally unsound (any Structure dmg triggers collapse)	None
6	150 dots (two-story home)	~60 years	Twenty years	Door(s) broken off hinges	None
7	250 dots (large store)	~70 years	Twenty-five years	Booby trap	Teenagers (playing hooky or smoking)
8	350 dots (factory, apartment complex)	~80 years	Thirty years	Bloodstains, fresh or faded	Feral dogs, cats, or coyotes
9	400 dots	~90 years	Forty years	Warped or	Gangbangers

³ For very large buildings, it may be easier to use a dice-rolling app than to physically roll dozens of d10s.

	(skyscraper)			overgrown floor (counts as difficult terrain)	
10	500+ dots (stadium)	100+ years	Fifty years	Drug paraphernalia (former drug den)	Hobgoblins

Although iron and steel are the easiest to find and obtain, thanks to their magnetic properties, nonferrous metals (aluminum, tin, brass, etc.) are the most valuable to scrapyards. Copper is especially profitable, but many scrappers are killed after unknowingly cutting into wires which they didn't realize were live, or being electrocuted when water spilling from old pipes completes a circuit with a nearby socket.

To save themselves the effort of manually removing tons of paint, plastic coating, and incriminating decals from their findings, scrappers typically toss it all into the basket of a shopping cart, light a bonfire underneath it, and wait for everything but the metal to burn or melt away. This process often releases choking black smoke and invisible fumes (Toxicity 3), but it does dramatically cut down on time- and energy-expenditure. Some scrappers apply this technique *before* they collect the metal: they simply pick a building, set it ablaze, wait for the fire department to put it out, then walk through the burned-out hulk and pick bits of metal out of the ashes. Mechanically, this removes the need to survey the building beforehand.

Contracts of Elements and Contracts of Communion (especially Electricity, Fire, and Metal) are must-haves for any changeling scrapper who can afford them. Contracts of Separation can help scrappers to get in and out of work sites, evade capture if spotted, and escape if captured, while Contracts of Smoke and Contracts of Darkness make it easier to avoid detection in the first place. Contracts of Stone are useful for breaking, lifting, and removing objects which mortal scrappers ignored because they were too heavy or too firmly attached for easy removal.

Sources and Inspiration

At more than three centuries old, Detroit has played host to its share of dramatic and historic events, and has been the setting and subject of many films, songs, and stories. Here are a few properties which can help make your Detroit chronicle more interesting.

Books

[*313: Life in the Motor City*](#), by **John Carlisle** – While most photo-essays about Detroit are exclusively about urban blight and abandoned buildings, this author chooses to place his focus squarely on Detroiters and the many ways they cope, survive, and thrive in a city which the rest of the world has given up on. Observant readers will find a treasure trove of fascinating characters which can be inserted into any Detroit chronicle.

[*Detroit: An American Autopsy*](#), by **Charlie LeDuff** – A firsthand account of just how fucked-up Detroit really is, told by a native son who still cares enough about his city to get pissed off. A must-read for any

player or Storyteller who plans to interact with Detroit firefighters, law enforcement, or city politics.

[**Detroit: A Biography**](#), by **Scott Martelle** – Traces the city’s rise from frontier trading-post to major manufacturing center, and the long, painful decline which followed. The author gives much insightful commentary on the twin issues of race and class in Detroit, while managing to avoid the racialized blame-slinging which continues to stifle meaningful dialogue.

[**Detroit City Is the Place to Be**](#), by **Mark Binelli** – A rare optimistic look at some of the things about Detroit that are actually getting better. It might be cliché, but when you’ve got nothing left to lose, it really *does* give you the freedom to try anything you want.

[**Legends of le Détroit**](#), by **Marie Caroline Watson Hamlin** – This large (and free!) PDF collection of Detroit folklore from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries can be a valuable source of real-world legends and a cool prop for players to “discover” while doing research. It contains several local legends about *lutins*, *loup-garou*, ghosts, demons, and the earliest-known written reference to *Le Nain Rouge*. However, the author’s casual and patronizing racism towards Native Americans is odious to modern readers.

[**Things I Do in Detroit: A Guide Book to the Coolest Places**](#), by **the Nain Rouge (a.k.a. Dave Krieger)** – This guidebook to everything that’s hip, fun, interesting, or just plain bizarre in Detroit is annotated by the Nain Rouge himself (who is presented as an unappreciated benefactor to the city and its people). Chock-full of beautiful full-color photographs featuring the Nain interacting with Detroiters while doing everything from feather-bowling to eating a *pączki*.

Film

[**8 Mile**](#) – This Eminem vehicle features plenty of gritty scenery, shot mainly in Detroit and its northern suburb Warren (Slim Shady’s real-life hometown). It’s easy to imagine the main character as an up-and-coming changeling trying to prove himself to an unwelcoming freehold, while simultaneously trying to hold together his family life and shore up his dwindling finances.

[**American Juggalo**](#) – Although it’s not about Detroit *per se*, this short (and free) documentary provides much insight into the cultlike “family” of Insane Clown Posse fans, who are legion in Detroit and its suburbs. Useful for any chronicle involving Juggalos and/or the Autumn Court of Detroit.

[**The Crow**](#) – It’s easy to see Eric Draven as a Sin-Eater, but his sense of theatricality and desire to terrify the men who murdered him and his fiancée (not to mention his creepy harlequin makeup) would make him a consummate Scarecrow Minister. Sergeant Albrecht is a great example of how quickly things can get really weird for any cop who decides to team up with supernaturals.

[**Deforce**](#) – An eye-opening look at 20th century Detroit history, and just how badly the city has declined since the 1950s. Includes many examples of the spectacular corruption which crippled the Motor City and continues to hamper its efforts to heal and rebuild.

[**Detroit**](#) – A truly horrifying film, made all the more unsettling by its truth. The riot scenes could provide useful ideas for what happens if and when the people of Detroit get angry enough, while the gut-wrenching police brutality (which borders on the psychotic) could explain why so many Detroiters don’t trust cops. The racist, murderous Officer Krauss would make a terrifying antagonist for any motley, whether they work outside the law or within it.

[**Detroit 1-8-7**](#) – A police procedural following the homicide division of the Detroit Police Department. Notable for its ethnically- and gender-diverse cast, on-location filming, and cases drawn from actual

Detroit headlines.

[Gran Torino](#) – Clint Eastwood’s character could be seen as a retired Summer courtier who yearns for the chance to bust skulls again, or as a Winter courtier who decides he’s sick and tired of hiding while his neighborhood crumbles around him. His relationship with the neighbors could be an example of the Reaper’s Pledge, exchanging yard work for Glamour-infused beers. Take notes on the techniques the Hmong gangbangers use to cajole, coerce, and threaten Thao into joining their posse.

[It Follows](#) – After losing her virginity, a teenage girl from Detroit’s suburbs is relentlessly followed by a murderous, slow-moving, shape-changing, gender-switching *thing*. Could it be one of the True Fae? A Scarecrow Minister with a fondness for stalk-and-slash horror movies? Or something even weirder? Whatever “it” is, the atmospheric 8-bit soundtrack by Disasterpeace will scare the bejeezus out of you.

[Robocop](#) – In the modern era of surveillance drones, armed security robots, and brain implants that connect to the Internet of Things, this classic '80s action/sci-fi/cop movie takes on a new and chilling relevance. The film's protagonist could easily be reinterpreted as a changeling cop who struggles to perform his duty while strange and painful memories of his Durance force their way to the forefront of his mind. The 2014 remake adds a strained family dynamic which could easily be appropriated for a *Changeling* chronicle, and asks some interesting questions about the nature of free will and the differences between perception and reality.

Music

Angel Haze – This powerful agender rapper never shies away from sensitive and controversial topics, including her unorthodox gender-expression and the sexual abuse which she suffered as a child. Great inspiration for changelings who want to rise above the abuse and madness which created them.

Detroit Techno – Detroit is considered by many to be the birthplace of techno music, and for many years it has been a haven and playground to purist DJs who resent corporate-engineered attempts to commercialize electronica. Great places to start listening include Juan Atkins, Kevin Saunderson and Derrick May ("the Belleville Three"), and the “Detroit Techno Militia” musical collective.

Eminem – Even when he’s not rapping about the D, Slim Shady’s lyrics open a window into the lives of the urban poor: what it’s like to have a drug-addict mother and an absent father, what it’s like being a single parent in the ghetto, what it’s like to have your life-savings stolen out from under your mattress and not even having enough money left to replace the broken lock on your door.

Insane Clown Posse – While their clown-make-up schtick and larger-than-life personas sometimes defy belief, this horrorcore hip-hop duo have been spraying profanity and [Faygo™](#) (and driving their fans wild while doing it) for almost two decades. Each album reveals details of their own [elaborate mythology](#) about the soul and the afterlife, and represents a single card in a carnival-themed tarot deck. Much of their gross-out humor could be truly horrifying if played straight.

Motown – There are still young people in Detroit, and in spite of everything, they still fall in (and out of) love. Many changelings are considerably older than they appear, and [Motown artists](#) – such as Diana Ross, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, Stevie Wonder, The Supremes, The Jackson 5, and many others – likely provided the soundtrack for their formative years.

Further listening:

- “Black Day In July” by Gordon Lightfoot

- “Detroit Breakdown” by J. Geils Band
- “Detroit Rock City” by KISS
- “Motor City Madhouse” by Ted Nugent
- “Panic In Detroit” by David Bowie
- “Welcome 2 Detroit” by Trick Trick, feat. Eminem
- “Who's Afraid of Detroit” by Claude VonStroke
- [Crimetown](#) (podcast), Season 2
- *Astonishing Legends* (podcast), [Episode 204: Nain Rouge](#)
- [Detroit I & II](#) (studio albums) by Big Sean, especially ["Full Circle" feat. Key Wane, Diddy](#)

Chapter One: History of the Wheelhouse



“Detroit was always made of wheels. Long before the Big Three and the nickname ‘Motor City’; before the auto factories and the freighters and the pink, chemical nights; before anyone had necked in a Thunderbird or spooned in a Model T [...] way, way back, when the city was just a piece of stolen Indian land located on the strait from which it got its name, a fort fought over by the British and the French until, wearing them out, it fell into the hands of the Americans; way, way back then, before cars and cloverleaves, Detroit was made of wheels.”

— Jeffrey Eugenides, *Middlesex*

The Narrows

Oral history suggests that changelings were active in the Upper Great Lakes region prior to the

arrival of the first Europeans, circa 1600 A.D. The Algonquin were not immune to the predations of the Gentry, though they knew the Others by different names and faces than the French and British. Their [traditional stories](#) tell of small children stolen from their homes by the Little Folk (children who returned blessed with powerful medicine), and of powerful supernatural beings such as the mercurial little *pukwudgies* and *memegwes*, the draconic Water Panther, the awe-inspiring Thunderbird, and the terrifying man-eating *wendigo*.

[Sidebar: The Mound Builders]

The first people to inhabit the southern Great Lakes region are believed to have been distinct from the Algonquin, although their ultimate fate is unknown. By the dawn of the twentieth century, all of the numerous burial and ceremonial mounds for which they were known had been dug up and flattened into streets and lots, but a few relics of these ancient and mysterious people may still lie buried beneath layers of asphalt, brick, and stone.

Fort Pontchartrain du Détroit

In 1701, French fur-trader Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac persuaded his superiors to let him build a new fortified fur-trading post on the banks of the Straits of Lake Erie, to safeguard French control of the Great Lakes against encroachment by the English. Cadillac reached the Detroit River on July 24, 1701, and founded a settlement which he named *Fort Pontchartrain du Détroit* [“Fort Pontchartrain On-The-Narrows”]. Almost as soon as the wooden palisade was complete, Cadillac invited Indians from all over Michigan to settle in villages surrounding the fort, offering protection and favorable trading opportunities, hoping to induce their loyalty and encourage the growth of the lucrative Great Lakes fur trade. Within three years, over two thousand Native Americans would make the move to Fort Pontchartrain, in Detroit’s first wave of employment-oriented immigration.

Less than two years after its founding, a massive fire swept through largely wood-and-thatch settlement. Contemporary accounts state that shortly before the blaze broke out, several prominent city fathers, including Cadillac himself, were taunted and threatened by a little man covered in red fur, who was dubbed *Le Nain Rouge* (“the Red Dwarf”). He would reappear in the days leading up to every major calamity to strike the city thereafter, including floods, fires, riots, pestilence, and military attack. There is considerable disagreement among the Lost as to whether the Dwarf causes disasters, or warns of them, or simply likes to have a front-row seat for human suffering.

[Sidebar: *Le Marche du Nain Rouge*]

Every year on the first Sunday after the Vernal Equinox, Detroiters gather at or near Cass Park for an annual pageant known as “[Le Marche du Nain Rouge](#)”. Revelers arrive in costume (sometimes carrying protest signs or towing homemade Mardi Gras-style floats), and share stories which celebrate “whatever is good and working in the city”. At some point in the festivities, the Nain Rouge himself shows up to tell boastful tales of his own successes in ruining the city in the past year, taunting the crowd for their failure to stop him. As far as the fae of Detroit are aware, the *real* Nain has never made an appearance at this event, so it is not yet known whether he considers this portrayal flattering or insulting.

Fort Detroit

By the middle of the 18th century, the strait between Detroit and its newly founded sister-city of Windsor, Ontario had become the gateway to the Great Lakes. When the French and Indian War erupted between Britain and France in 1754, this passage to the interior of the New World was hotly contested. Despite years of hard fighting, the war ended in 1760 with the British conquest of Canada.

The British did not cultivate good relations with the First Nations, nor did they make any effort to understand their customs (such as the use of ceremonial gift-giving to strengthen partnerships), which strained diplomatic relations with their new subjects. After only a few years of British rule, Chief Pontiac of the Ottawas rallied several tribes in a doomed rebellion against the British. Despite the Ottawas' fierce resistance, France ceded *Nouvelle France* to the British in 1763, and withdrew their support for the Indian rebels. Pontiac and his forces fought on for another three years without French aid, but were forced to sign a treaty in 1766; ostracized for his failure, Pontiac was assassinated by a Peoria warrior just three years later.

On June 12, 1805, the newly-appointed Judge Augustus B. Woodward arrived in Detroit to begin his term as territorial judge. Instead of a grand welcome, he was greeted by the blank-faced stares of homeless refugees. Just one day before his arrival, a fire had broken out in the early hours of the morning, and quickly consumed virtually every structure in the mostly-wooden city. By nightfall, every physical trace of the city's century of history had been reduced to ash. In the wake of this catastrophe, Father Gabriel Richard coined a Latin phrase which would eventually become the city's motto: *Speramus meliora; resurget cineribus* (Latin: "We hope for better things; it will arise from the ashes").

Although he had not been granted authority to do so by the territorial government, Judge Woodward quickly took charge of the rebuilding effort, and instituted a cohesive plan for the new city to ensure its safety and future growth. Woodward borrowed his fellow Freemason Pierre Charles L'Enfant's layout for Washington D.C., which consisted mainly of a hexagonal array of broad avenues radiating from a central park. Woodward named the park *Campus Martius*, Latin for "the field of Mars," where Roman heroes walked. This Enlightenment-inspired city plan ultimately proved impractical, and a grid-based street plan was later imposed atop Judge Woodward's designs.

Old Slow Town

With the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, a flood of immigrants began to pour into Detroit, which at the time had a population of fewer than two thousand residents; less than two decades later, it had topped ten thousand. During the Civil War, Detroit became a major center of industry and manufacturing, producing much of the *matériel* which allowed the Union to win the war. Detroit was also a major station in the Underground Railroad: conductors gave Detroit the codename "Midnight", because it was the final stop before crossing the river into Canada and freedom. Many of the city's changelings, being sympathetic to the plight of escaped slaves, acted as conductors and lookouts for the railroad, and allowed their homes, businesses, and sometimes churches to be used as hiding-places for the refugees.

[Sidebar: Bond-breaker]

One early Winter courtier named Louis Austin expended tremendous amounts of effort, Glamour, time, and eventually his life, to help [Thornton and Rutha Blackburn](#)—a free black couple who had been living in Detroit for years—to escape the slave-catchers who had tracked them from Kentucky. Louis’ skull was fractured when the local sheriff fired shots into an angry crowd which had gathered outside the courthouse when he showed up to collect his reward for turning Thornton in, and Louis died of his injuries a few days later. It’s said that it was Louis’ own rusty, pitted wood-axe which struck the manacles from Thornton’s wrists; local legend says that this axe became a powerful Token known as “Bond-breaker”, and that it only appears to those who fight to free others from bondage or wrongful imprisonment.

Sadly, the city’s mortal populace was less sympathetic to the cause of abolition. Many Northerners feared that if the war were successful, the North would be swamped with Negro migrants, increasing competition for jobs and driving down wages. The *Detroit Free Press* fanned the flames by reprinting stories from around the country of the latest “negro outrage” and calling for lynch mobs to attack black men accused of violent crimes.

While the 1863 Riot is not as famous as later riots in Detroit’s history, one contemporary *Free Press* reporter would later call it “the bloodiest day that ever dawned upon Detroit”. The casualties of the day included at least two innocent people dead, and a multitude of others (mostly African-Americans) mercilessly beaten by mobs. Thirty-five buildings were burned to the ground, and many more were damaged by fire. The riot resulted in the creation of a full-time police force for Detroit, which for many years was used as an extension of the racial tensions which brought about the riots in the first place.

The Paris of the Midwest

At the dawn of the 20th century, more than half of Detroit's residents were foreign-born or first-generation Americans. Similarly, more than half of its free population had moved there for the same reason that so many mortals did: the city was a bustling center of commerce and trade, and even a man (or woman) with strange habits and few connections could easily find gainful employment there.

It was also during this era that Detroit's seasonal Courts truly came into their own, transitioning from Lost social clubs into true political entities. Autumn courtiers found a fertile harvest of fear (Americans' fear of foreign competition, and foreigners' fear of anti-immigrant backlash) as well as a robust community of tinkerers, scientists, and businessmen seeking to build a better mousetrap. Winter courtiers found the city's cold northern climate extremely hospitable, and came by rail and horse and foot to build themselves new lives and identities, to mask themselves from the Gentry's spies in the rush of bodies and the sounds of city life: the din of horse and carriage, the whistle and chug of the locomotive, the clatter of streetcars and the rattling of those strange new "horseless carriages". Spring courtiers migrated from other nearby freeholds to get a taste of the city's newfound wealth, and to experience the epicurean delights which that new money could purchase.

The fact that no Summer courtier in Detroit manifested their season's crown was deemed a reflection of Michigan's relatively brief, cool summers. Without a Wyrd-appointed ruler, changelings who identified with Summer were effectively barred from full participation in the governance of the freehold, which was dubbed “The Wheelhouse”.

The word “wheelhouse” can mean many things: for example, it can refer to the housing of a ship’s wheel, from which the pilot steers his craft. It can mean the fender or wheel-well of an automobile. In the context of railways, it refers to a turntable-like device which allows cars to switch rails. It can also refer to the sweet spot of a baseball player’s strike zone, from which the greatest power and strength can be utilized; and by extension, an individual’s area of knowledge or expertise. It can even refer to the section of a watermill that contains the water wheel, which transfers the river’s energy into the gears which in turn drive the millstone.

No one is certain which of these meanings was intended by the changelings who chose it as the name for Detroit’s freehold, but this ambiguity may have been intentional. Knowing a thing’s name gives you power over it, but knowing that name is less useful if the name has several meanings, thereby providing a measure of defense or camouflage against the Gentry.

The Iron Spear’s exclusion from the governance of the Wheelhouse ended with the arrival of the Fairest known as “**High John deConquer**”, who arrived on the borders of the freehold in 1919, claiming right-of-hospitality for himself and the ragged band of followers he had led in rebellion against, and out of, a hellish Arcadian plantation. Although they had supported the cause of *mortal* runaway slaves, the rulers of the Wheelhouse—fearful that deConquer and his followers might be Loyalists—refused to extend the ancient right of hospitality to the newcomers, telling them to try their luck in Canada instead.

When High John learned that his people would be forced to journey onwards, without even a chance to rest in a safe place for a single night, his wrath was great and terrible. He walked alone and unarmed into the private chambers which the Council of the Wheelhouse used for meetings, kicked down the door in one mighty blow, and demanded that his people be given a chance to rest and recuperate. The council-members turned, and were shocked to see the Crown of Summer shimmering above his furrowed brow. In light of such an obvious blessing from the Wyrd, the Courts of the Wheelhouse did not dare eject the Court of Wrath from the freehold, for fear of breaking the cycle of the seasons and bringing down the Wyrd’s curse on their heads.

Since all the best territory had already been claimed by the existing Courts, the newcomers were forced to inhabit the city’s most dangerous and downtrodden neighborhoods, such as Paradise Valley and Black Bottom. Living in close proximity to the city’s poor and dispossessed would prove highly influential on the Court of Wrath’s development. Summer courtiers quickly latched onto the growing union movement, sometimes delivering blistering oratory that whipped the workers into a frenzy, and at other times simply walking the picket lines and letting the wrath of both the picketers and management-hired thugs wash over them.

As the union movement gained momentum, the other Courts began to regard Summer with a wary eye. If these newcomers had already staged one violent uprising, then might they do it again?

The Motor City

In 1914, Henry Ford shocked the world by announcing that he would pay his workers an unthinkable high wage: five dollars a day! This prompted massive waves of migration to Detroit by both blacks and whites, particularly from the rural South. For many, the floor of the auto factories would be the first time that members of either race worked alongside each other as equals.

During the 1920s, Detroit’s black population swelled from 41,000 to 120,000 as black workers streamed into the city in search of auto factory jobs, and to escape the Jim Crow South. Fearful of losing political power to the “invading” Negroes, Detroit instituted a policy of legalized, racially-motivated

housing discrimination known as “redlining”. By law, blacks were not allowed to live outside the twin neighborhoods of Black Bottom (originally named for its rich black soil, not its inhabitants) and the adjacent, ironically-named Paradise Valley. Both neighborhoods quickly became dangerously overcrowded and filthy (since the city refused to collect their trash; allegedly at the behest of the Old Guard) but they also become centers of black culture and business-ownership. Black entertainers like Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong made names for themselves by performing to mixed-race audiences.

In 1916, three years ahead of the rest of the country, Michigan outlawed the sale of alcohol. Almost immediately, rum-running became an incredibly profitable industry, providing a major source of revenue for organized crime. Detroit quickly became a hotbed for some of the fiercest and most vicious gangland violence of the Prohibition era.

The Roaring Twenties

Built in 1925, [The Michigan Theatre](#) became the new seat of the Wheelhouse shortly after its construction. This opulent, jaw-dropping beauty was one of the most expensive theaters ever constructed in its day, with a price-tag of \$3.5 million. The fae of Detroit immediately felt a connection to the unearthly beauty of this exquisite movie palace, with its ten-foot chandeliers, marble arches, decorated plaster ceiling, dark velvet-lined hallways which muffled all manner of sounds, and the wide variety of strange sights and noises which helped convince any mortals seeing something odd out of the corner of their eye that they must simply be imagining things.

[Sidebar: Rum-Running on the Detroit River]

Bootleggers did their best trade during the winter, when the annual freezing of the Detroit River made [smuggling liquor from Canada](#) as simple as driving across the ice with their headlights off, in order to avoid detection by police watching from the American shore. Needless to say, this was an incredibly dangerous occupation with a very high accident rate. Police would pull about two bodies a week from the frigid waters, but doubtless many of these smugglers’ remains—and their cargoes—are still lying at the bottom of the river today.

The Depression

On Black Tuesday in 1929, the stock market tumbled and Detroit’s spectacular growth was brought to a standstill. As a single-industry town, nearly the whole of Detroit’s population was employed by the auto industry, either directly or indirectly. The auto plants shed jobs like autumn leaves, and many workers suddenly found that their entire reason for coming to Detroit had vanished overnight. With one-third of the city’s workforce unemployed, white Detroiters began to resent the waves of blacks and immigrants who still poured into the city, desperately hoping for an auto-plant job, or any job at all. Tensions rose between rich and poor, as well as across racial, ethnic, and religious lines. Membership in the Ku Klux Klan skyrocketed, and nearly two-thirds of the city’s police force were secretly members of the [Protestant Order of Black Legion](#), whose fear-based tactics (used against both enemies and its own members) may have been influenced or suggested by Autumn courtiers. Though the Court of Sorrow was the unquestioned ruler of this era, Autumn was not far behind, as those who retained their jobs constantly feared losing them. Though Summer remained the least powerful Court in Detroit, it did grow substantially during the Depression, collecting new recruits from the disaffected and disillusioned who

wanted to overturn the social order.

During this era, many Summer courtiers sought automaking jobs with the intention of organizing the workers, stoking their anger at their poor working conditions, unfair pay, and lack of decent benefits. The rise of the union movement under the leadership of Walter Reuther led to sit-down strikes in 1937, resulting in anti-union violence, with the resultant wrathful glamour only serving to bolster Summer's power.

The Arsenal of Democracy

Detroit produced many of the planes, tanks, and other war machines which helped the Allies win World War II. These government contracts also jump-started the city's economy after the Depression, allowing the automakers to get back on their feet. Though Detroit rode this wave of prosperity for several decades, the city never took the opportunity to diversify its economy: rather than continuing to produce a wide variety of machinery, the city reverted *en masse* to automaking as soon as the war was over.

Many changelings felt it was their civic duty to lend their unique talents to the war effort, and a large number of Summer courtiers felt that their gifts could best be utilized by enlisting in the armed forces. Consequently, Summer's population in Detroit dropped significantly during the war, leaving its territory loosely-guarded. It's not clear whether the Old Guard incited the race riot of 1943, but they did direct the mobs away from their respective territories, which meant that much of the worst rioting happened on Summer's turf. Despite the depletion of their ranks, Summer fought valiantly and emerged with minimal casualties. Radical elements within the Court of Wrath cried for retaliation, but although he hated the Old Guard, High John was unwilling to start a civil war within the freehold without definitive proof that the Old Guard was responsible for starting the riots. Though cooler heads prevailed for the time being, extremist Summer courtiers knew that their day would come: the riots made Detroiters trust each other even less than before, which meant there was even less contact between rich and poor, between black and white, between immigrant and American-born. It would only be a matter of time before Detroit was ripe with wrath.

Motown

In 1950, Detroit's population reached its historical apex of 1.85 million. Though the term "white flight" would not be coined for a few decades, Detroit had already begun to shrink. Despite this loss of population, the years 1945 through 1967 represented a period of relative calm and prosperity in Detroit's tumultuous history. Pay for auto workers rose significantly, catapulting hordes of newly-arrived immigrants into the middle class. Employment and union membership were high, wages were on the rise, and Detroit even produced its own signature musical genre: a hybrid of pop, soul, and R&B known as "Motown".

But, like many seemingly-peaceful eras, one needed only to do a little digging to unearth a darker side. Because the factories were fully integrated, white Northerners and white Southerners competed fiercely with black southerners and white immigrants for jobs. Redlining was the order of the day in nearly all housing and employment concerns, further entrenching the city's tensions along racial, ethnic, and religious lines. The Detroit Police Department, which was almost entirely white, functioned much like an occupying army in the Negro neighborhoods, enforcing curfews and arresting any young

black male who looked “suspicious”.

In the early fifties, at the height of the Red Scare, Winter spies reported that Summer was stockpiling weapons and powerful Tokens, and that talk of a “glorious Revolution” was on every tongue in the Court of Wrath. Fearing a communist uprising led by the Crimson Court (surely that nickname couldn’t be a coincidence!), the Old Guard resolved to strike at Summer’s home territory by cutting it in half with the new interstate freeway system. Autumn, Winter, and Spring leveraged their collective political resources to convince the city council to route the new Jeffries Freeway (better known as I-375) directly through the heart of the Black Bottom and Paradise Valley neighborhoods, in the name of “blight management”. Lacking the political connections to oppose the vote, Summer saw its territory bulldozed in 1954. Though the Iron Spear began its diaspora along with the rest of Paradise Valley and Black Bottom, they knew who had called for that vote, and they weren’t planning to forgive anytime soon.

High John’s Rebellion

The Summer of 1967 was a hot one, in both temperature and political climate. War raged in Vietnam, and protests flourished across the country. With nearly all of Detroit’s African-American population of 140,000 crammed into a few square miles around the remnants of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley, Detroit was more heavily-segregated than many cities of the Old Deep South.

The 12th Street Riot, one of the most destructive riots in United States history, began in the early-morning hours of July 23, 1967, following a police raid on a birthday party for two black soldiers recently returned from Vietnam. Unaware of the party, police arrived to make a few arrests for illegal liquor sales, and found more than eighty people in attendance. Deciding to arrest everyone present, the police called for backup while an angry crowd gathered outside. After two hours the police left, but the crowd, too agitated and angry to disperse, began looting nearby stores and smashing windows. The mayor dispatched squads of police to arrest looters and restore order, but since much of the frustration which caused the riot stemmed from the rioters’ poor relations with the police, this only served to exacerbate the situation. Forty-eight hours later, the governor declared a state of emergency and called in the National Guard, which still took an additional three days to quell the rioting and looting. For five terrifying days, life in one of the largest cities in America ground to a complete halt amid scenes of carnage and looting. Forty-three people were killed, more than a thousand were injured, over seven thousand were arrested, and 1,400 buildings burned.

The Summer Court insisted that they did not start the riot, but they certainly fanned the flames of unrest, insisting that only by purging the city of all of its simmering wrath could Detroit avoid total catastrophe further down the line. To this day, many in the Court of Wrath argue that the riots were put down before Detroit could fully purge its anger.

Though the riots did prove Summer’s willingness to use force to protect its interests and members, they also cost the Crimson Court its monarch. High John was struck down in the heat of battle by a Winter sniper’s bullet. The Silent Arrow denied this allegation, but that didn’t stop roving motleys of Summer courtiers from administering summary beatings to every Winter courtier they could find over the next few days, with a few Spring and Autumn courtiers thrown in for good measure.

Rather than confronting the issue of race in America, many of Detroit’s residents chose to flee for the relative safety of the suburbs. While the riots were not the root cause of white- and middle-class flight, they seemed to confirm the worst fears and prejudices which whites and blacks had about each other: whites saw the riots as proof that inner-city blacks were nothing more than violent looters, while

for blacks the riots confirmed their suspicions that the government and the police had no interest in protecting them.

In a way, the riots proved more effective than Summer had imagined: the Court of Wrath *did* get more of a say in freehold politics, but mainly because the other Courts packed up and moved out.

Running Out of Gas

Six years after the riots, the American economy was reeling from the Arab Oil Embargo. Gas prices rose, and American dominance of the auto industry crumbled in the face of smaller, more fuel-efficient Japanese models. The Big Three shed jobs once more, and many middle-class Detroiters began thinking about leaving the city and its high cost of living. Real estate agents seized their opportunity, using scare-tactics to convince white homeowners who lived near blacks that they should “get out before it’s too late,” then turning around and selling that same home black homeowners, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy which frightened the remaining whites into selling their own homes.

In 1974, with the election of Coleman Young as Detroit’s first black mayor (a position which he would hold for another twenty years), the Spring Court decided it could read the writing on the wall: Detroit was beyond saving, and they needed to get out while they could. Under the leadership of **Chicory Jane**, the entire Emerald Court fled across the Detroit River to Windsor in a shocking mass-exodus, in the course of a single night. Once settled, they immediately began lobbying for the construction of a casino, to draw pleasure-seeking Detroiters across the river into their new territory.

From the back rooms and broom closets of the Michigan Theatre (which Autumn and Winter continued to use as their base even after it transitioned from a movie theater to a rock ‘n’ roll music venue), the two remaining Old Guard courts strongly protested Spring’s abandonment of the Wheelhouse. Autumn and Winter tried for quite some time to compel the Antler Crown to fulfill its oath of unity and brotherhood to the rest of the freehold, only to have their messengers rebuked at every turn.

Finally, Spring decided to send a clearer message that it was not interested in rejoining the Wheelhouse. Throughout the early Seventies, the renamed and repurposed “Michigan Palace” would be repeatedly damaged by rowdy, Glamour-addled music fans who seemed hellbent on destroying the theater’s exquisite fixtures. The fans ripped out sinks, smashed mirrors, and hurled anything they could fling at the beautiful worked-plaster ceilings. After a few years, the cost of constant repairs proved too great for the theater’s owners, and the building was shuttered in the early seventies. Though saved from the wrecking ball by being turned into [the world’s only Baroque parking-garage](#) in 1977, the Wheelhouse had been shattered from within.

With their headquarters reduced to a majestic ruin, Winter and Autumn had an acrimonious falling-out, each blaming the other for failing to control Summer and to bring Spring back into the fold. The Leaden Mirror fled from the city’s center to its northern border, where it took up residence in the vast Woodlawn Cemetery and the adjoining State Fairgrounds. None outside the Court of Sorrow know where Winter hid itself, but within a few years rumors had begun to circulate which spoke of a place called “Hensteeth,” a mobile Hollow which moved about the Hedge, connected to the mortal world by an array of continually-shifting doorways.

Despite their Pyrrhic victory in the riots, it was only a few years before Summer was forced to

follow their main source of Glamour (automaking unions and their wrathful picket-lines) to the southwestern suburbs, leaving Detroit's carcass to be picked-over by Autumn and Winter.

The Murder City

The 1970s were the decade of white flight, and as Detroit emptied, so did its coffers. The decline of the Big Three automakers, coupled with high unemployment and the rise of the drug trade (especially cocaine, crack, and heroin) ushered in an era of sorrow and fear. Autumn and Winter were both heavily involved in the drug trade: while Winter supplied more drugs overall, Autumn cooked up higher-quality product in its laboratories. Needless to say, this drug-race proved disastrous for Detroit at large, and ultimately for Winter and Autumn as well.

With the rise of crack-cocaine in the Eighties, Detroit's gangs began using a new strategy for moving product around the city: employing minors as drug mules and runners. If caught, the youths would only serve minimal sentences and quickly return to the streets, reducing downtime and increasing profit. Naturally this escalated the stakes of the drug wars, leading to a level of violence not seen since the days of the Purple Gang and Prohibition. Police and emergency services were overwhelmed: their inability to cope with the near-constant stream of killings, arsons, and drug deals turned white flight into class flight, as everyone who could afford to leave Detroit began to do so. As residents fled, so did jobs, which only served to stoke the fires of the city's illicit economy. Even those who wanted to stay, wanted to stem the tide of drugs and violence, began to reconsider once they had children to worry about.

Fallow Fields

In the Nineties, Detroit became the only American city in history to have its population recede *below* the one-million mark. Amidst this decline, a Winter spy poisoned the old Autumn king, **Red-Hand Harry**, and the new monarch decided that if the Court of Sorrow wanted Detroit so badly, they could have it. He pulled up stakes and moved the Ashen Court's headquarters to the State Fairgrounds on Detroit's northern border (conveniently located adjacent to creepy Woodlawn Cemetery). Absorbing the theme of their new environs, the Court of Fear began to take on a distinctly carnivalesque demeanor: the king began to refer to himself as "**Ringmasta Ray**," and altered the other titles of his Court to suit this new theme.

Shortly after the move, Ringmasta Ray began a project which would eventually reap tremendous benefits for the Court of Fear. He began to secretly shape the dreams of two up-and-coming rappers, subtly insinuating a funhouse-mirror version of his own Court into their subconscious minds. Taking inspiration from these dreams, the two formed the horrorcore rap duo known as "The Insane Clown Posse". Catapulted to international success almost overnight, their fans (who called themselves "Juggalos") were legion, particularly in their hometown of Detroit's northern suburbs. Through a combination of subliminal messaging and selective dreamshaping, Autumn courtiers were able to subtly (and sometimes obliquely) influence gangs of Juggalos to watch, track, or attack key individuals and locations at almost any time: the perfect army of unwitting, expendable hooligans.

One year into the new millennium, Kwame Kilpatrick—Detroit's self-styled "hip-hop mayor"—became, at the tender age of 31, the youngest Detroit mayor ever elected. Over the next eight years, he would preside over a cartoonishly corrupt and incompetent city government which mismanaged, stole, and lost track of several million taxpayer-dollars. Despite his administration's

well-known reputation for corruption and general incompetence, Kilpatrick was elected for a second term of office in 2005, partly thanks to his willingness to shamelessly play the race card whenever his polling numbers dropped, framing himself as black Detroiters' only defense against white suburban exploitation. In 2008, Kilpatrick resigned as mayor, after pleading guilty to two counts of obstruction of justice and no contest to one count of assaulting and obstructing a police officer. He left office under the shadow of a 38-charge felony indictment on additional corruption charges, in what a federal prosecutor called a "pattern of extortion, bribery and fraud" by some of Detroit's most prominent officials.

Hitting Bottom

On Thursday, July 18, 2013, the City of Detroit filed the largest municipal Chapter 9 bankruptcy in U.S. history, by both population and amount of debt (an estimated \$18-20 *billion*). Shortly thereafter, the governor of Michigan appointed an Emergency Financial Manager (or EMF) to take control of Detroit's finances, authorizing this unelected appointee to use any means necessary to return the city to solvency. This included austerity measures (in a city which was barely providing the most basic of services to its residents) and the sale of public property, including much of the Detroit Institute of Arts' priceless permanent collection.

In many ways, however, the bankruptcy came as a relief to Detroiters, since—in some ways—it meant that things finally couldn't get any worse. Freed from much of its crippling debt, Detroit finally had a chance to lick its wounds. Housing prices began to bottom out, stabilizing for the first time in decades. Microbreweries began popping up in formerly-abandoned lots, catering to the hipsters and artists who were attracted by the city's bohemian arts scene and incredibly-cheap studio space. The occupancy rate for downtown skyscrapers climbed to 95%, and although black Detroiters have seen relatively little benefit from the city's rebirth, few can argue that seeing life and commerce return to a city which many had written off as dead is anything but a good sign.

Having fallen further than any other American city, Detroit is poised for what could become its most spectacular comeback.

As it has done many times before, Detroit is beginning to rise from its own ashes.

[Sidebar: Gentrification and the Gentry]

As Detroit begins to recover from its long downward spiral, opportunists of all descriptions are trickling into the city. Some are land-speculators and house-flippers just looking to make a quick buck, while others are artists, hipsters, intellectuals, and suburbanites under the impression that "Detroit is the new Brooklyn" (it isn't). While their efforts to "rehab" or "reclaim" the city are well-meant (or at least not overtly malicious), the sudden influx of trendy gastropubs and posh boutiques are having the unintentional effect of pushing out native Detroiters who were tough enough to weather the bad years, but can simply no longer afford to pay rent in the neighborhoods they fought for so long to live in.

This creates a difficult paradox: everyone wants Detroit to "get better" — to become cleaner, brighter, more occupied, etc. — but the very economic force of such "improvements" are forcing out the people who weathered the city's lean years, and who by extension are most intimately bound to the city and its future. Why should a Wizened Brewer care that his organic farm-to-table bistro is forcing out people he's never met, with whom he doesn't intend to build a relationship? What does a hipster really care for Detroit when it stops being cool or trendy and starts requiring real sacrifice and commitment? Why would an East Coast transplant bother to help his new neighbors when it's so much easier to attract newer and wealthier neighbors who share his tastes in neoliberal politics, banjo music on vinyl, and beard-conditioners?

When mortals talk of "gentrification", most changelings shudder and make the ancient signs to ward off the Gentry, for they know that gentrification is not just a purely economic phenomenon. To these changelings, gentrification is about a shift in mindset, about believing that other human beings, and their hopes and dreams, are unimportant or beneath one's notice. If mortals begin to treat each other as the Gentry treat them, then it will only be that much easier for the Gentry to hide themselves (and their actions) amongst the mortal masses.

...but there is another, competing narrative: one which states that gentrification (in both the mundane and fae senses) is something to be *encouraged*. Who really cares if old residents (whether changeling or mortal) get kicked out, when they're the ones who fucked up the city in the first place? They had their chance, they failed, and now they're being replaced by those with better judgement and stronger Wyrd. Detroit's new freehold will be bigger, brighter, and better able to withstand the depredations of the Others than the pitiful, broken remnants which currently exist. If the Gentry are the strongest and most dangerous creatures out there, then *why wouldn't* you want to become more like them?

Chapter Two: Lay of the Land



“It’s easy to snatch off a piece [of Detroit], and think you’ve got the whole of it. But that would be a mistake. When America happens to a place, Detroit is the result, all of it, hard-scrabble urban core and suburban millionaire enclaves and everything in between. No piecemeal souveniring will suffice, although the temptation to grab something and go is understandable.”

– Jerry Herron, "[Motor City Breakdown: Detroit in literature and film](#)"

Detroit is located in the southeastern corner of the “mitten” of Michigan’s lower peninsula, on the shores of the Detroit River, which connects Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie. Detroit is the seat of Wayne County, and encompasses 138.7 square miles (large enough to contain all of Boston, San Francisco, and Manhattan at once), completely enveloping the enclaves of Highland Park and Hamtramck.

The Detroit River acts as the city’s southern border and major artery of trade. In past centuries, several of the numerous islands which dot the river were used for cockfighting, dueling, and as hideouts for smugglers, but most are now public parkland.

Detroit’s terrain is mostly flatlands near the river, which fades gradually into rolling hills further inland. Most freeways in the city are sunken, so it’s possible to drive all the way from the suburbs to downtown and back without actually seeing a single blighted building. While this does help encourage tourism, it also makes it easy for politicians to pretend that the city is doing much better than it is.

Detroit Neighborhoods

Detroiters generally describe themselves as “East Siders” or “West Siders” (meaning which side of Woodward Avenue they live on). Both sides insist that they never go to the other side of Woodward if they can help it, because it’s “too violent over there.”

The East Side was the first part of the city to be settled by French *habitants* in the early 1700s. As a result, the streets of the East Side tend to be narrower and change direction haphazardly, like an Old World city. The West Side was incorporated much later, and its streets tend to be wider, straighter, and conform more closely to the grid-system beloved by city planners. The East Side tends to be less well-off than the West, though it is home to more historic buildings and major landmarks.

- **Downtown** – The heart of the city, and its main business district. Filled with Art Deco skyscrapers, movie-palaces of the Roaring Twenties, and the majority of the city’s oldest structures (including a few churches which served as stops on the Underground Railroad).
 - **Greektown** – Popular restaurant-and-entertainment district. Few Greeks live there anymore, but many of the restaurants are still owned by old Greek families.
- **East Side** – Detroit’s older half often suffers from aging infrastructure and poor urban planning, but it also contains the city’s most well-to-do waterfront properties and historic buildings.
- **Hamtramck** – Although it’s sometimes known as “Poletown,” this enclave within the City of Detroit is home to a *huge* Arab population: most storefronts and advertisements are written in Arabic script.
- **Highland Park** – Sometimes called “the Detroit of Detroit,” because of its spectacular levels of blight and poverty. Detroit is reluctant to absorb this enclave, for fear of taking responsibility for even more desperately-poor people and blighted neighborhoods than it already has.
- **Midtown/New Center** – The world’s first “edge city” is home to several major bastions of culture: the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Detroit Public Library, the Museum of African American History, and Wayne State University’s main campus.
 - **Cass Corridor** – Home to numerous addicts, winos, and vagrants, but also (thanks to the low cost of housing) most of the city’s bohemian artists and musicians.
- **Southwest Side** – Despite what Journey would have you believe, there is no such place as “South Detroit”. But there *is* a Southwest Side, and it’s home to several ethnic neighborhoods, including Mexicantown (which is now more Latino than Mexican) and Corktown (as in County Cork, Ireland), the city’s oldest existing neighborhood.
- **West Side** – Since it was settled later than the East Side, the streets here are wider and more gridlike, with names which evoke the Wild West: Wyoming, Telegraph, Greenfield, Southfield, etc. Much of the severest depopulation has happened here; on some blocks you can count the houses on one hand.

[Sidebar: Detroit at a Glance]

Climate: Winters are long, cold, permanently overcast, and heavy on snow, leading to wet, sloshy springs and pothole-riddled roads. Summers are surprisingly warm and often humid. Autumn colors are among the best in the country.

Economy: Jobs are scarce, especially legal ones. Most of the automaking jobs have moved to the suburbs or been automated. Many enterprising Detroiters earn a small income by selling scrap metal. Ambitious and unusual startups are frequently able to secure funding and facilities in Detroit that they couldn't get elsewhere.

Government: In 2013, the governor of Michigan appointed an Emergency Financial Manager (EFM) to restructure and pay off Detroit's astronomical debts and ensure the city's future economic viability, including the sale of public property (such as the Detroit Institute of Art's permanent collection). While many Detroiters protested having their city taken over by an unelected bureaucrat, there is not yet any mechanism in place for the EFM to be recalled, impeached, or removed from office.

Population: The city of Detroit is home to roughly 689,000 residents, and is 82% black and 10% white, with an unemployment rate of 10% – by comparison, the greater Metro Detroit region contains more than four million people and is 70% white and 22% black, and has an unemployment rate of just 5%). Detroit is also home to one of the world's largest communities of Middle-Eastern people and a growing Latino population.

Media and Culture: Detroit has two major newspapers (*The Detroit News* and *The Detroit Free Press*) and an alternative weekly (*The Metro Times*), but since half of Detroit's adult population is illiterate, many Detroiters get their news from television such as Fox 2 Detroit and Channel 7 Action News. The Motor City boasts four professional sports teams: the Tigers (baseball), the Lions (football), the Pistons (basketball), and the Red Wings (hockey).

The Urban Sprawl

Detroit is the poster child of white flight: many newcomers are stunned at how abruptly the sprawl ends and the ghetto begins once you cross 8 Mile Road. It's almost like crossing the border between the United States and Mexico, only in this case the southern side of the border is eerily empty.

The Detroit Metro area contains two major rivers and their associated watersheds: the Rouge and the Ecorse. It also includes seven "ghost waters" (waterways which have been partially or entirely buried under man-made infrastructure, but which continue to flow underground), including Baby Creek in Delray, May Creek beneath Corktown, Bloody Run Creek under the Near East Side, and Savoyard Creek which winds beneath Downtown's skyscrapers and Cobo Hall.

Major Suburbs

- [Dearborn/Dearborn Heights](#) – Home to the world's largest Arab population outside of the Middle East, the headquarters of the Ford Motor Company, the [Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation](#), and [Greenfield Village](#) (the largest indoor-outdoor museum complex in the United States).
- [Downriver](#) – "Crap floats, and always downriver." This unofficial conglomeration of more than a dozen smaller cities and townships is known for abandoned industrial spaces, its state of general disrepair, the crassness of its populace, and for its obnoxious white trash teenagers (many of whom identify as thugs or Juggalos).
- [Grosse Pointe](#) – A wealthy eastern suburb, largely untouched by blight. Auto-industry CEOs and other bigwigs have built their lakefront homes here for three generations.

- [Inkster](#) – Because black workers in Henry Ford’s factories were legally barred from living in Detroit, many of them chose to settle here, just outside city limits. As a result, Inkster today is one of the few Detroit suburbs whose population is majority African American.
- [Royal Oak](#) – A trendy, gentrified northern suburb, known for its LGBT community and liberal policies, and for being the home of the [Detroit Zoo](#).
- [Southfield](#) – Near the center of town, just beside the busy John C. Lodge Freeway, stands a cluster of five golden-tinted skyscrapers known as “the Golden Triangle.” It’s rumored that mages of all Paths are strongly attracted to the business park’s occult resonance, which is ideal for the weaving of geomantic rituals.
- [Warren](#) – Eminem’s hometown isn’t as bad as they made it look in the movie *8 Mile*. Mainly consists of urban sprawl, single-story ranch homes, and strip malls.

[Sidebar: Genie in a Faygo™ Bottle]

In the real world, Dearborn, Michigan is home to the highest concentration of Muslims in the United States, and Hamtramck is the first city in the United States to have a majority-Muslim population. In the *World of Darkness*, these cities are also your best bet for encountering a *djinni* in North America. The *djinn* come to southeast Michigan for many of the same reasons that mortal immigrants do, ranging from a sense of obligation towards family members to a desire to be near others who speak their mother-tongue. Whatever reason they have for being here, the *djinn* are among Detroit’s strangest and most powerful residents, and should always be treated with the greatest of caution and respect.

For more on how *djinn* exist in and interact with the *World of Darkness*, see [\[Ephemeral Beings\] Djinn, Offspring of Smokeless Fire](#), by Cinder.

Key Locations, Detroit

- [Ambassador Bridge](#) – This is the busiest international border crossing in North America in terms of trade volume, and it’s only four lanes wide; backups can last for hours. All crossings in either direction require a valid passport. The bridge is a privately-owned structure, feeding the pockets of a single billionaire family through its toll crossings.
- [Belle Isle](#) – One of the few truly-beautiful places remaining in Detroit, this largest island park in the United States (it’s slightly bigger than Central Park) is home to a famous rose-garden, a greenhouse of exotic plants, and the Belle Isle Aquarium.
- [Campus Martius Park](#) – The literal center of the city of Detroit, just recently rediscovered. All the “mile” roads (8 Mile, 9 Mile, etc) are named for their distance from this point, situated at the center of the city’s central hub, almost on the same location as the original Fort Pontchartrain.
- [Comerica Park](#) (Tiger Stadium) – This neutral ground is a powerful source of all types of Glamour: desire, wrath, fear, and sorrow are all in plentiful supply here. The stadium’s high walls offer the (mostly suburbanite) patrons a lovely view of Detroit’s skyscrapers and sky, while blocking the city’s ever present blight and crime from view.
- [Detroit Institute of Arts](#) – A beacon of culture and beauty for well over a century. Much of its collection (including priceless works by Monet and Picasso) is currently being sized-up for the

auction block, to help pay off the city's staggering debts. A [dragon](#) from the Babylonian [Gates of Ishtar](#), one of only a tiny handful left in the world, is on display here, and many other artifacts are held behind closed doors.

- [The Detroit Salt Mine](#) – Founded in 1895, shortly after the discovery of massive salt-deposits near the Rouge River, and it quickly became an exceptionally busy enterprise. The growing city's newly-paved roads required vast amounts of salt to keep them navigable during Michigan's long, cold winters, and the mine rapidly expanded to meet the growing demand. Though it runs more than a thousand feet beneath the city streets, the mine now covers more than 1,500 acres. It's said that if a serious earthquake ever hit Detroit, a sizable chunk of Dearborn would simply be swallowed by the earth, along with the mine's closest neighbor: a major railway depot which services the Ford Rouge Plant.
- [Detroit-Windsor Tunnel](#) – This long, dimly-lit tunnel, which runs for almost a mile beneath the Detroit River, is the second busiest crossing between the United States and Canada. Try not to think about the cold water flowing just above and around you while you're driving through it, or what would happen if the ventilation system gave out. All crossings in either direction require a valid passport.
- [Fort Wayne](#) – A colonial-era fort, built on the site of several Indian burial mounds (yes, really). The fort's shape, that of a squared, four-pointed star, may have been selected to enhance the site's occult resonance.
- [Heidelberg Project](#) – Artist Tyree Guyton's multi-decade experimental art project, in which he turns abandoned houses into public works of art using only whimsical paint-jobs (e.g., polka-dots) and found objects (stuffed animals, old shoes). Somewhat unpopular with its neighbors, who consider it an eyesore and an attractive nuisance; several of the installations have recently been targeted by arsonists.
- [John K. King Used & Rare Books](#) – With tens of thousands of linear feet of shelving which spans four warehouse-sized floors, this is one of the largest and oldest used bookstores in America (and remains steadfastly uncomputerized). The rare book room contains numerous titles which may appeal to customers with more esoteric tastes.
- [Manoogian Mansion](#) – This east-side waterfront mansion is the official residence of the mayor of Detroit. It has been marred by associations with a party thrown there in 2002 by Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, in which his wife attacked an exotic dancer who was later found murdered with a .40 caliber Glock pistol (the standard-issue weapon of the Detroit Police Force).
- [Masonic Temple](#) – The cornerstone of this building, the largest Masonic temple in the world, was laid on Thanksgiving Day in 1926, using the same trowel that George Washington used to lay the cornerstone of the National Capitol. Constructed in the Gothic style, rather than the typical Greek or Egyptian. Changelings still argue about whether Mages might have been involved with its construction and current usage, or whether it's simply a front for a cult worshipping one of the Aisen.
- [Michigan Central Station](#) – The largest Trod in the Motor City, and a whistle-stop on one of the few known Goblin Railways, the station is a festering and highly-public symbol of the loss of Detroit's greatness, and a constant focus of efforts to restore the blighted, formerly-beautiful structure to its former splendor (or at least prevent its demolition).
- [Packard Automotive Plant](#) – Perhaps the most famous symbol of Detroit's decay. After it closed

in 1956, several different tenants, all short-lived, have attempted to make use of the Packard Plant. In 1999 the City forced the tenants out, with the goal of demolishing the aging structure. While legal battles raged in court, the plant stood empty, defenseless against the scrappers who ravaged the entire structure within a few short years. Today it's used as a haunting ground for urban explorers, a set for Hollywood movies and music videos, and a backdrop for wedding photographs for rich-kid brides and grooms.

- [Renaissance Center](#) (a.k.a. The Ren Cen) – Although this “riot-proof” complex was intended to reinvigorate Detroit’s urban center, General Motors’ five-towered headquarters amounts to a walled city-within-a-city. Contains its own small police station (with a full sized one about a hundred yards down the street), a pharmacy, a four-star hotel, multi screen movie theater, and a small shopping mall, with luxury restaurants on the top floor overlooking the Detroit River.
- [Rouge Plant](#) – Henry Ford’s original automobile assembly complex. At its peak, it employed more than 10,000 workers every day, in three shifts. Today most of its workers are robots.
- [Zug Island](#) – This heavily industrialized human-made island is the most polluted ZIP code in Michigan, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. The island is home to “sizable and sometimes troublesome” populations of rats, seagulls, and feral cats. Nearby residents are plagued by strange emanations from the island: unidentified smells which are strong enough to cause dry heaves; unusually high rates of asthma and cancer; and a sparkly, omnipresent dust which settles over every surface. In 2011, the island was identified by Canadian scientists as the source of mysterious subterranean vibrations – known as “[the Windsor Hum](#)” – that have been felt up to 50 miles (80 km) away. Despite numerous requests by Canadian scientists to examine the site, Zug Island remains closed to the public by order of the Department of Homeland Security.

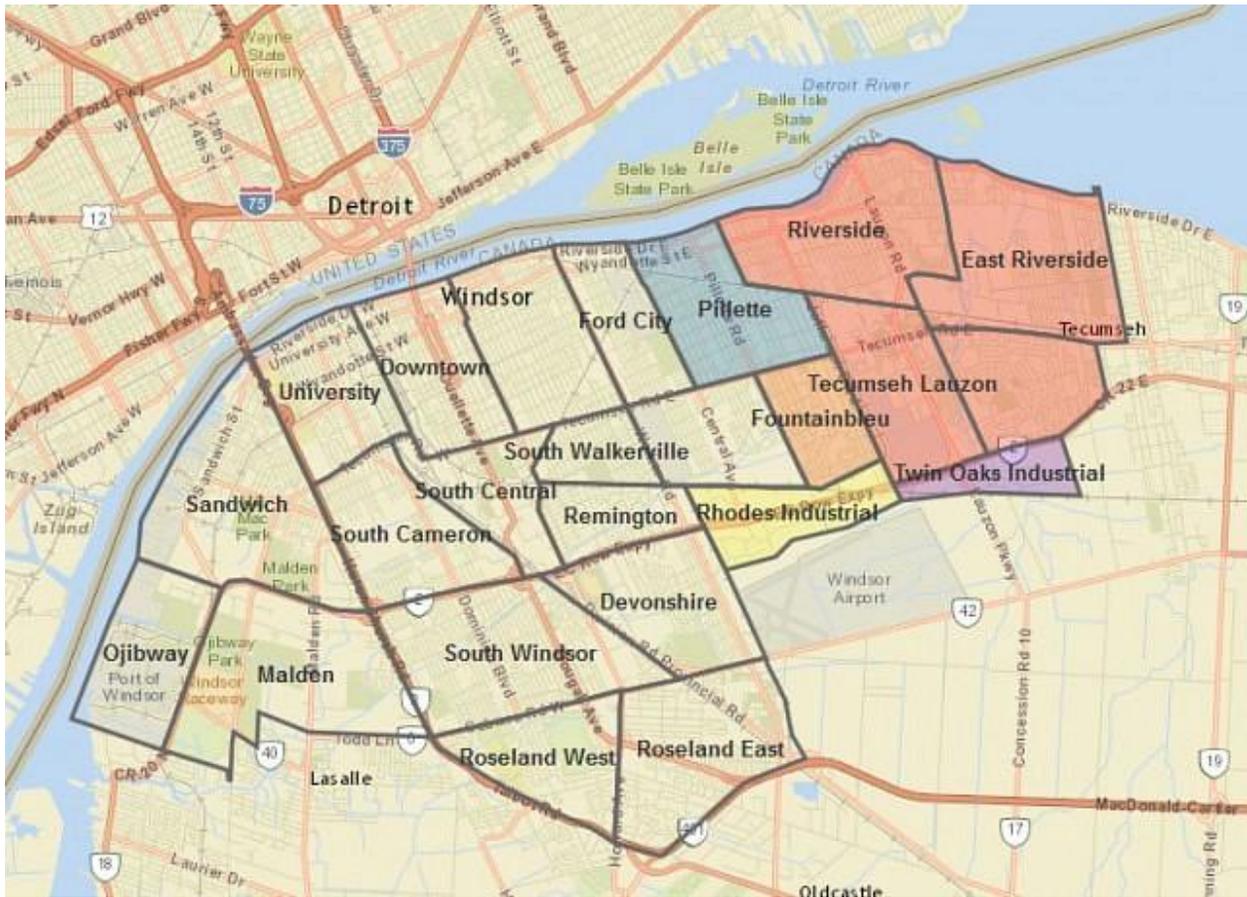
[Sidebar: International Relations]

While the border between the second- and fourth-largest countries on Earth is relatively peaceful and porous, traversing it is not always easy. Any US citizen or US resident that has a criminal record may be denied entry to Canada. Even if the offense was "only" a misdemeanor, such as a DUI, it can still be a major issue when trying to enter Canada. If a person is inadmissible to Canada due to criminality, the only way he or she can legally visit Canada with a criminal record is by obtaining permission from the Canadian Government.

Both the U.S. and Canada practice extradition, but their longstanding treaty requires the offense for which extradition is sought to be a crime in both countries.

These issues can be bypassed by purchasing the "New Identity" Merit, each dot in which adds a +1 equipment bonus to Intelligence + Subterfuge rolls against the border guard's Intelligence + Investigation roll. Of course, changelings can always try to cross the border via the Hedge instead, but that method comes with dangers and pitfalls all its own.

Windsor, Ontario



When Fort Detroit was ceded to the Americans after the end of the American Revolution, the town of Sandwich sprung up across the river, composed of French and English subjects who wished to remain under British rule. Sandwich was eclipsed in the mid-1850s by the younger and faster-growing adjacent city of Windsor, whose growth was fueled by rail- and river-trade across and along the Detroit River.

By the 1940s, Windsor boasted a small freehold of its own, known as the Rosehold. Much smaller than the Wheelhouse, it largely defined itself in opposition to its larger neighbor: when the Wheelhouse did one thing, the Rosehold would usually do the opposite, mainly just for contrariness' sake, but also to keep itself from being overwhelmed or subsumed. Windsor became famous as a haven for freethinkers, iconoclasts, and those who just didn't fit in on the American side of the river.

The Rosehold remained an independent freehold with its own separate Courts until the 1970s, when Detroit's Spring Court abandoned their city and invited themselves to Windsor. Surprised by the sudden move and facing a unified Court which was almost as large as their entire freehold, the Canadians quickly found themselves under American control. Windsorite changelings were compelled to swear their allegiance to the Antler Crown or be deported from their own freehold: most were integrated into the Court of Desire, with varying degrees of success.

Today, Windsor is much smaller than Detroit, with fewer than 211,000 residents (compared to barely 700,000 in even the vastly-shrunken city of Detroit proper, and four million in the Detroit Metro region). Windsor's population is, on average, about ten years older than Detroit's, but its bar scene averages about ten years *younger*, consisting largely of Michigan and Ohio teens sneaking across the river for some discreet underage drinking and gambling. Some of these teens say that Windsor is like Detroit's "fun uncle" who invites all the local kids to his lake house for crazy parties on the weekend; but as you get older, you realize that having wild parties and getting wasted is *all he ever does*.

[Sidebar: Windsor at a Glance]

Economy: Caesars Windsor Casino and the lower drinking age (18) pull in a lot of teens and young adults from Michigan and Ohio, but "the City of Roses" retains a small-town feel. Many Windsorites commute daily across the Ambassador Bridge, to jobs in Detroit or (more often) its suburbs. Much of Windsor's tourism industry involves Americans seeking to purchase what they cannot legally obtain in the States, such as Cuban cigars and rum, cheap prescription drugs, and absinthe.

Government: Windsor is divided into ten wards, each represented by a councillor. Windsor is virtually free of violent crime, in part because [many weapons are prohibited from entering Canada](#), including: all firearms, most tasers, pepper spray, switchblades, brass knuckles, most crossbows, nunchaku, shuriken, spiked wristbands, blowguns, butterfly knives, morningstars (!), and many other forms of weaponry.

Population: 210,890 in 2011, almost one-fifth of whom were born outside of Canada, and speak languages such as Québécois French, Arabic, and Italian.

Media and Culture: Most Windsorites get their news from *The Windsor Star*, *The Windsor Independent*, or CBC Radio 2. The city boasts several well-maintained parks and numerous historic buildings, as well as the University of Windsor. Each summer, Windsor and Detroit honor Canada Day and the Fourth of July with a joint fireworks display launched from a barge in the middle of the Detroit River.

Key Locations, Windsor

- [Art Gallery of Windsor](#) – As one of Ontario's most significant collections of Canadian art and the largest largest public art gallery in the Detroit-Windsor corridor, this stately modern museum contains art and artefacts from all across Canadian territory and history... including a series of installations by a changeling sculptor, the contemplation of whose work sometimes triggers prophetic dreams and out-of-body experiences in mortals.
- [Assumption Church](#) – Originally established as "The Mission of Our Lady of the Assumption among the Hurons in Detroit" in 1728 by the Jesuits, this ornate cathedral has been closed since 2014, due to its badly deteriorated condition – though the diocese says it has plans to reopen the cathedral "soon". The diocese has never been able to satisfactorily explain the flickering lights which appear inside the locked and boarded-up church every year at Candlemas.
- [Caesars Windsor](#) – When your grandma goes to Canada to buy her cheaper prescriptions, she'll likely spend the money she saved at the craps table here. While Detroit's casinos were still under construction/renovation, this location settled into its niche where it continues to thrive.
- [Capitol Theatre](#) – This Art Deco *grande dame* of Ontarian screen- and stagecraft is the beating heart of Windsor's arts community. Though the ornate theatre is showing its age, it still plays host to both the Windsor Symphony Orchestra and the Windsor International Film Festival.

- EDDE's Graffiti Alley – This huge installation of surreal and vivid imagery amounts to a massive, constantly-evolving, multi-artist mural. Sometimes, the people and animals (and other, stranger things) which are depicted in the murals seem to move, or to whisper terrible, impossible secrets, or simply look straight into your soul as you go by. And who can tell what those graffiti tags are supposed to say? For all we know they could be written in cuneiform, or even Atlantean runes or First Tongue glyphs.
- Mackenzie Hall – This former courthouse and prison, the site of many contentious trials and executions, is said to be one of the most haunted buildings in Canada.
- Market Square – This indoor farmers' market and flea mart is has fallen on hard times in the last ten years: most of the vendors are bored or surly, and most of the food (which never tastes very good) is flown in from afar despite being close to some of the richest farmland in Canada. Things get even uglier at night, when the Goblin Market takes over (see below).
- Willistead Manor – Built in 1906 by the heir to Hiram Walker's distilling fortune and named after the owner's dead son, this 36-room mansion is situated amidst a 15-acre park. The house, and especially the basement, is said to be haunted by the ghosts of the childless couple who built it.
- Windsor International Airport – Amidst the disorienting maze of terminals, spinning baggage carousels, and confusing signage, lies the single largest Trod in southern Ontario. Many newly-escaped changelings emerge from the bathrooms and broom-closets of this cramped airport, where they are often mistaken for delusional, sleep-deprived foreigners. Unfortunately, its status as a major Trod also means that many True Fae (to whom international borders mean nothing) use this as their jumping-off point on their forays into the mortal world.

The Hedge



[Detroit: Gone to Seed](#), ©2012-2018 [Spex84](#) (used with permission)

In Detroit, urban blight is so pervasive that the adjacent Hedge more closely resembles the burned-out remains of a residential neighborhood than any forest. Overgrown lawns resemble miniature jungles, providing cover to predator and prey alike; Trods consist of ramshackle sidewalks not associated with any

street, which twist and snake through a maze of collapsing structures, smouldering rubble, piles of reeking garbage and dirty diapers, rusting playground equipment, and snowdrifts of broken glass. Sometimes the Hedge's idea of what a house looks like is a little warped, which can result in Trods which take travelers up a set of front steps, through a brick doorway and immediately down the back steps, with no house in the middle; or the decaying wreckage of a Queen Anne home might have wallpaper and family portraits hung all over its exterior, with fine brickwork and decorative wooden "gingerbread" on the inside.

Because the seasonal Courts of Detroit do not share power or territory, this has had a curious effect on the local Hedge: in Detroit, the seasons which the Hedge exhibits reflect the Court which controls that part of the Hedge (and/or the adjacent mortal realm), bearing no relation to the actual time of year. It's entirely possible to wander through a glittering snowscape, only for one's next step to land in a sweltering jungle of Thorny undergrowth; or to ford a babbling brook where one bank sports spring verdure while its opposite is resplendent in autumn colors.

Much like Survival can be substituted for Streetwise on the urban prairie, the reverse is true in the Hedge near Detroit: Streetwise can be substituted for Survival in the Hedge near Detroit (at least, in the parts which are closest to the mortal world).

Hollows in Detroit

As Detroit's mortal population bled away, so too did its fae population. As they fled to the suburbs, or across the river to Windsor, many changelings added new entrances to their Hollows and destroyed the old ones; but many simply abandoned their old haunts, not wanting to stick around any longer than necessary. After several decades, this practice has left the Hedge which surrounds Detroit riddled with abandoned Hollows. While some are now so overgrown as to be indistinguishable from the rest of the Hedge, many of these Hollows, bound and beholden to the ancient laws of hospitality, have endured through many years of neglect, patiently awaiting the day when new owners might make use of them once more.

Characters who wish to purchase dots in the "Hollow" Merit may instead elect to scour the local Hedge for an abandoned Hollow which suits their needs; characters who do so gain a three-die bonus to their search. Any Hollows they find are likely to be in an extreme state of disrepair (zero dots in Amenities and/or Wards), but they are also likely to several free dots in Size and Doors, which can substantially reduce the cost of purchasing this Merit.

(One useful way to randomly assign locations to the Doors of discovered Hollows is to roll a dice pool equal to the Hollow's dots in Doors directly on a printed map of Detroit. Wherever a d10's main vertex lands is the approximate location of one of the Hollow's Doors in the mortal world.)

Storytellers should note that even in a freehold with as many abandoned Hollows as the Wheelhouse, it is very rare to find a perfectly good abandoned Hollow. Some are abandoned for very good reasons: many have become dens to dangerous Hobgoblins or exiled True Fae, or hideouts for privateers or Loyalists; some are structurally unsound, booby-trapped, or even cursed. Even after being claimed and cleaned, ownership of a Hollow can prove contentious: someone who claims to be the Hollow's true owner (or inheritor) might show up after all the heavy lifting is done and attempt to reclaim their property from the "squatters".

Finding an Abandoned Hollow

Enter the Hedge and roll to activate Contracts of Dream • (the “Pathfinder” clause), and apply the usual +3 bonus for discovering or locating abandoned structures in Detroit. If the character succeeds, then they locate one abandoned Hollow. Next, roll two dice and cut each result in half (round down): the first result represents the Hollow's dots in Size, and the second represents its dots in Doors (assume that if you were able to locate a Hollow, that's because it no longer has any dots in Wards to keep people like you from finding it). If you scored an exceptional success on the Contract-activation roll, then roll a third d10 and halve the result (round down) to determine the Hollow's remaining dots in Amenities. If you decide to take it, you may continue upgrading the Hollow's attributes for the normal cost (New dots x 2), as if you had built the Hollow yourself.

There is no limit on the number of times a character can attempt to find abandoned Hollows. Willpower *can* be spent on rolls to locate an abandoned Hollow, but not on rolls to determine the Hollow's remaining dots in Size, Doors, or Amenities.

[Sidebar: Storytelling Hollows]

Storytellers are encouraged to provide a detailed and evocative description of each abandoned Hollow their players discover. Simply saying “you find a Hollow that's about the size of a small apartment and has two doors” just won't cut it. Your description should give the players a sense of the previous inhabitants' personalities. Were they paranoid doomsday-preppers? Spouse-swapping sybarites? Man-eating ogres? Thugs? Cops? Crackheads? Hollows can be anything you want them to be, anything your chronicle *needs* them to be, as long as they aren't boring.

Marsh-Catch, the Goblin Market

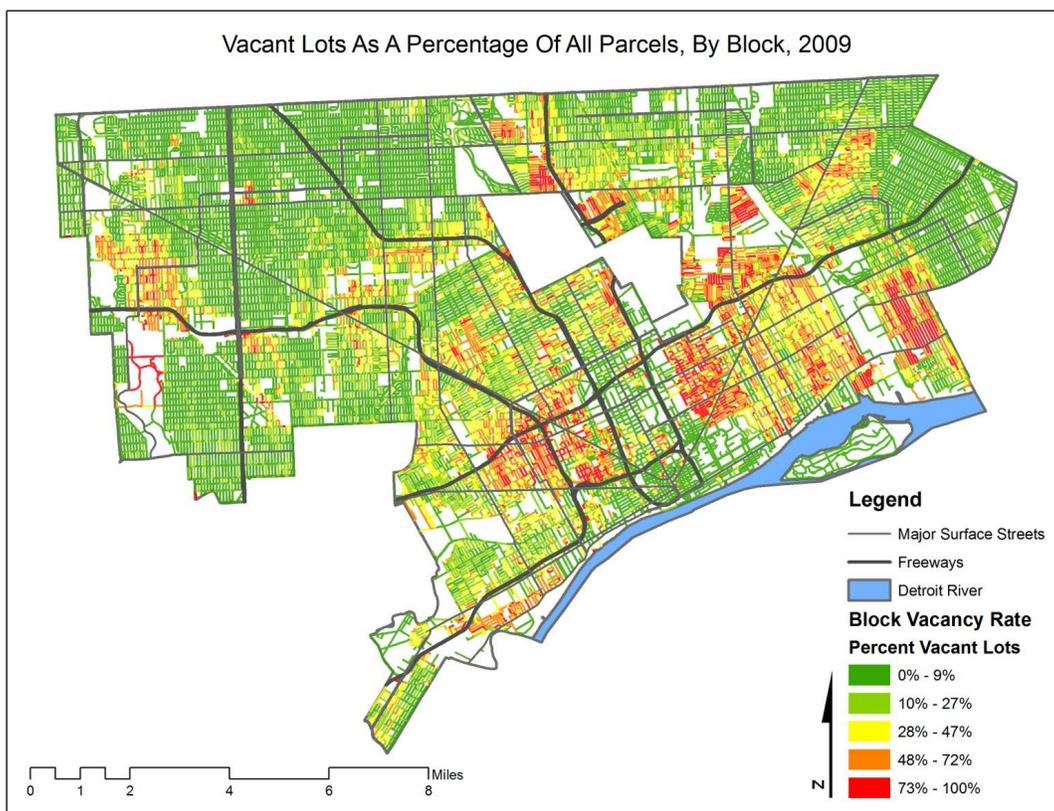
When French-speaking changelings first arrived at Fort Détroit, they found – to their great surprise – that the region already possessed a well-stocked Goblin Market frequented by Native American changelings from many different tribes. The French fae called it *le marché caché* (“the hidden market”), but English tongues soon mangled the French pronunciation to “Marsh-Catch”.

Though it was held just on the other side of the Hedge from the sprawling open-air [Eastern Market](#) for much of the freehold's history, Marsh-Catch followed the Spring Court to Windsor in the mid-Eighties so it could be closer to the few changelings in the region who still had the resources to purchase their wares and services. Just as mortals are constantly going to Windsor to buy what they can't get in the States (absinthe, Cuban rum and cigars, underage drinking, etc.), the fae of Detroit also cross the river to buy or barter whatever they can't obtain in the mortal realm.

Like Eastern Market, Marsh-Catch still sells different types of wares on different nights. Mondays are for weaponry, armor, Tokens, and Gewgaws (*Goblin Markets*, pg. 21), while Tuesdays are for food and drink, drugs, Goblin Fruits, and Trifles. Jewelry, hedgespun garments and accessories, footwear and headgear, and mundane clothing are bought and sold on Wednesdays. Thursdays bring those who barter information and services (including transformations and second-hand destinies) rather than material goods. Traders in slaves, servants, pets, and all manner of living creatures hawk their wares on Fridays. Saturdays bring esoterica and lost objects. Somewhat ironically, the Market is always closed on the Sabbath.

[Sidebar: The Goblin Railway]

The long-abandoned Michigan Central Station is a terminal for one of the few known Goblin Railways in North America. Similar to a Goblin Market, prospective passengers can barter and trade with Hob ticket-takers for passage to exotic destinations in both the Hedge and the mortal world (and perhaps, if the rumors can be believed, even to Arcadia itself). Those who live near the depot swear that on moonless nights they can hear the scream of a steam whistle and smell coal smoke, even though the last train pulled out of the station bound for Chicago more than forty years ago.



Chapter Three: The Four Freeholds



“We're all on the same side here. This is not downtown versus the neighborhoods, this is Detroiters against a negative future.”

~ *DeForce: America's Past, America's Future, Detroit's Present* (2010)

Although the courts of the Wheelhouse still exist today in greatly-altered forms, they all lack the blessing of the Wyrd, which has not manifested a Crown for the ruler of any court since the sundering of the freehold in the early 1970s (in fact, no changeling in the Motor City has manifested more than three dots in any court's Mantle since the turn of the millennium).

After the courts severed diplomatic ties with each other, they began to ignore the mystical protections afforded by their sacred annual rites. No court can demonstrate its largesse, nor strengthen the freehold's bonds of brotherhood, if only members of the host-court are welcome. Yet the Summer Court continued to hold its competitions and the Winter Court its galas, Autumn its convocations and Spring its soirées, but they were incestuous affairs: pale shadows of the life-affirming celebrations of the past, these sad gatherings served only to highlight how small and petty the courts had become. The power in traditions like the Spring Revel and the Ash Run began to fade away, and with them went the bulk of each court's pageantry and power.

Though they still retain their seasonal names, the courts of Detroit are more commonly known by sobriquets which reflect either their territory or style. They lack any clear connection to the seasons, and the only reason they have endured so long at all is because they are believed to provide slightly better protection for their members than simply going it alone (though whether they are *actually* safer than being Courtless is debatable, and clearly untrue in some cases).

Changelings in Detroit

Between the the True Fae, hobgoblins, other supernatural denizens of the *World of Darkness*, and mundane threats, Detroit's fae population has fallen from more than 300 at its peak to fewer than fifty today: a population far smaller than would be expected in safer cities with better-run freeholds.

As a result, the fae community of Detroit (it cannot truly be called a freehold any longer) is a nest of vipers: it's a small, isolated, disorganized, and deeply fractured community, where old wounds fester and animosity runs deep. No wonder then that the only new faces in Detroit's changeling community for the last thirty years or more have been fresh escapees from Arcadia, or that many of these decided to set out for other nearby freeholds rather than attempt to eke out a living in the ruins of their hometown. Until recently, that is.

Just as mortals are starting to move to Detroit for a host of reasons (some prudent and some naïve), changelings too have been attracted by the promise of cheap land, minimal government (both mortal and fae), and the opportunity to start afresh in a city that's desperate for new blood and new money. Sometimes this leads to a culture-clash, as long-time residents see newcomers as fair-weather friends who are only interested in helping after the *real* Detroiters have endured the worst times for them. Likewise, the newcomers tend to arrive in Detroit with a lot of prejudices and misconceptions, often armed to the teeth and jumping at shadows.

Freehold Law

Since the Courts of Detroit cannot truthfully lay claim to anything beyond their own turf, there are no official laws which extend to the entire Detroit Metro region. However, there are a few *unofficial* rules which most changelings in the D can generally be counted on to follow.

1. **Finders' Keepers** – Anything which is abandoned in Detroit is automatically forfeit as soon as it leaves its owner's possession or their occupancy ends, and is considered up-for-grabs by all other changelings. If a changeling dies in the Hedge, his possessions belong to the first person to stumble across his corpse, regardless of any last will and testament they may have left. If you move your stuff out of a safehouse or a Hollow, anyone else can freely move into it the moment you leave. If the original owner returns to contest this "theft," other changelings may choose to step in (usually on the side of the finder), but are not required by honor or social convention to do so.
2. **No-Man's-Land** – The center of Detroit (known among changelings as "the Hub") is neutral territory, not controlled by any individual Court or faction. This enclave is roughly defined as the region bordered by Rosa Parks Boulevard, Mack Avenue, St. Aubin Street, and the Detroit River: it includes Grand Circus, Campus Martius, the casinos (MGM Grand, Motor City, and Greektown), the stadiums (Comerica Park, Cobo Center, Ford Field, and the Joe Louis Arena), and Eastern Market. The Hub remains neutral partly because the high concentration of police, government officials, and pedestrians in the area, and partly because all four Courts benefit so greatly from the various flavors of Glamour which can be harvested there, that none of them dares break the

unspoken truce for fear of scaring away all the Glamour.

Freehold Virtue: Hope – When all else is gone, hope remains. Living in the wake of immense loss and the shadow of a bleak future, Detroiters can only move forward by hanging on to the hope that someday, things might get better. This tenacity is enshrined Detroit’s official motto, which was coined in 1805 after a fire burned the entire city to the ground: *Speramus meliora; resurget cineribus* (Latin: "We hope for better things; it will arise from the ashes.")

Freehold Vice: Cynicism – Detroiters are tired: tired of incompetent and corrupt officials; tired of overgrown lots and broken promises and problems gone too long unfixed; tired of having the things and people they love taken away from them without warning. Most Detroiters can no longer muster the energy to change things or attempt to make them better, having seen too many such attempts end in bitter disappointment. The way they see it, if someone else is willing to do the hard work of fixing things, let them try: we’ll see how far they get before Detroit pulls them back down.

Court-Holdings

Since the four Seasonal Courts of Detroit no longer share power with each other, the old throne-room in the Michigan Theatre (now a parking-garage) sits unused and empty. Each individual Court has its own seat of power, as detailed below.

Spring Court: Windsor, Ontario

The Court of Spring holds no lands on the American side of the Detroit River, preferring to barricade themselves in Windsor’s casinos and hotels.

In the early 1970s, with the election of Detroit’s first black mayor, the Antler Crown decided they could read the writing on the wall: they believed that Summer had dealt the Wheelhouse its deathblow, and in a bold and dangerous move, the Court of Desire broke away from the seasonal cycle of the Courts, abandoned all claims to territory in and around the City of Detroit, and migrated *en masse* across the river to Windsor, Ontario.

With their superior numbers and the element of surprise on their side, the Spring Court quickly overthrew the Roselords and set up their own single-court freehold in Canada’s southernmost city. Windsorite changelings who survived the takeover still feel intensely bitter towards their American overlords, and are constantly striking back at them through acts of sabotage, espionage, and a general refusal to cooperate with even the most basic or mutually-beneficial requests.

The Odette Sculpture Park on Windsor’s waterfront contains (among other bizarre statuary) a large steel sculpture depicting a female hand holding an apple (aptly titled [Eve’s Apple](#)). By slipping through the narrow space⁴ between thumb, forefinger, and fruit, visitors emerge in a neon-lit casino lounge where impossibly-beautiful figures dance to unearthly music or recline on Roman couches,

⁴ At the Storyteller’s discretion, characters with the “Obese” Flaw or the “Giant” Merit may be unable to fit through the opening, requiring them to enter via a different route.

discussing the important matters of the day (like who wore what and who is sleeping with whom), being fed Goblin Fruit by indentured Hobgoblins and Hedgestuff servants.

[Sidebar: Casinownership]

Numerous Spring courtiers are shareholders in Caesar's Windsor (and as rumor has it, a few Detroit casinos, too), but earning money from an establishment is not the same as controlling who gets to come in. Besides, a changeling's money is just as dear as a mortal's hard-earned cash, so why drive them away? Using Contracts at the gaming-table is frowned-upon but rarely punished, unless it arouses mortal suspicion or makes a dent in the profits.

For rules to simulate gambling and games of chance or skill, see "Gambling" in *Winter Masques*, pg. 97.

Summer Court: Downriver and the Southwest

The Crimson Court see themselves as the original Social Justice Warriors, tirelessly striving to uplift the oppressed and the downtrodden, always "sticking up for the little guy" against "The Man" and his cronies. Summer still considers itself the true protector of all oppressed people in Detroit, but detractors sneer that if that were true, they'd be cracking skulls in the ghettos, and not walking picket-lines demanding higher wages (though few are bold enough to say this directly to a Summer courtier's face).

In Detroit, the true strength of the Iron Spear flows not from physical might but from social clout. Summer courtiers in Detroit often feel more at home walking a picket line with a sense of righteous pride or whipping a crowd into a frenzy with some choice words than they do in the gym or on the field of battle.

Summer's power-base is firmly in the Downriver area, which has long been a stronghold of auto-workers' unions and their eternal frustration with upper management. Summer has also branched out into harvesting wrathful glamour from newly-arrived immigrant workers who feel they've been cheated out of their fair shot at the American Dream.

Being focused primarily on "improving" the mortal world, the Court of Wrath does not maintain its headquarters in the Hedge. Instead, they meet in an abandoned union-hall (UAW Local 313), which closed its doors when the adjacent auto factory went out of business around the turn of the millennium. Under cover of darkness, the Crimson Court meets here once each week (after doing a thorough security-sweep) to resolve old business, discuss new business, and vote on important issues facing the Court of Wrath. These debates can become quite heated, but mortals who live nearby know that they must never attempt to observe these hidden gatherings, lest terrible misfortune befall them.

Autumn Court: The Northern Suburbs and Grosse Pointe

Autumn courtiers are nothing if not showmen, and they know their audience well. The "rubes" of Detroit are jaded by decades of loss and hardship, and have grown accustomed to the constant threat of violence that suffuses their lives. So when the glamour started running low, the Leaden Mirror simply packed up its tents and moved to the northern suburbs. There they found an abundance of fearful

glamour, mainly from white people who were (and still are) scared shitless that “the Negroes” might escape the ghetto and move into *their* neighborhoods.

The Ashen Court subsists mainly on the fears of white suburbanites, and is perfectly willing to “play the race card” if it will scare up an extra hit of glamour. It’s not uncommon for a motley of Autumn courtiers to disguise themselves with Contracts as young black men, cruise slowly through white neighborhoods in Warren, Ferndale, or Royal Oak, and bask in the fear that washes over them (or vice versa, south of 8 Mile).

The abundance of fear in Detroit proper makes the city an irresistible target for Autumn raids. Fear settles over the city each night at dusk, and Autumn courtiers can simply slow-roll through the ghettos, soaking it up. A few of the bolder ones will drive into the projects and fire a gun into the air for a quick hit of adrenaline-laced Glamour.

Playing heavily into its carnivalesque theme, the Court of Fear holds its seat of power in two adjacent locations just south of 8 Mile Road: the Victorian [Woodlawn Cemetery](#) and the abandoned [Michigan State Fairgrounds](#). In general, the cemetery is used for “personal business” and small meetings within or between motleys, while the fairgrounds are used for official Courtly functions.

Winter Court: Detroit, Hamtramck, and Highland Park

Ironically for a Court which is based on the harvesting of sorrow, the Winter Court sees itself as a band of “Merry Men”, robbing from the rich and giving to the poor (which conveniently includes many of their own members). They feel that the Iron Spear destroyed the city from within with its hate-mongering and sloppy overuse of Bedlam, and then moved away like everyone else as soon as the city had burned itself out, leaving only the Onyx Court to mourn the dead and get on with the business of staying alive. And they *have* stayed alive: despite everything the city and the rest of the Courts have thrown at them, the Silent Arrow remains alive and free.

The years have been kind to the Court of Sorrow: they are the only Court in the Detroit Metro which routinely collects a surplus of glamour. Detroiters can hardly drive a single block without seeing a reminder of all that they’ve lost, of the squalor they’re forced to live in, of the impersonal brutality of it all. Granted, most Detroiters learn at a young age to numb themselves against the creeping sadness, but enough of them still feel the ache that it creates a constant low-level miasma of sorrowful glamour which blankets the city like a shroud.

The Winter Court preaches a doctrine of disloyalty to the tyrannical forces which seek to curtail their freedom, striking back from the shadows against all who would oppress Detroiters: gangbangers, dope-dealers, Juggalos, crackheads, crooked politicians, and even (arguably) legitimate authorities like the police and the city council. The Silent Arrow sees itself as using Detroit’s sorrow to fuel their efforts to protect it against further exploitation, but their slapdash street-corner “justice” often causes even more decay and sorrow (which conveniently produces even more sorrowful glamour for them to harvest).

Though the Onyx Court’s holdings appear to be enormous, they are very loosely-held, and there are too few courtiers to seriously enforce the borders. But perversely, this works to Winter’s advantage: none of the other Courts can muster sufficient manpower to drive the Onyx Court completely out of *all* their holdings, and the panoply of abandoned structures in Detroit means that any conquered turf is

quickly and easily retaken by a Silent Arrow insurgency.

Unlike the other Courts, Winter operates out of the Hedge, from a secret base known as “Hensteeth.” This well-warded Hollow has several doors which open onto different parts of Detroit, and are constantly being moved, closed, altered, and reopened elsewhere to avoid detection and keep the Silent Arrow’s enemies guessing (though the actual Hollow itself remains in the same hidden location within the Hedge; only the doors change their positions).

Other Factions

Because the Courts of Detroit are so weak and decentralized, several new factions have sprung up in the power-vacuum. Though each of the factions in Detroit today show some resemblance to one or more Seasonal Courts, none of them may be considered true successors (though they are often rivals for members and resources). Although they lack the cohesion and size necessary to claim territory or enforce their own laws, they are large enough and elusive enough to make difficult any attempts to create a unified freehold in Detroit.

- As the Courts fled the Wheelhouse, the suburbs became increasingly inhospitable for the Court’s eternal detractors, the Margravate of the Brim. Given Detroit’s massive size (144 square miles), the Margravate’s small membership was already stretched thin across the periphery of the freehold. Rather than moving further outward and taking on more territory than they could realistically patrol, the Margravate simply redrew their maps of the Brim and made the unorthodox decision to move further *into* the city, even as the Courts moved out. Rebranding themselves as “**The Margravate of the Blight**,” they have transitioned from outer-ring holdouts to urban homesteaders; many Margraves are heavily involved in the urban farming movement, seeking to make their Entitlement entirely self-sufficient. The Margraves currently control several of Detroit’s emptiest neighborhoods, including Burbank, Ravendale, Delray, Westwood Park, and Brightmoor (a.k.a. “Blightmoor”). Though they refuse to work with any of the hated Courts, they do have a formal Pledge of mutual non-interference with the Winter Court, thanks to a certain similarity of their goals and methods.
- Spring Courtiers who did not flee to Windsor eventually decided that the only viable source of Glamour in a city as badly damaged as Detroit was to extract as much wealth and pleasure from the city as they could, before it collapsed entirely. Though it’s rare that they personally participate in salvage operations (though many own junkyards and recycling centers), these so-called “**Scrappers**” earned their nickname by analogy, because of the way they coldly tear the city apart, brick-by-brick and person-by-person, for their own personal benefit. Scrappers often deal in drugs, prostitution, and theft both grand and petty. They care nothing for Detroit’s future, or for the suffering which their actions inflict on some of the poorest and most disadvantaged people in the United States.
- Most insidious is **The Kevorkian Society**, a secret fae society which seeks to put Detroit out of its misery by hastening its death. Affiliates pose as members of the other courts and factions, reasoning that much of what the others are already doing is helping to destroy the city anyway. A large number of Winter courtiers find this faction appealing, though any changeling who is burned-out and disillusioned about Detroit’s future might be recruited by the so-called “Ravens”.

- **The Movement** is a growing faction of changelings who demand... well, *change*. Specifically, a change in fae government: they believe that the reason the Wyrd has failed to manifest crowns for any of the Courts' rulers is because none are worthy of the title, by virtue of the fact that they refuse to rule in concert, as they are meant to. Forsaking membership in any of the existing Courts, "**Movers**" demand an end to the bloodshed and infighting which have plagued Detroit for decades. This would be no mean feat, as grudges run deep between the Courts, which is part of the reason why Movers feel that the days of the Wheelhouse can never return. Instead, they propose something truly radical: a new freehold, and a complete reinvention of the Court system within Detroit. Of course, there are internal divisions: some favor switching to the Diurnal Courts, while others say that the Transitional Courts are the best fit for Detroit. Many insist that an entirely new Court system must be implemented, based on entirely new symbols: suggestions include elements (water, wood, earth, metal, and fire), sports (hockey, baseball, football, basketball, and soccer), automotive systems (engine, transmission, electrical, and suspension), and musical genres (hip-hop, soul/R&B, rock, and electronica).

Chapter Four: Denizens of the D



“Most people here are just trying to make a way out of no way. Some of the choices available and taken are terrible. No doubt, Detroit will give you a daily dose of ugliness to go along with its freedom and social vibrancy.

You don’t ever recover from the Detroit virus. Everywhere else seems pale and innocuous and inhospitable by comparison. We love/hate/need this place. It is a power spot whose vibrations are both thrilling and exhausting.

No, we prepare to ride, not to run away from Detroit, but to run toward ourselves and in so doing, run on a purer fuel when we return to the exasperating, endearing, delicious, delightful wreck of a city.”

–Shaun S. Nethercott, “The Detroit Virus,” [A Detroit Anthology](#)

Mortals, Non-Combatants

Journalist/Blogger

“That’s very interesting. Could you elaborate?”

Background: Journalists are professional reporters employed by news agencies who investigate stories, verify facts, interview witnesses and persons-of-interest, and compose informative articles for public consumption. Bloggers are often amateurs, though some are popular enough to support themselves partially or entirely with ad-revenue from their blogs or websites.

Appearance: Most professional journalists have graduated from college with a degree in writing or journalism, so they’re generally not younger than their mid-twenties. Bloggers can be any age, though teen bloggers find it difficult to be taken seriously and often have issues with transportation and gaining access to “adults-only” locations.

Storytelling Hints: Many journalists are chain-smokers and/or heavy drinkers (when they're not on duty). Bloggers tend to be younger and more tech-savvy, though this is far from a rule. Both are characterized by insatiable curiosity, and a burning desire to find The Truth. Justice and Prudence are common Virtues for journalists and bloggers, while their desire to expose The Truth even if it harms one of their contacts makes them prone to Lust.

Abilities

Interview (dice pool 3) — People love talking about themselves, and will sometimes let useful information slip (or fall tellingly silent) with just a few simple questions.

Investigate (dice pool 5) — Journalism requires extensive fact-finding, which often involves sifting through piles of documents and mountains of data.

Subterfuge (dice pool 4) — Journalists are often aware, whether from training or experience, when they are being lied to, or when key information is being left out.

Priest

“Tell me, my child: what’s troubling you tonight?”

Background: Priests (also known as imams, pastors, presbyters, and rabbis) are religious leaders who conduct worship services, administer religious education, care for their place of worship and sacred texts, act as pillars of their communities, and provide ethical and emotional counseling to their congregants (and sometimes non-believers). Priests are usually male, though this varies with religion and denomination.

Appearance: Priests dress in holy vestments while acting in their official capacity, but many are allowed to wear ordinary street clothes in their day-to-day lives (though some are required by their vows to wear badges of their faith, such as a white collar, a *yarmulke*, or a *taqiyah*). Priests can have nearly any appearance or physical build, though most priests are not young, and their somewhat sedentary lifestyle inclines them toward stoutness.

Storytelling Hints: Being a priest requires great empathy, good public speaking, and strong faith. Priests can be soft-spoken and kindly old father-figures, or exciting young firebrands who whip their congregations into ecstatic frenzies, or detached ascetics who favor the spirit and eternity over the flesh and the now, or crusaders for social justice and reform. Whatever they do and however they operate, they do it with conviction.

Abilities

Empathy (dice pool 5) — As moral leaders in their communities, congregants often turn to their priests for advice, guidance, and consolation in times of stress and uncertainty.

Theology (dice pool 5) — Priests undergo years of training and testing in the doctrine and history of their faith.

Exorcism (dice pool 4) — While the average priest is not equipped to banish ghosts, demons, or other supernatural entities, most have sufficient theological training and Morality to make a decent attempt at exorcism, if a trained professional is not available.

Pyromaniac

“So... fucking... beautiful... [grunting and heavy breathing]”

Background: Pyromaniacs are usually young males, often unemployed. For many, setting fires begins as a way to reduce boredom or relieve stress, which quickly escalates out of control. Pyromaniacs often exhibit poor impulse control, and may show signs of obsession with firefighting and its paraphernalia; some like to hang around firehouses and ask the firefighters annoying questions, even going so far as to set false alarms (or real ones) just to get a chance to see or talk to firefighters in action.

Appearance: Though though they all take steps to cover their trails, they will sometimes show signs that they have recently been near a fire: they might have soot or ash on their shoes or under their fingernails, there might be a lingering scent of smoke in their clothing or hair, or burn marks on their clothing, etc.

Storytelling Hints: Unlike garden-variety arsonists who use fire as means to an end (usually revenge, insurance fraud, or entertainment), pyromaniacs are obsessed with the beauty and power of fire. For some, known as pyrophiliacs, there is a sexual or erotic element to starting fires or watching flames consume a building. As a rule, pyromaniacs always try to watch their handiwork, in person if possible.

Abilities

Firestarter (dice pool 5) — Pyromaniacs are fairly good at setting fires (obviously).

Larceny (dice pool 3) — Pyromaniacs can pick up tricks for breaking and entering from online message boards, as well as avoiding or disabling simple security systems.

Stealth (dice pool 4) — Since they want to remain close enough to watch their handiwork but not get caught when the cops show up, hiding is usually a pyromaniac’s only option.

Scrapper

“[grunting] Turn it to the left! No, my left! [loud crash, followed by cursing]”

Background: Scrapppers are people (usually unemployed men) who make a living finding and reselling scrap metal to junkyards. Some work carefully within the law, while others are less scrupulous.

Appearance: Scrapppers dress in hard-wearing, functional clothing, including steel-toed boots, denim overalls, heavy jackets, and leather gloves. Smart scrapppers wear hardhats, as well as eye- and ear-protection.

Storytelling Hints: Most scrapppers just want to keep their head down, stay safe, and make a buck. Not all abandoned buildings in Detroit are as empty as they appear, and so most scrapppers will encounter the occult during their career. Some are willing to sell information they uncover, or trade it (perhaps with a portion of their earnings) to one of Detroit’s various factions (mortal and supernatural) for protection. Others are fiercely independent and opposed to “taxation”. Either way, most scrapppers will avoid getting in deep enough with any group to attract the ire of its enemies.

Abilities

Awareness (dice pool 3) — While scrapppers spend a lot of time out in the world, they’re usually focused on their work, which tends to be in places where few other people are nearby.

Scrapping (dice pool 4) — Scrappers make their living (or at least their side-hustle) by removing large, unwieldy chunks of metal from wherever they can find it.

Streetwise (Dice pool 4) — It wouldn't do to walk into a gang safehouse or an Ogre's pantry by mistake, so scrappers learn how to look for signs before they wander into somewhere dangerous.

Urbexer

"These empty spaces are SO beautiful! They're practically sacred."

Background: Typically from Ann Arbor or the wealthier suburbs of Detroit, self-styled "urban explorers" tend to be well-off white kids who enjoy the thrill of entering abandoned and condemned structures. Many are amateur historians or photographers who come to see and document the "forgotten places" from Detroit's past (but not to help the people still struggling to live there).

Appearance: Experienced and competent urbexers wear practical clothing while pursuing their hobby: sturdy jeans and hoodies or jackets in dark colors are the norm, especially paired with steel-toed boots. Inexperienced urbexers often show up in their street clothes and sneakers.

Storytelling Hints: Generally speaking, urbexers are young white suburbanites; play up how out-of-touch they are with the daily struggles of actual Detroiters. Urbexers almost always carry camera equipment (wealiter urbexers might bring headcams or quadcopter drones), and smart ones carry cell phones, walkie-talkies, and emergency whistles. For many, their enthusiasm and curiosity outstrip their better judgement, leading them to become injured (by falling, electrocution, or sharp bits of metal) or trapped (by collapsing infrastructure, guard dogs, or hostile squatters).

Abilities

Academics (dice pool 3) — Many urbexers are currently—or were recently—attending college.

Athletics (dice pool 3) — Urbexers' very physical hobby requires the ability to run, jump, and climb fairly well.

Larceny (dice pool 1) — Seasoned urbexers become experienced at breaking and entering, as well as avoiding or disabling simple security systems.

Running Away (dice pool 5) — Urbexers are emphatically *not* combatants, and will attempt to flee at the first sign of danger.

Sex Worker

"Y'all lookin' for a good time?"

Background: Usually from the poorest backgrounds, though many are kidnapped off the street, forcibly addicted to drugs, and compelled to enter the trade to feed their newly-inflicted habit. Most sex workers are female, and often young; they almost always enter the trade at a young age (frequently well below the age of consent), and few survive for more than a few years in such a dangerous occupation.

Appearance: Streetwalkers tend to dress in provocative clothing, often garish and extremely revealing. High-rent call girls (or boys) may dress in any manner which suits their clients' tastes.

Storytelling Hints: Sex workers are among the lowest of the low in society's eyes. Despised by moralists, dehumanized by those who engage their services, and routinely abused by their employers and pimps,

sex workers lead grim, painful lives with little hope of improvement or rescue. Many turn to drugs for escape and comfort, which often accelerates their demise.

Abilities

Awareness (dice pool 4) — Sex workers need to keep their wits sharp and constantly be on the lookout for danger, since they can't call the police for help.

Seduction (dice pool 4) — Sex workers are trained to seduce, and they do it well.

Knife-fighting (dice pool 1) — Knives are cheaper and easier to conceal than guns, and they attract less attention. Unfortunately, most sex workers are not very strong or athletic, and are rarely trained in combat techniques.

Mortals, Combatants

Firefighter

Quote: *"Don't panic, I'm here to help!"*

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Lust

Concept: extensively-trained rescue professional

Background: Firefighting requires exceptional bravery, physical strength, and stamina, as well as extensive training and certification. Few are left in Detroit who are willing to risk their lives on a daily basis to save a dying city, so most Detroit firefighters tend to be grizzled old-timers or probies who won't last long before burning out.

Appearance: Usually male, rarely older than middle-age, always in excellent physical condition. Working in a city that seems to be hell-bent on consuming itself, Detroit's firefighters are often hollow-eyed and unshaven, and can be seen clutching a cigarette in one hand and a styrofoam cup of coffee in the other.

Storytelling Hints: Detroit's firefighters are legendary in their field for enduring a brutal workload, a civilian population with an ingrained culture of arson, extensive government corruption and meddling, criminally low pay, and generally deplorable working conditions. Many are disillusioned and bitter, and *all* are exhausted.

Gear & Equipment

Breathing apparatus, fire-resistant coat and boots, fire helmet, protective talisman (rabbit's foot, religious symbol, etc.)

Attributes

Mental: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social: Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

Skills

Mental: Investigation 1, Medicine (Burns, CPR) 2, Science (Fire Dynamics) 4

Physical: Athletics (Lift/Carry) 4, Brawl 2, Drive 3, Weaponry 3

Social: Empathy (Survivors) 2, Intimidation 2

Merits: Fleet of Foot 1, Iron Stamina 3, Literate 2, Strong Back 1, Allies (Firefighters) 2

Willpower: 6

Morality: 8

Initiative: +5

Defense: 2

Armor: Fireman's coat, 1/0

Speed: 11

Health: 8

Tactics: Arson (*Night Stalkers* pg. 123), Battle Hardening (*Night Stalkers* pg. 124), Controlled Immolation (*Hunter: The Vigil* pg. 218)

Total XP: 36

Attacks	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Size	Special
Brawl	0 (B)	n/a	5	n/a	
Fire-axe	2 (L)	n/a	6	2	
Halligan bar (off-hand)	1 (L)	n/a	4	2	
Fire hose	4 (B)	40/80/160	5	n/a	Knockdown, Stun

[see also: Flyboy254's [Profession: Firefighter](#), designed for *Hunter: The Vigil*]

Juggalo/Juggalette

Quote: "I'm down with the clown 'til I'm dead in the ground, muhfucker! Whoop-whoop!"

Virtue: Loyalty

Vice: Gluttony

Concept: young hoodlum

Background: Fans of the Detroit-based horrorcore rap duo Insane Clown Posse (ICP) are known for their rowdy (and often senselessly violent) behavior; their total lack of respect for authority, laws, and private property; their prodigious appetite for drugs of all types; their almost superhuman energy-levels; and their complete and unquestioning devotion to all other members of their extended "family" of Juggalos.

Appearance: Juggalos are mostly young Caucasian males, and tend to either be rail-thin or overweight. They often dress in outlandish and colorful clothing (especially wifebeaters, cargo pants with numerous chains, and/or enormous, baggy T-shirts), wear their hair in the “spider-legs” style, and drape themselves in [hatchetman](#) logos/paraphernalia. Females (called Juggalettes) are encouraged to dress provocatively, and frequently do. Many Juggalos of both genders sport extensive tattooing.

Storytelling Hints: Juggalos are primarily motivated by hedonism, though they will go to extreme lengths to protect members of their “family,” even those they’ve never met before. Reasoning with them is next to impossible, unless one knows their [Dark Carnival](#) theology well enough to make an argument that Shaggy 2 Dope and Violent J would want them to do (or refrain from) whatever-it-is. Juggalos particularly despise racists, bigots, child molesters, and perpetrators of domestic violence, and frequently use such allegations as justification for delivering a round of vigilante justice.

[Sidebar: Lore of the Dark Carnival]

Juggalos are steeped in the lore of the Dark Carnival, The Insane Clown Posse’ musical mythology about the soul and the true nature of reality. Few Juggalos realize that The Insane Clown Posse’ entire discography is shot through with subliminal messaging which subconsciously teaches listeners about the fae.

Any mortal who has self-identified as a Juggalo for more than one month gains the “Lucid Dreaming” merit (*Changeling: The Lost*, pg. 195), as long as they fall asleep listening to The Insane Clown Posse at least once each month.

Additionally, any Juggalo who is sufficiently high (see “Drugs,” *World of Darkness Rulebook* pg. 176) can temporarily see through the Mask. Though they may not be aware that what they see is anything more than a very consistent hallucination about a particular person, place, object, or creature, this does allow them to recognize fae creatures and objects on sight, and potentially understand that the creature/object in question is somehow related to the strange things that keep happening around them. Sober Juggalos will not necessarily believe what their tripping friend tells them, but are more likely than normal mortals to play along and see where this takes them. If and when they sober up, Juggalos’ memories of the fae are no clearer than memories of any vivid hallucination or bad trip.

Gear & Equipment

2-liter bottle of Faygo™, black-and-white facepaint (cannot use Stealth to blend in with non-Juggalos, imposes -1 penalty against being recognized or identified when out-of-costume), a few ounces of marijuana or other drug(s), roll of quarters (+1 to Brawl, included in stats), bling pendant on a heavy chain

Attributes

Mental: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social: Presence 4, Manipulation 2, Composure 1

Skills

Mental: Crafts 2, Occult (Dark Carnival) 2, Science (Drugs) 1

Physical: Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Drive 1, Larceny (Pickpocketing) 2, Weaponry (Bladed) 2

Social: Intimidation 1, Socialize (Carousing) 3, Streetwise 3

Merits: Allies (Juggalos) 3, Barfly 1, Iron Stamina 3, Fighting Style: Improvised Weaponry⁵ 1, Lucid Dreaming 1

Flaws: Illiterate, and/or Minor, and/or Obese

Willpower: 3

Morality: 6

Initiative: +3

Defense: 2

Speed: 10

Health: 8

Tactics: Corral (*Hunter: The Vigil*, pg. 218), Distraction (*Witch Finders*, pg. 118)

Total XP: 15

Attacks	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Clip	Size	Special
Brawl	0 (B)	n/a	7	n/a	n/a	n/a
Knife	1 (L)	n/a	6	n/a	1	n/a
Knife (thrown)	1 (L)	10/20/40	7	n/a	1	n/a

Changelings

Karagiozis

Quote: *"I only sell what people want. Why should I not make profit from to sell people what they want, eh?"*

Virtue: Faith

Vice: Lust

Concept: self-made plutocrat

Seeming: Wizenod

Kith: Antiquarian

Court: Spring

Entitlements: None

⁵ *Midnight Roads*, pg. 57

Background: Geórgios Papadopoulos arrived in Detroit just as the first Model T rolled off the assembly line. He claims that he left Greece because his family and fetch were killed by Turkish soldiers, but rumors persist that he reached the boat just ahead of a tar-and-feather gang. Finding work in one of the city's many machine shops, Geórgios received the nickname "[Karagiozis](#)" for his hunched back and ragged appearance. Finding the epicurean philosophy of the Spring Court appealing, and parlayed his skill with machinery into a position as the Antler Crown's mechanic and chauffeur. By listening to his passengers' conversations, he learned that the Antler Crown was completely broke. He generously offered his skills as treasurer and bookkeeper, and quickly began investing heavily in Detroit's most profitable industry at the time: rum-running. Making a small fortune virtually overnight, he was catapulted into the upper echelons of Spring society, where he kept the entire Court well-supplied with liquor during the dreary years of Prohibition and the Great Depression which followed. By the end of World War II, he was one of the wealthiest men in a *very* wealthy city. After Spring's exodus from Detroit, he spearheaded the effort to convince the Windsor government to allow the construction of a casino (a move which the mortal politicians of Detroit would soon emulate). When the old Spring Queen passed away, he took up her office (but not her crown, which the Wyrd failed to manifest for him or any other Spring courtier).

Appearance: Karagiozis' Mask shows him to be a swarthy old man with a pronounced hunchback, a large black moustache, and a very prominent nose. His bald head is crowned with a ring of wiry white hair, though he usually covers his baldness with a tasteful, older-style men's hat. To fae eyes, Karagiozis looks like a political caricature: his back is hunched like a question-mark, making him seem even shorter than he already is; his hooked nose protrudes above an oily black moustache; loose skin hangs limply from his elongated neck. One of his arms is noticeably longer than the other.

Storytelling Hints: Karagiozis sees himself as a living embodiment of the American Dream: starting from nothing, he built his fortune through canny investment and supplying the market with whatever it demanded, becoming a respected businessman and courtier purely by virtue of his own business acumen. His detractors call him a bloated kleptocrat who made his money by breaking laws and destroying lives, and who got the hell out of Detroit the moment it stopped being profitable (but not without continuing to line his pockets by supporting organized crime and the drug trade), all while living in the comfort and safety of his own ivory tower behind the protective "moat" of the Detroit River. When confronted with these accusations, Karagiozis simply shrugs them off. He has never forced anyone to buy what he's selling; they asked him, *begged* him for booze and drugs and illegal goods and prostitutes. If it weren't for his tenements and liquor stores, many Detroiters wouldn't have roofs over their heads or food on their tables. Besides, he's not even a major player in these industries: even if he shut down every one of his operations, it wouldn't make a dent in the amount of contraband flowing into Detroit. He's only offering what the market demands, so why shouldn't he make a little profit for himself?

Pledges

- Commendation (liege for all Spring courtiers)
- The Knight's Oath (liege for all Spring courtiers, +1 to Resources)

Gear & Equipment

Tailored suit and silk tie, smart phone, briefcase, concealed handgun (illegal in Canada)

Attributes

Mental: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1

Social: Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

Skills

Mental: Computer 2, Crafts 3, Investigation (Financial) 2, Politics (International) 3

Physical: Athletics (Sprinting) 1, Drive 2, Firearms 2, Larceny (Locksmithing) 4

Social: Expression 3, Persuasion (Legalese) 2, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 4

Contracts: Fleeting Spring ●●●, Eternal Spring ●, Animation ●●, The Forge ●●, Goblin (Fool's Gold) ●●, Verdant Spring ●

Merits: Allies (Spring Court) 3, Contacts (Detroit Underworld) 3, Language (Greek) 2, Mantle (Spring) 5, New Identity (American) 3, New Identity (Canadian) 3, Resources 4, Status (Spring Court) 5

Flaws: Deformity (Hunchback)*, Racist (Muslims, esp. Turks)

*Imposes a -2 penalty to Social rolls, but only when the other person(s) can see him *and* are unaccustomed to his appearance.

Willpower: 4

Clarity: 7

Initiative: +6

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Health: 6

Wyrd: 5

Glamour/per Turn: 14/5

Total XP: 297

Attacks	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Clip	Size	Special
Brawl	0 (B)	--	1	--	--	--
Pistol, Light	2 (L)	20/40/80	6	17+1	1	--

Monique Collier

Quote: *"Let's make a deal: if you promise to call off your investigation, then I'll promise that when I walk out of this room, your balls will still be here in your pants instead of in my hand."*

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Wrath

Concept: self-serving politician

Seeming: Fairest

Kith: Succubus (*Winter Masques*, pg. 109)

Court: Summer

Entitlements: None

Background: Jennae Kincaid was a selfish and catty little girl long before she was taken to Arcadia, and her Durance only taught her the necessity of taking whatever she wanted before somebody else could take it from her. She had always been beautiful, but when she returned she was *gorgeous*. Deciding that she was now too beautiful to go back to her old life (and never really having any desire to return to her family's filthy tenement), Jennae rechristened herself "Monique" and set herself to accumulating every form of protection and power that she could lay claim to. She joined the Summer Court, took up martial arts, learned how to handle a gun, and began using the Iron Spear's contacts as stepping-stones to political office (her stated goal was always to help Summer improve Detroit's wildly-incompetent government "from the inside"). Monique began making romantic overtures to octogenarian Councilman Jack Collier (Detroit's longest-sitting and most corrupt politician), and had no difficulty convincing him to marry a pretty young thing like her. Shortly thereafter, Councilman Collier's health deteriorated precipitously, forcing his loyal wife to take up his office while he recovered. Once elected in her own right, Councilwoman Collier began funneling large amounts of taxpayer dollars into the coffers of the Summer Court (and, unbeknownst to them, into her own private bank account). Using her position as her Court's main breadwinner, she handily obtained the rulership of the Court of Wrath as well, cementing her position as Detroit's most politically-connected changeling. Believing herself too clever to be caught, Monique has taken only basic steps to avoid detection; but even in a city like Detroit, where millions of taxpayer dollars routinely disappear, it's only a matter of time until someone looks a little closer at the books and wonders why so much money is being paid to "Spear Construction, LLC" for work that isn't getting done.

Appearance: Monique's mortal guise is that of a ravishingly beautiful African-American woman in her late thirties, with short, wavy hair, dark eyes, and a flawless complexion. She strides from meeting to meeting in her tailored power-suits and heels, confident as only truly beautiful people can be that everything will go her way. Monique wears fashionable glasses to make herself look more intelligent (mainly as a form of intimidation), even though she doesn't need them.

Monique's fae mien reveals a creature of elegant loveliness: Her skin is the color of polished mahogany, and her perfectly symmetrical face is graced with dewy, almond-shaped eyes and slightly pointed ears.

Storytelling Hints: Monique has no idea just how dangerous a game she's playing. There is a very real possibility that her actions and high degree of visibility might lead to the Summer Court (and perhaps the entire fae community of Metro Detroit and Windsor) being exposed to the scrutiny of both mortals *and* the Gentry. This possibility hasn't occurred to her yet, but if it did, her first thought would be to secure her own safety, not to worry about the fallout.

Monique believes that mortals are too stupid to guess what she is and how she gets her way so often: this makes her haughty and contemptuous, as if she were holding back a big secret that she just can't

wait to tell. Her high opinion of herself makes it hard for her to understand how anyone else could think ill of her. She's more a queen bee than a true leader, and mainly keeps her cronies in line through a combination of angry outbursts, threats of physical or social harm, and childish name-calling.

Pledges

- The Knight's Oath (liege to all Summer courtiers)
- Commendation (liege to all Summer courtiers, +1 to Status (City Council))

Gear & Equipment

Business suit with slightly-too-short skirt, concealed handgun, designer briefcase with combination-lock, designer heels, smart phone

Attributes

Mental: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 1

Skills

Mental: Academics (Law) 2, Politics (Bribery) 4

Physical: Athletics (Kickboxing) 2, Brawl (Dirty Tricks) 3, Firearms 2

Social: Expression (Public Speaking, Seduction) 4, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge 3

Contracts: Vainglory ••, Fleeting Summer •••, Eternal Summer •, Stone •, Separation ••

Merits: Striking Looks 4, Fighting Style (Kung Fu) 3, Fame 1, Resources 3, Staff 1, Status (Summer Court) 5, Status (City Council) 3, Literate 2, Mantle (Summer) 5

Willpower: 3

Clarity: 5

Derangements: Narcissism (mild) at Clarity 7, Suspicion (mild) at Clarity 6

Initiative: +4

Defense: 2

Armor: 1

Speed: 11

Health: 8

Wyrd: 4

Glamour/per Turn: 13/4

Total XP: 219

Attacks	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Clip	Size	Special
Revolver, Hvy.	3 (L)		35/70/140	5	6	1 --
Brawl	0 (B)	--		6	--	-- --

Ringmasta Ray

Quote: *"Ladies and gentlemen! What I am about to show you will blow your mothafuckin' minds WIDE OPEN!"*

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Gluttony

Concept: creepy ringmaster

Seeming: Darkling

Kith: ~~Shadow~~ Snowskin

Court: Autumn

Entitlements: None

Background: Ray rose to prominence within the Leaden Mirror in the early nineties, when (he claims) he used dreamshaping and subliminal messaging to inspire up-and-coming Detroit rappers Shaggy 2 Dope and Violent J to become the horrorcore duo now known as "Insane Clown Posse". They quickly gained a fanatical following among disaffected teens across the nation, and especially in their hometown. After a riot at one of Insane Clown Posse' concerts, in which two security guards were killed while attempting to disperse a mosh pit, the Court of Fear began to recognize the true value of "Juggalos" (as ICP fans call themselves). Using a combination of suggestive lyrics, subliminal messaging, and dreamshaping, Ray began to direct gangs of Juggalos to perform random acts of mayhem which were useful for sowing fear and furthering the Leaden Mirror's agenda. Barely a decade after returning from Arcadia, Ray was elected King of Autumn in a landslide victory, and since then he has gleefully fulfilled the duties of that office.

Ray presides over an Autumn Court of circus/carnival-themed subjects, including leonine Beasts, Fairest acrobats, Elemental fire-eaters, Ogre strongmen, Darkling clowns, and Wizeded carnies. In order to "interface" more easily with Juggalos, Ray ensures that senior Autumn Courtiers are written into Insane Clown Posse songs and mythology. Currently, this inner circle consists of The Astounding Szczepanski, Gargantua the Bearded Lady, The Flying Eduardo Brothers, and "Herpes da Klown".

Appearance: Ray is as thin and tall as a lamppost, and is never seen in public without his flamboyant crimson ringmaster coat and black silk top-hat. His nails are unusually long for a male, but always neatly manicured. He sports a small goatee, which is carefully tapered to a curlicue point.

Behind his Mask, Ray's unblinking black eyes are set deep in a face the color of cold cream, above a nose so grotesquely long and pointed that it's almost (but not quite) comical. A grin full of more needlelike teeth than any human mouth has a right to contain is perpetually wrapped halfway around his head. Each of his unnaturally long, thin white fingers is tipped with a two-inch claw.

Storytelling Hints: Though he projects an air of "wacky" unpredictability, his seemingly careless, casual violence is anything but improvised. More than a decade of occult studies, research into Jungian archetypes, and oneiromantic experimentation went into the creation of his "Ringmasta" persona (a

blend of Alice Cooper and Pennywise the Dancing Clown). Like many professional actors, Ray is riddled with insecurities, self-doubt, and fears: fear of being exposed as a fraud, fear of being ridiculed, fear of losing his position, fear of being retaken by his Keeper. Increasingly, his favored method of coping with these fears is alcohol, which in turn causes him to fear discovery as an addict, which leads steadily to more drinking.

Pledges

- Commendation (liege for all Autumn courtiers)
- The Knight's Oath (liege for all Autumn courtiers, +1 to Allies (Juggalos))

Gear & Equipment

Cane (Token: Bug Cudgel), silk top-hat, crimson ringmaster's coat, knee-high patent leather boots

Attributes

Mental: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Skills

Mental: Academics 2, Occult 2, Science (Psychology) 3

Physical: Stealth (Darkness) 3, Weaponry 2

Social: Empathy 3, Expression (Crowds) 2, Intimidation 3, Subterfuge 3

Contracts: Darkness ••, Dream •••, Eternal Autumn ••, Fleeting Autumn ••, Smoke ••, Spellbound Autumn •

Merits: Allies (Juggalos) 3, Mantle (Autumn) 5, Status (Autumn Court) 5, Token (Bug Cudgel) 4, Fighting Style (Dream Combat) 3

Flaws: Addiction (Alcohol)

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 2

Derangements: Irrationality (mild)

Initiative: +5

Defense: 2

Speed: 9

Health: 7

Wyrd: 4

Glamour/per Turn: 13/4

Total XP: 196

Attacks	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Size	Special
Cane	2 (B)	--	4	2	see "Bug Cudgel", CtL pg. 206

Brawl 0 (B) -- 1 -- n/a

Terence White

Quote: *"Freeze. Put your hands on your head and turn around slowly. Now tell me: who told you how to find this place?"*

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Gluttony

Concept: paranoid vagrant-king

Seeming: Beast

Kith: Runnerswift

Court: Winter

Entitlements: None

Background: Terence inherited the crown of Winter after the previous monarch, Frostbite Bethany, met her untimely demise in a [Devil's Night](#) fire (Autumn Court involvement was suspected but remains unproven). Terence felt this proved that Winter and its courtiers would both be safer if the other Courts didn't know where to find them, and the best way to accomplish that was to always keep moving. Taking his cue from the white-tailed deer which have slowly begun to return to Detroit, Terence has his courtiers move silently and inconspicuously from one abandoned structure to the next, in staggered groups of no more than three, ready to scatter at the first sign of danger or pursuit. Though this nomadic lifestyle plays havoc with Winter courtiers' personal lives (and Clarity), Terence feels that the safety of his "herd" is worth the inconvenience.

Perversely, though, Terence finds himself unable to resist the temptation to "make things right" by killing off those who threaten his Court or benefit from Detroit's suffering. He routinely leads hunting parties across the urban prairie and down blind alleys, patiently waiting to discreetly ambush the Silent Arrow's enemies. He knows that these forays are dangerous, for both himself and his Court, and that they've taken a serious toll on his Clarity, but he simply cannot stand by and allow the wicked and monstrous to escape unpunished, even if that means taking unnecessary risks. Lacking the sort of regular human contact that would allow them to recalibrate their own psyches, Terence and his courtiers have no idea just how close their leader is to taking that short, final step into true madness.

Appearance: In his mortal guise, Terence looks like an African-American man in his forties. There's not an ounce of excess fat on his body; he's all bone and sinew and gamey muscle. Terence's skin is usually dry and ashy regardless of the season, and his close-cropped hair is graying at the temples. He dresses in practical, unremarkable clothing, and never wears anything which would restrict his speed or movement. He always seems to be resting on the balls of his feet, ready to spring into motion at the first sign of danger. Terence's fae mien is that of a [mighty stag](#), with a huge crown of antlers rising above his sad, deep-brown eyes. His rack adds a foot to his height, giving him an imposing, regal presence. Though Terence does not speak often or for long, listeners instinctively fall silent when he does. His voice is a rich baritone, calm yet firm.

Storytelling Hints: Terence understands that sorrow is only natural in a city like Detroit; but only the living can mourn the dead, and he intends to keep both himself and his herd alive to mourn. He realizes that this cold demeanor can make him seem blunt or uncaring, but he can live with that. What's important to Terence is making it through this lean season (and the next one, and the one after that) alive, and ensuring that anyone who hunts his herd never lives to try it twice.

Pledges

- Commendation (liege for all Winter courtiers)
- The Knight's Oath (liege for all Winter courtiers, +1 to Fleet of Foot)

Gear & Equipment

Crossbow, skinning knife (+1 equipment bonus to Intimidation), Carhartt™ jacket (counts as light armor)

Attributes

Mental: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Skills

Mental: Crafts 2, Investigation 1, Medicine (First Aid) 1

Physical: Athletics (Sprinting) 2, Brawl 1, Firearms (Crossbow) 4, Stealth (Urban Prairie) 3, Survival 1, Weaponry 1

Social: Animal Ken (Deer) 3, Empathy 1, Intimidation 2, Streetwise (Criminals) 4, Subterfuge 2

Contracts: Fang and Talon (Deer) ●●●●, Eternal Winter ●●●, Fleeting Winter ●●●, Smoke ●, The Wild ●●, Sorrow-Frozen Heart ●●

Merits: Danger Sense 2, Fast Reflexes 1, Fleet of Foot 3, Fighting Style (Archery) 3, Status (Winter Court) 5, Mantle (Winter) 5, Contacts (Homeless) 2, Hollow* 5 (Amenities 0, Size 1, Wards 3, Doors 4), Ritual Gateway 1

Flaws: Illiterate

Willpower: 4

Clarity: 1

Derangements: Paranoia (severe), Avoidance (mild)

Initiative: +7

Defense: 3

Armor: padded clothing (1 vs. Weaponry, 0 vs. Firearms)

Speed: 13

Health: 8

Wyrd: 3

Glamour/per Turn: 12/3

*collective Hollow, owned communally by all Winter courtiers.

Total XP: 246

Attacks	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Size	Special
Crossbow	4 (L)	80/160/320	8	3	Armor Piercing 2
Knife	1 (L)	14/28/56	6 thrown, 3 to stab	1	--
Brawl	0 (B)	--	3	--	--

Miss Winnie (Winnifred Jones)

Quote: “Children, it’s time to go inside now. Miss Winnie got to talk with these... nice people... by herself.”

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Wrath

Concept: daycare mama-bear at a school for pregnant teens

Seeming: Beast

Kith: Hunterheart

Court: Courtless

Entitlements: The Order of the Hallowed Garden (*Swords at Dawn*, pg. 150)

Background: Miss Winnie is the head childcare provider at [Catherine Ferguson Academy](#), a high school for pregnant teens and young mothers. While the mothers are in class, Miss Winnie and her trained staff care for the children just like they would at any daycare center. But unlike most daycare centers in Detroit, this means taking the children outside to play on the academy’s generous acreage of fenced-in urban farmland, orchards, and flowerbeds. Miss Winnie is also in charge of the school’s apiary, collecting honey and beeswax for sale at Eastern Market.

Appearance: Miss Winnie is a *big* black woman, who towers above the toddlers to early-gradeschoolers which cluster around her calves. Her movements are not so much slow as they are deliberate, and her muscles are well-developed by constant physical exertion. You wouldn’t know it to look at her, though, since it’s all covered by a layer of soft, insulating fat that kids love to snuggle up against (all the children agree that Miss Winnie gives the *best* hugs).

To fae eyes, Miss Winnie is a hulking ursine figure, covered from head to toe in a thick, soft coat of dark-brown fur. Her broad hands end in curved yellow claws, and her mouth is full of long white teeth. Her dark eyes are black beads in a wide face, and her arms ripple with concealed muscle beneath her pelt.

Storytelling Hints: While she has no children of her own, Miss Winnie is fiercely loyal to her young charges, and is more than willing to defend them against any and all attempts to harm them. More than one irresponsible young father has been tossed out on his ear for “inappropriate behavior” towards his

child (i.e., raising or disciplining the child in a way she doesn't approve of). She's not afraid of rounding on the young mothers, either, if she thinks they're not raising their kids right.

Pledges

- The Ancient Pact (Principal Andrews)
- The Pledge of Horn and Bone (children under her care)

Gear & Equipment

First aid kit, walkie-talkie, whistle

Attributes

Mental: Intelligence 1, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 1, Stamina 3

Social: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Skills

Mental: Academics (Child Psychology) 2, Medicine 2

Physical: Athletics (Sprinting) 4, Brawl (Grappling) 3

Social: Animal Ken (Bears, Bees) 3, Empathy 1, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Subterfuge 1

Contracts: Fang and Talon (Bees) ●●●, Den ●, Stone ●

Merits: Literate 2, Brawling Dodge 1, Quick Healer 4, Allies (Teachers) 2

Willpower: 6

Clarity: 8

Initiative: +4

Defense: 1

Speed: 9

Health: 8

Wyrd: 3

Glamour/per Turn: 12/3

Total XP: 55

Mike "Wrecker" Gorski

Created and written by Admiral Squish

Quote: *"All this has gotta come down if we're gonna build it right."*

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Wrath

Concept: living engine of (re)construction

Seeming: Elemental

Kith: Render (*Winter Masques*, pg. 91)

Court: None

Entitlement: The Ancient and Accepted Order of Bridgemasons⁶

Background: Son of a successful contractor, Mike was the first in his family to graduate college. He received degrees in both engineering and architecture before being called home to take over the family business from his ailing father. Unfortunately, he lacked the business and social skills his father had, and the business was soon struggling. Desperate to save the business, he accepted a lucrative, if somewhat unusual commission from a mysterious businessman, and took a dozen men with him to save his company.

Arriving at the job site, Mike and his crew found themselves in an impossible city, unable to escape. There were hundreds of half-finished buildings of stitched-together styles, from sleek futuristic buildings capped with thatch roofs, to modern high-rises ringed by moats, to stone keeps with satellite dishes. The city was lorded over by “The Boss,” a bizarre, capricious industrial magnate looking for the *perfect* headquarters. While Mike’s crew was drafted into the construction of more of these insane structures, Mike was saddled with the odious role of overseer. He was forced to drive the crews ever-faster, inspect the work to ensure it met the ever-changing and often impossible requirements of The Boss, and tear down whatever didn’t. He quickly became the face of the enemy to the construction crews, as much at fault as The Boss for their predicament. Over what felt like years of endless construction, inspection, demolition and reconstruction, Mike was forced to become mechanical, both literally and figuratively. Emotionless, inflexible, efficient, and powerful.

When The Boss brought in a new crew to accelerate the timetable, Mike was jarred from his repetition, and realized that he had to get out. He gathered up whatever workers still had any measure of trust in him, and led them in an attempt to bust out. Eventually, Mike managed to smash through a wall into the Hedge and then back into the mortal world. But not without days of panicked flight, hounded by The Boss’ goons every step, and many escapees recaptured.

Emerging back into the mortal world, Mike found only two weeks to have passed. But explaining away the two weeks he and what remained of his crew his crew were gone, as well as the disappearance of the other half his crew, would be no easy task. Upon returning to his office, much to his unease, he found a beautiful leather briefcase with a completed invoice ‘for services rendered’ on top of it. Opening it, after hours of deliberation, he found within a folder with all the paperwork needed to justify what had happened and enough cash to finance his business for years to come.

Now, Mike is a relatively successful contractor, with an entirely new crew. He’s a bit of a distant boss, managing through a supervisor. He tends to come in and inspect the job sites at night, when nobody else is around, and leave notes for the supervisor. Those on the morning shift often comment on how much the afternoon crews get done, but silently puzzle at how their cement work could still be wet after setting all night...

Appearance: Mike appears to be a powerfully built man in his early thirties, with dark, buzzed-short hair, a square, smooth-shaven jawline, and a heavy brow. His expression is typically serious, somewhat dour

⁶ *Lords of Summer*, p. 109

even, and even when he smiles it doesn't seem to quite reach his eyes. He has very broad, square shoulders, a thick neck, and dense, solid muscles, hidden under a bit of a paunch.

Underneath the Mask, Mike is a machine. A skeletal frame of machined steel, its proportions an exaggerated imitation of human, powered by massive hydraulics that pump and hiss softly with every tiny movement he makes. Instead of skin, plates of red, orange, and yellow sheet metal are riveted to his frame, like armor plating, covering most, but not all, of his inner workings. Bands of striped yellow and black ring many of his joints, warning the onlooker of the inherent danger. His eyes glow a faint blue beneath the low rim of a metal imitation of a hard hat, which seems to be either part of his skull or fused to it so firmly it's almost pointless to distinguish them. His overlarge jaw suggests comparison to the blade of a bulldozer or the shovel of a backhoe. His legs are short and stocky, and his feet are flat and heavy, seemingly designed to be planted immovably, rather than moving quickly. Long, incredibly powerful arms end in massive hands, with long, clawlike fingers, reminiscent of miniature boom-arms off construction vehicles.

Storytelling Hints: While he may seem to be little more than a big, dumb brute at first glance, and he can certainly play the role, in truth, Mike is a highly intelligent individual. He has both an academic and deeply practical understanding of engineering and architecture, allowing him to apply his great strength to an even greater effect. He also has a deep appreciation for both, and often marvels at particularly impressive structures and feats of engineering. He usually tries to solve his problems by applying engineering principles, either literally or figuratively, a strategy which doesn't usually adapt all that well to social interaction. His nonverbal sounds, such as coughs, chuckles, and grunts, tend to sound almost like engine noises.

Pledges

- The Reaper's Pledge

Attributes

Mental: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 2

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 1, Stamina 3

Social: Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Skills

Mental: Academics 2, Computer 1, Crafts (Construction) 2, Science (Engineering) 3

Physical: Athletics 3, Brawl (Grappling) 4, Drive (Large Vehicles) 2, Weaponry 2

Social: Empathy 1, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 2

Contracts: Elements (Stone) ●, Elements (Metal) ●, Stone ●●●

Merits: Brownie's Boon 1, Fighting Style (Martial Arts) 3, Iron Skin 4, Literate 2

Willpower: 4

Clarity: 7

Defense: 1

Initiative: +3

Speed: 10

Size: 5

Health: 8

Wyrd: 2

Glamour/per Turn: 11/2

Total XP: 6

Thurgood

Quote: *"I know you in there, you dumb [ethnic slur], so don't act like you can't hear me! You know how this works: it's Rent Day! Now open up this door 'fore I bust it down!"*

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Sloth

Concept: tenement landlord/superintendent

Seeming: Ogre

Kith: Render (*Winter Masques*, pg. 91)

Court: Courtless

Entitlements: None

Background: Thurgood is the landlord and superintendent of the [Thornton Blackburn](#) Homes, a high-rise tenement building in one of Detroit's most-blighted neighborhoods. His building is unusually safe (very few drugs, almost no crime), but the mortal tenants are always whispering about the "weird stuff" they see and hear. This is mainly due to the tenement's unusually high concentration of fae residents: Thornton attracts changeling tenants by offering them free or reduced rent, and makes up the difference by charging them in Glamour, Tokens, Pledge-enforced favors, and other goods and services (including sex).

Appearance: Thurgood's mortal tenants see him as an African-American man in his early fifties, with stooped shoulders, beefy forearms, and a pronounced beer-gut. He generally wears denim suspenders over a sweat- and grease-stained wifebeater, and throws on a heavy, shapeless old coat when the heater stops working. Graying eyebrows are the only hair on his bald head.

Thurgood's fae tenants (and ensorcelled mortals) can see that his heavy fists curl into worn and dented hammers, able to smash drywall or doorways with equal ease; it is their tremendous weight which causes him to walk with a stoop.

Storytelling Hints: Thurgood is illiterate, but most of his tenants don't know it; he has a Wizeden retainer, Honest Jack, who earns his keep by balancing the accounts and reading Thurgood's mail to him. Whenever Thurgood is asked to read something, he tucks it away in his overalls and promises to "look at it later, in my office."

While he's not a genius, Thurgood does have an excellent business sense and can stick to a budget. He knows how to fix pretty much anything that breaks in his building, but he generally doesn't bother until it absolutely, positively can't be put off any longer. Thornton is especially good at shaking

people down for rent, and threatening them with eviction if they don't pay on time. He's even been known to break into his tenants' rooms on occasion, to collect what he's owed and make sure they're not holding out on him.

Despite the way he treats his human tenants, Thurgood has a soft spot for animals, particularly dogs: he takes in any stray he can find, and cannot stand to see a cat or dog harmed in any way. His favorite pet is a pitbull named "Babyface", with whom Thornton shares both his meals and his single bed in the boiler-room.

Pledges

The Landlord's Vow

- **Type:** Corporal, Mortal Emblem (Key-ring)
- **Tasks:** Endeavor, Medial (-2, landlord agrees to keep the building operational and and secure); Favor, Medial (-2, tenant agrees to tithe Glamour, Tokens, favors, or other non-monetary compensation to landlord instead of rent-money)
- **Boons:** Glamour (+2, landlord receives Glamour monthly/seasonally); Favor, Greater (+3, tenant lives in a safe, functional building without paying rent)
- **Sanction:** Curse, Medial (-2, landlord is cursed with bad luck); Banishment (-3, tenant is evicted)
- **Duration:** Moon (+2, both parties)
- **Invocation:** 1 Willpower (both parties)

Similar to ancient oaths of hospitality and fosterage, a fae landlord may opt to charge his changeling tenants in Glamour instead of money. The tenants get a place to live which is operational and safe (if not necessarily pretty, or pleasant to live in), and the landlord gets a bumper-crop of Glamour, Tokens, and other non-monetary compensation on the first day of each month.

Gear & Equipment

Tool belt, work-stained overalls, steel-toed boots, toolbox, walkie-talkies, heavy Carhartt™ coat (counts as light armor)

Attributes

Mental: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 2

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Skills

Mental: Academics (Tenant Law) 1, Crafts (Repairs) 2, Politics 1, Science 1

Physical: Athletics 3, Brawl (Boxing) 4, Larceny (Lockpicking) 3, Weaponry 2

Social: Animal Ken 1, Intimidation (Rent) 2, Persuasion (Cutting a Deal) 2, Subterfuge 2

Contracts: Artifice ••, Stone •••, Oath and Punishment ••, The Den (Boiler Room) •

Merits: Fighting Style (Boxing) 2, Retainer 2 (Honest Jack), Strong Back 2, Resources 2, Status 1

Flaws: Illiterate

Willpower: 4

Clarity: 7
Initiative: +4
Defense: 2
Armor: thick clothing (1B/0L)
Speed: 10
Health: 8
Wyrd: 3
Glamour/per Turn: 12/3

Total XP: 82

Attacks	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Size	Special
Crescent wrench	3 (B)	n/a	5	2	n/a
Brass knuckles	1 (B)	n/a	8	0	n/a

Calliope Washington

Quote: *"I got fire in my belly and murder in my eye/ And my words they like smoke-signals risin' to the sky/ I know where I came from and I know where I'm goin'/ And if you try and hold me back I'll knock you down without slowin'!"*

Virtue: Hope

Vice: Pride

Concept: underage idealist

Seeming: Fairest

Kith: Flamesiren (*Winter Masques*, pg. 83)

Court: Courtless

Entitlements: None yet (aspires to join the Bishopric of Blackbirds)

Background: When Calliope was twelve years old, her family's house caught fire. Her mother and step-father thought that everyone had gotten out safely, but in truth it was a fetch whom the firefighters pulled from Calliope's bed. Callie spent the next three years in Arcadia as a thrall to the Blazing Baron, a devilish True Fae who liked to make the young woman sing for him, and would burn her whenever her voice failed or she ran out of rhymes. Eventually she escaped him and made her way back to the mortal world, only to arrive at the charred, still-smoldering remains of her family's home: they had been killed in a house-fire the night before, just hours ahead of her return. Numb with shock and grief, Callie was taken to a mental hospital where she spent the next few years slowly learning to readjust to the mortal world, and life without her family.

Callie considered joining each of the Courts as she stumbled through her journey of grief, but the most she ever gained was a little Court Goodwill which evaporated as soon as she left. Her unwillingness to commit soon made her a pariah, unwelcome anywhere but at Courtless gatherings. One night, a mortal friend tried to coax Calliope out of her funk by bringing her to an underground rap battle, where one rapper dissed another by implying that he went to prison on purpose (for all the gay sex, of course).

Righteous anger flared in Callie's heart; she marched up on stage, ripped the mic out of his hands, and began to freestyle for the first time since her Durance. All of her rage and fear and sorrow and desire came boiling out of her, and for the first time since her homecoming she felt cleansed, like something dark and terrible inside her was being burned away. The crowd went wild, and she caught the attention of one fae audience-member, a Blackbird Bishop named Auntie Sable who introduced her to "The Movement" to establish an entirely new Freehold in Detroit, where ALL changelings would be welcome.

Callie had finally found her fire: something to drive her, something meaningful to work towards. Rechristening herself "Old English DeeJay," she threw herself into Detroit's underground hip-hop scene and changeling politics with equal fervor. Although she's not yet legally an adult, Calliope (whose name means "beautiful voice" in Greek) has a larger-than-life presence in Detroit's underground hip-hop scene, where performers are judged solely (and often harshly) by raw talent and stage presence alone, where no amount of fame or experience can buy back a shattered reputation or make an excuse for sloppy, uninspiring verse. Only time will tell whether Calliope's high degree of visibility and burgeoning fame will make her a hero for Detroit to unite behind, or whether it will paint a target on her back for mortals, changelings, and True Fae alike to aim at.

Appearance: Mortals perceive Calliope as a petite African-American girl in her mid teens. She has a slender, slightly androgynous figure and a passionate demeanor. Her eyes can flash with anger or glow with genuine warmth. Her long feathery hair (it's natural, not a weave) is black as midnight and very shiny; in her fae mien it has a slight rainbow sheen, like the feathers of a crow or raven. Her aquiline nose suggests Middle Eastern or Indian heritage, possibly even Native American.

Behind the Mask, Calliope's skin shines like burnished bronze, and radiates heat. Brilliant feathers of gold, red, orange, even green and violet cover her entire body and fan out beneath her forearms.

Storytelling Hints: Calliope is sarcastic, a little mischievous, and very clever; sometimes a little too clever for her own good. She's one of those people who can always think of the perfect comeback, and can't always stop herself from saying it out loud.

She's often afraid—of her past, of the future—but she turns her fear into a motivator instead of allowing it to paralyze her. Frequently angry (and with good cause), but doesn't allow it to blind her. She's sad, but doesn't wallow in self-pity. She hopes for better things, but doesn't let optimism cloud her judgement. There's no denying she's an exceptional young woman, but in a city that seems to feed on hope, is being exceptional enough to keep her from getting eaten alive?

Pledges: The Penitent's Pledge ("Detroit Is Making A Comeback") - Normally a religious vow of faith, Calliope has sworn to convince all non-believers that despite all evidence to the contrary, Detroit *is* getting better. This pledge grants her a +2 bonus to Persuasion and a free Holistic Awareness merit, as long as she demonstrates her devotion to Detroit by physically remaining within the city's borders (whether this includes Highland Park, Hamtramck, and/or the Hedge is left to the Storyteller's discretion).

Attributes

Mental: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2
Social: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Skills

Mental: Crafts 3, Medicine (First-Aid) 2, Politics (Fae) 2
Physical: Athletics (Sprinting) 1, Drive 2, Weaponry 2
Social: Empathy 1, Expression ([Rap battles](#)) 4, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize 2, Streetwise 2

Contracts: Dream ••, Elements (Fire) ••, Goblin (Trading Luck for Fate) •, Phoenix •••• [see below], Vainglory •••

Merits: Contacts 2, Holistic Awareness 3, Inspiring 4, Literate 2, Meditative Mind 1, Mentor 2 (“Auntie Sable”), Striking Looks 2

Willpower: 4

Clarity: 8

Initiative: +5

Defense: 3

Speed: 10

Health: 7

Wyrd: 2

Flaw: Minor

Glamour/per Turn: 11/2

Total XP: 185

Attacks	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Size	Special
Brawl	0 (B)	n/a	1	n/a	—
Wrench	2 (B)	n/a	4	2	Cold Iron

Contracts of the Phoenix

created by Caligo Mourningstar

The mythical Phoenix is a bird that is found in multiple cultures across the world. Beauty, fire, purity and rebirth are all common themes of the Phoenix’s legend. Though the Phoenix is a bird of longevity, those who use its clauses find that they must wait a sanctioned time in order to use them again. This is an affinity Contract for the Fairest and Beasts.

Song of the Phoenix (•)

The Phoenix song is that of legendary beauty. Able to bring those that hear it to tears. Those who enter into the Contract of Phoenix first learn of this clause find that their own songs bring out a strong emotional response from those that hear it. This need not be a song in the typical sense. A poetry reading, an orchestra recital, or even a speech can be considered an individual song of sorts. The only condition is that it must be heard.

Cost: 1 Glamour

Dice Pool: Expression + Wyrd

Action: Extended (required successes equal to highest Resolve + Composure of the group. One roll equals one turn)

Catch: The changeling enacts this clause to help himself sing.

Sanction: 1 Scene

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The performance is a resounding failure. The emotion conjured up is one of mockery and disrespect. Any that heard what the changeling performed gain a +2 to all resistance rolls made against the changeling for the rest of and the following scene. The sanction also activates.

Failure: No progress is made to completing the song.

Success: The character performs an auditory performance. It emotionally moves those that hear it first hand. Any successes may be added to Harvest Glamour dice pool from those that heard the performance for the rest scene. The emotional response is always to which the changeling desires. If he sings a comedic musical song people will feel humor and joy. A sad speech brings sorrow.

Exceptional Success: The song stirs up such strong emotions that all who hear it first hand are brought to tears. For the rest of the scene the changeling has a +2 modifier to all social rolls to anyone who witnessed it.

Author's note: Originally I made this contract different. But I changed it to what you see now because I had inadvertently created Songs of Arcadia. But I used the possible emotional response as the focus to help glamour harvesting.

Feathers of the Firebird (••)

The feathers of the Firebird of Russian folklore are said to glow or even be made of flames. Characters who enact this contract find their bodies engulfed in the mythical fires of the Phoenix. The Firebird was notoriously hard to catch and harder still to keep as it would break out of cages designed to hold it and would fly free once more.

Cost: 2 Glamour

Dice Pool: Strength + Wyrđ

Action: Instant

Catch: The changeling willing lets the fires of this contract burn him. The contract burns the changeling for 1 point of lethal damage regardless if it activates or not.

Sanction: 1 Scene

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The fires fail to ignite, and the sanction activates. What's more an ill omen falls upon the changeling. For the rest of the scene the changeling does not benefit from the 10 again rule.

Failure: The clause fails to activate. The sanction does not activate and he may try to activate it again.

Success: The clause activates and the changeling's body is covered in the flames. He may choose to not cover his entire body instead choosing only to have a specific limb(s), as being completely covered could be dangerous for allies in close areas. But once this area is chosen it can not be altered until the scene is finished and he reactivates the contract. The flames can be extinguished by the user's will though this ends the contract.

When touching someone with the flame covered body part that person suffers automatic lethal damage of the changeling's Wyrđ rating halved (rounded up), per turn of contact. Likewise any brawl roll made against the changeling suffers an equal amount of damage. If the changeling is not covered by the flames the opponent must be a targeted attack to avoid the flames. The flames also reduce durability of objects when trying to break them. When sticking an object the changeling's Wyrđ rating halved (rounded up) is reduced from the object's durability.

The flames are mystical in nature and do not ignite flammable objects though they will inflict structural damage in the form of burns, flammable liquids and gases simply fail to ignite when coming into contact with this flame.

These flames need not be red, phoenix plumage is so varied that any color is suitable and varies from changeling to changeling. Reds are typical, but blues and copper are not uncommon, even flames of black and white are possible. Contract of Elements do not affect the fires of this clause and they cannot be extinguished unless the user wills it, or is knocked unconscious.

The flames can also be used to illuminate rooms. The illumination is equal to that of a torch.

Exceptional Success: Not only can the changeling cover his entire body within the flames but the flames somewhat rejuvenate the changeling. The user heals up to 3 points of bashing damage upon its activation.

Author's note: This contract was particularly hard for me to get down. I wanted an attack clause dealing with flames without treading too much into the Armor of the Elements' Fury clause in the Contracts of Elements. I took inspiration from *Night Horrors: Grim Fears's* Fenghuang using automatic damage as opposed to an attack roll. I wanted to make it very useful but also a tad restrictive in how it is used. I liked the idea of just a changeling's arms or legs being covered in flames so I used that. I wanted to give it more use than just attacking so I added the durability part in as well, using the fact that the Firebird always seemed to fly free.

Healing Flames (●●●)

The phoenix is commonly associated with rejuvenation. An immortal bird that heals any damage inflicted upon it with healing fires. The user of this clause benefits in the miraculous healing ability. If the user is not wounded at all the contract simply fails to activate.

Cost: 2 Glamour + 1 Willpower.

Dice Pool: Stamina + Wyrd

Action: Reflexive

Catch: The user is lying in his own bed.

Sanction: 1 Day

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Flames erupt from the wounds but instead of healing the user it causes extreme pain. The user must succeed in a Resolve + Composure roll or fall unconscious due to the pain. The sanction activates as well.

Failure: The contract fails to activate the sanction also fails to activate and the user may try again.

Success: Fire burns from the wounds away. For every success, heal 1 lethal, or 2 bashing. 2 successes may be used to downgrade aggravated damage to lethal. He may choose to heal himself in any way he chooses, which wounds get priority is strictly up to the changeling. This does not heal wounds given through illnesses.

Exceptional Success: No additional benefits besides the amount of damage the changeling can heal.

Author's Note: I really like the part of the phoenix's motif that involves regeneration. I used vampire's healing abilities as inspiration to how this would work, though I was tempted to use how I understand Geist's heal and just convert all damage to bashing. I might change it depending on reactions to this clause. The sanction was also hard for me to come down to. Originally it was 1 week, but I really felt that being too harsh. I also had the Medicine skill part of the Dice Pool, but I felt that would also just add way too many dice.

Huma's Shadow (●●●●)

The phoenix is commonly associated with positions of leadership. It is said that if you were to stand in the shadow of the Persian phoenix, the Huma, you would be bestowed kingship. Having the title of King is no small matter to the Lost, and the way one proves his title is through the manifested mantle of the Crown. This clause however allows the crown to manifest upon those of the user's choosing, if only for a short matter of time and if the Wyrd permits it. As the phoenix is often referred to as "the king of birds," this clause may be used on the changeling himself. The Changeling must be in the presence of the subject in order to enact this clause.

Cost: 3 Glamour + 1 willpower

Dice Pool: Presence + subject's Mantle (if he has no mantle then Wyrd).

Action: Instant

Catch: The subject is standing in the user's shadow.

Sanction: 1 Session

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The contract fails, the sanction activates. What's more, the Wyrd marks the subject as a pretender to the throne. The subject may not be targeted by this contract for a year and a day.

Failure: The crown fails to manifest, the sanction does not activate and maybe tried again.

Success: Upon successful activation of this clause the subject has a crown manifested into his mien for the next 24 hours. Besides the social ramification of having a manifested crown the subject is able to call in the benefit of that crown. The crown doesn't actually affect the Mantle rating of the subject. This clause can also work in a Freehold where that crown already has been manifested. It doesn't take away the crown from the other king, instead making a second crown for the duration.

Though not everyone is entitled to the crown. This clause simply helps the Wyrd manifest upon certain individuals. It is ultimately at the Storyteller's discretion if the crown manifests or not. Typically it works on individuals that have a high standing within their court. For example, a civil war erupts in the Summer court, the leader of one of

the sides is a likely candidate for this clause. Also dethroned kings also are likely to have the clause work on them, as once a king always a king.

The crown created through this clause is recognized by the Wyrd it is more brittle than an actual crown. Once the subject uses the actual benefit of the crown at the end of the scene it breaks and fades away. Though it can be re-created by this clause again.

If the subject is not part of a court but once was, this contract will manifest a crown of the court he once belonged to. If he had been part of multiple courts, then whichever court he was a greater part of will manifest.

If the subject was never part of a court the clause will most likely fail. Though a particularly wrathful Courtless might manifest a Summer like crown into his mantle.

Exceptional Success: Along with the manifested crown, the subject has a stronger aura of authority about them. For the next 24 hours the subject's mantle also increases by 1 point. If the subject already has a Mantle rating of 5 or is no longer part of a court then he simply gains 1 level of Status (Freehold). Also the crown will not break if you use the crown's benefit.

Author's Note: I really liked the idea being the Huma's shadow bestowing kingship. Phoenix around the world are commonly associated with kings as well. Kings are a big deal in changeling and it felt too good to just pass it by. The problem was how could it fit into the changeling setting without being way too powerful. I remembered the crowns, and decided to use that. I didn't like the idea of this contract being used to give anyone a crown, it would be too easily abused. So I added the part of clearing it with the Storyteller.

Rise from the Ashes (•••••)

The most famous aspect of the phoenix is what happens after it dies. It bursts into flames which consume it into ashes, and from the ashes it arises again newly reborn. A changeling that learns this most powerful clause can come back from death's door, though he should not count on doing so too often. This clause can only be activated a few moments after the changeling dies. The changeling must want to live otherwise it fails to activate and the subject simply passes on.

Cost: All remaining glamour + all remaining willpower

Dice Pool: Resolve + Wyrd

Action: Instant

Catch: The user was burned to death.

Sanction: A year and a day

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The changeling dies. What is more it's spirit goes straight to the underworld.

Failure: The changeling dies.

Success: The changeling dies, then his body is engulfed in the phoenix's fire. The body burns away to ashes, and from the ashes the changeling emerges completely healed. He does however not have any glamour or willpower left, unless the catch was used to which he simply has no more willpower. Rumor has it, however, that if you die from natural causes relating to old age, and the changeling's spirit still activates this clause what emerges from the ashes is a newborn changeling.

Exceptional Success: Not only does the Changeling emerge from the fire healed, but any pre-existing conditions are healed as well. A cripple may be able to walk, the blind able to see, a lost arm would be back and fully functional. Any disease may be gone. Healing effects should be discussed between the Storyteller and the player.

Author's Notes: And finally the biggest part of phoenix folklore: Rebirth. I wanted this to be a last card to play. If the changeling is truly overwhelmed this clause will not do him too much good. But it has the potential to save his life. Also with the time limit it prohibits abuse. Sure a changeling could fake a suicide, but doing so is a great gamble to one who has acquired this contract. Suddenly using it keeps a changeling from feeling immortal to frighteningly exposed for a whole year after he uses it.

Hobgoblins

Gremlin

Quote: *"Your thingamabob was broken, but don't worry; we fixed it for you."*

Virtue: Justice (i.e., "fixing" things which work like they're supposed to)

Vice: Greed

Concept: impulsive tinkerer/saboteur

Background: Gremlins are nasty little beasties who delight spreading chaos, usually through acts of theft, vandalism, and sabotage. They make no distinction between slapstick comedy and grievous bodily harm; to them, anything that causes inconvenience for humans (up to and including serious injury) is comedy gold. Unlike most Hobs, they seem to prefer the mortal world to the Hedge, though they are known to hoard parts, components, and miscellaneous useless junk in their filthy shared Hollows. Oddly, they also make no distinction between organic and inorganic matter when it comes to collecting "spare parts": their workshops are just as likely to contain buckets of pigeon bones and complete human spinal columns as they are rolls of duct tape or WD-40. The ramshackle machines which they cobble together often include organic components (even living tissues), much to the disgust and horror of human onlookers.

Appearance: Diminutive even by Hob standards, gremlins stand barely three feet tall, with needlelike teeth, orange eyes with vertical slits, three-fingered hands, and oversized batlike ears. They typically smell of car exhaust, gasoline, and engine oil, with an undertone of body-odor.

Storytelling Hints: Though intelligent, gremlins are creatures of impulse, never sticking with any project longer than it amuses or intrigues them. They have a very short attention span, and almost all of it is reserved for machines and the mishaps that result when they go haywire. By the twisted logic of the Fae, they consider anything that isn't malfunctioning in some way to be "broken," and will generously take it upon themselves to "fix" the object, machine, or creature in question until it operates in a manner that suits their tastes (or until it stops working entirely, at which point they'll just break it down for spare parts and move on to something else). As a result of their small Size and low Health, gremlins prefer to either flee from combat or attack in large groups.

Gear & Equipment

Greasy (and/or bloody) rag, rusty monkey-wrench, oil can, screwdriver

Attributes

Mental: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 1

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1

Social: Presence 1, Manipulation 2, Composure 1

Skills

Mental: Computer 2, Crafts (Sabotage) 3, Medicine 2, Science 2

Physical: Drive⁷ 2, Larceny (Petty Theft) 2, Stealth (Urban Blight) 3, Weaponry 1

Social: Streetwise 2, Subterfuge (“Of course it’s safe!”) 1

Turn: Artifice (mimics all 5 dots, can be used once per day)

Merits: Fleet of Foot 3, Hollow 3 (Size 1, Doors 1, Amenities 0, Wards 1), Technophile⁸ (Machinery) 2, Workshop⁹ (Machinery) 1

Willpower: 2

Initiative Mod: 4

Size: 3

Defense: 4

Speed: 12

Health: 4

Ban: Gremlins find bright light painful, and take lethal damage from sunlight as vampires (see table below).

Intensity or Exposure	Health Points/Turn
Faint, filtered sunlight (Example: light through heavy, closed drapes; cloud cover; twilight)	1 point
Filtered or weak sunlight (Example: light through thin drapes; outside on cloudy day; daylight through a window; reflection of sun in a mirror)	2 points
Direct sunlight	3 points
Exposure	Damage
Small part of body exposed (Example: one hand; part of the face; wearing heavy clothes, sunglasses, gloves and a broad-brimmed hat or balaklava)	+0 points
Large part of body exposed (Example: a leg; an arm; whole head)	+1 point
Much of body exposed (Example: whole torso; wearing thin clothing)	+2 points

Attacks	Damage	Dice Pool	Range	Size	Special
Brawl	0 (B)	chance die	n/a	n/a	n/a
Monkey wrench	2 (B)	2	n/a	2	n/a
Screwdriver	0 (L)	2	n/a	1	n/a
Oil can	n/a	4	5/10/20	1	Blinding

⁷ Due to their small size, gremlins generally cannot use Drive without at least one assistant to work the pedals and/or the clutch.

⁸ *Armory*, pg. 208

⁹ *Rites of Spring*, pg. 97

Madison the Bridge-Troll

Quote: *“The rates’ve gone up since last time you crossed. Now either pay up or get off my property.”*

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Greed

Concept: avaricious tolltaker

Background: As in the mortal world, there is a river which runs between Detroit and Windsor in the Hedge as well: it is known as the Burning River, and appears to be a psychoactive “echo” of the time [in 1969 when the oil-matted surface of the Rouge River caught fire and burned for several days](#). Despite its name, the river isn’t *always* burning, but it is always slicked with a vile slurry of garbage, filth, and oily black scum. The river catches fire unpredictably, and only one bridge spans this loathsome waterway: that bridge belongs to a Hob known as Madison the Bridge-Troll, and he will happily let you cross it... after you pay his toll.

Every time Madison lets someone cross his bridge, he takes careful note of exactly what and how much they paid. If and when they attempt to cross his bridge again, he charges them slightly more than he did last time. This can lead to some tricky bargaining, as Madison (being a hobgoblin) is completely uninterested in mortal currency of any kind. He prefers to charge in more esoteric ways: Tokens and tithes of Glamour are obvious alternatives, but Madison also deals in less-tangible goods such as favors, information, promises, and even memories.

Appearance: A huge, hulking brute whose heavy brows and pronounced underbite conceal sharp business acumen, and a heart as greedy as any miser’s. Freakishly-long arms allow Madison to swing all the way around the underside of his bridge, allowing him to drop off one side and come back up on the other, or swing along monkey-bars style (which grants him a +3 bonus on Stealth rolls) until he’s close enough for an ambush.

Storytelling Hints: Madison knows that others expect him to be as stupid as the troll in “The Three Billy-Goats Gruff”, and he likes to play into this stereotype during first encounters. He fakes foolishness and poor judgement, lulling his victims into a false sense of superiority, until he reveals his full awareness of exactly how the players are trying to pull one over on him... and then doubles his price as punishment for their presumption.

If Madison has one weakness, it’s his terrible and overwhelming fear of competition. He will go to extreme lengths to prevent, threaten, or sabotage anyone whom he thinks is even *considering* getting into his line of work. He’s been known to hire the Tolltaker Knights, employ privateers, and even bust kneecaps himself when all else fails. The players might be able to direct Madison towards their enemies if they can convince him that those individuals represent a threat to his monopoly.

Pledges

- **Free Passage:** Madison is an equal-opportunity businessman. *Anyone*, be they changeling, mortal, fetch, hobgoblin, True Fae, or any other kind of beastie, may cross his bridge once they pay his toll.

Gear & Equipment

Grimy utility vest, worn hard hat, steel-toed boots, 1 jarmyn fruit¹⁰, 2 amaranthines¹¹

Attributes

Mental: Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Presence 4, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

Skills

Mental: Crafts (Repairs) 3, Investigation (Appraisal) 4, Occult (The Hedge) 4

Physical: Athletics (Climbing) 4, Brawl 3, Stealth 1, Weaponry (Club) 4

Social: Animal Ken (Hedge Beasts) 1, Intimidation (“Get off my property!”) 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge (Spotting Lies) 3

Turn: Contracts of the Den¹² (mimics all 5 dots, can be used once per day)

Merits: Eidetic Memory 1, Giant 4, Hollow 9 (Size 3, Doors 2, Wards 2, Amenities 2), Market Sense 1¹³, Token 3 (Hoarfrost Spine), Token 4 (Biting Grotesquerie), Token 4 (Bug Cudgel), Weaponry Dodge 1

Willpower: 5

Clarity: N/A

Initiative Mod: +7

Defense: 4

Speed: 15

Size: 6

Health: 10

Wyrd: N/A

Attacks	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Size	Special
Brawl	0 (B)	n/a	9	-	n/a
Club	3 (B)	10 ft.	11	3	see “Bug Cudgel”, CtL pg. 206

Hollow: “The Smokesway Bridge”

A decrepit suspension bridge composed of rusty cables, jagged rebar, and disintegrating metal, all coated in peeling blue paint. It’s often possible to see the sludgy brown-black waters of the river below through

¹⁰ *Changeling: The Lost*, pg. 223

¹¹ *Changeling: The Lost*, pg. 223

¹² *Winter Masques*, pgs. 19-21

¹³ *Goblin Markets*, pg. 33

little holes which open up in the surface of the bridge. An occasional splash can be heard as chunks of asphalt or metal fall into the water below. The air quality is very poor, even when the river isn't burning, but Madison seems unfazed by the stink.

When he's not walking patrol with his massive club resting on one shoulder, Madison can be found sleeping (very lightly) in the cool darkness under one end or the other of his bridge, or counting his hoard in the padlocked cinderblock toll-house which stands at the midpoint.

It's not clear whether Madison built, found, stole, or inherited the bridge, but he seems to resent being asked about it.

True Fae

Le Nain Rouge

Quote: *"I gave Dey-twa ze geeft of fire, and for my trouble I was cast out, détesté! But I will not let my gift be squandered: in ze cleansing flames, I weel shape you into a tool worzy of le destin glorieuse!"*

Virtue: Gluttony

Vice: Fortitude¹⁴

Concept: embodiment of urban blight and decay

Background: No one knows how long the exiled True Fae known as *Le Nain Rouge*¹⁵ has been living in Detroit. He claims to predate even the Mound Builders, but obviously no one can verify this. What can be verified is his obsession with everything that's wrong or broken in Detroit (from potholes to why the Lions suck so much), and his belief that all of it can be directly attributed to his own actions. Perversely, he seems to also believe that Detroit's continued failure is evidence that the city is nothing without him, that if they (and Monsieur Cadillac in particular) had treated him better, he would not have been forced to act against the city for so long. Of course, it's equally likely that this is all a ruse to gain sympathy, even cooperation from a foolish motley before plunging a dagger into their backs.

Appearance: When he deigns to wear the Mask, the Nain appears to be a dishevelled little person with a weak chin, bulging eyes, stout limbs, a pronounced beer gut, and a blotchy, ruddy complexion. He can rarely resist the urge to tear his Mask asunder for long, revealing bright red skin like that of a poisonous amphibian. Small pointed horns rise up from his forehead, above eyes like glittering black beetles and a wide, fleshy mouth full of many needle-sharp teeth, which he occasionally licks with his unnaturally long tongue. His distended belly and short, stunted limbs accentuate his toad-like appearance.

¹⁴For the True Fae, the rules for recovering Willpower from Virtues and Vices are reversed.

¹⁵In French, this is pronounced "le NAN rooj," but Detroiters say it like it looks (rhymes with "pain").

Storytelling Hints: The Nain speaks with a very nasal French accent (characters who understand French will notice it's specifically a Québécois accent). Often punctuates his sentences by taking long drags on his cigars, and can't resist blowing smoke in the face of anyone who gets close enough, especially when he feels the conversation has become *ennuyeux*.

Personality-wise, the Nain is prone to violent and often contradictory mood-swings: one moment he'll be weeping crocodile tears into his beer about how Detroiters never loved him, how they rejected and hated him just because he was short and ugly and never appreciated all the good stuff he did for them... the next moment he'll be throwing things and overturning tables and swearing in French about how much he despises this stupid, ugly shithole and everyone in it.

Above all, the Nain is an ambiguous figure. On the one hand, he has done his level best for decades, perhaps centuries, to inflict pain and suffering on Detroit and its citizens. On the other hand, he seems to genuinely believe that he is persevering, alone and unaided, in the thankless task of "improving" the city—perhaps he believes that only by tearing everything down can Detroit be rebuilt in the "correct" manner (and perhaps, cynical as it is, there might be a grain of truth in that). Storytellers should emphasize that he is of two minds about Detroit: Detroit is his pride and joy and the bane of his existence, his pet project and a thorn in his side, his most hated rival and his favorite son.

The Nain does not cut an imposing figure, and his small stature and lack of true allies (the Kevorkian Society and the odd gremlin notwithstanding) makes him ill-suited for combat, especially against an entire well-armed motley; because of this, he avoids direct combat whenever possible. If cornered he can defend himself, but he much prefers to act through proxies. He is particularly adept at whipping crowds into frenzies of emotion, through the use of Contracts of the Moon, inciting Bedlam, or simply knowing how to redirect ambient frustration and anger onto a useful target. He is also fond of using ambient effects (such as raging fires, malfunctioning machinery, or widespread rioting and looting) to distract pursuers and cover his own tracks while he escapes.

[Sidebar: The Vermillion Idol]

The [historical record](#) states that during an early contact between Catholic missionaries and local Indigenous peoples, they discovered "a place that is remarkable and held in veneration by all the Indians of these countries, because of a stone idol" which was "all painted and a sort of face had been formed for it with vermilion." The priests immediately destroyed the idol, and cast the largest fragments into the deepest part of the Detroit River, not far from Belle Isle. In truth, this stone idol was an earthly prison for the True Fae who would later be known as *Le Nain Rouge*; the many offerings which the natives made to the idol were not meant for the being within it, but rather to strengthen its prison. If the idol's fragments could ever be retrieved from the silty bottom of the Detroit River, it's conceivable that they could be used to discover how to imprison him once more. It's equally likely that the fragments could be used against the Nain as weapons, either physically or psychologically (as there are few who enjoy being confronted with fragments of their former prison).

Pledges

Lord of the Dying City (Liege-Lord of the Kevorkian Society)

"Before the next three moons wax and wane, you shall perform one service of my choosing for me, whatever I ask, and for this service you shall gain your choice of wealth, power, or beauty, as long as you keep silent and do what I ask of you. Should you fail or refuse, madness shall afflict you, and your home

shall lie open and unprotected against your enemies. Should I harm you or your loved ones by my actions, may the hands of my enemies strike true against me.”

- **Type:** Corporal, Personal Emblem (leather Red Wings jacket from 1936, the first year they won the Stanley Cup)
- **Tasks:** Forbiddance (-2, vassal keeps silent about their involvement with the Nain and the Society), Alliance, medial (-2, the Nain agrees not to directly harm the vassal or their loved ones)
- **Boons:** Blessing, greater (+3, vassal's choice), Favor, greater (+3, owed to Nain)
- **Sanction:** Pishogue (-3, vassal is afflicted with Contracts of the Moon 3 and Fair Entrance), Vulnerability, violence (-3, Nain only)
- **Duration:** Season (both, +2)
- **Invocation:** 1 Willpower, 1 Glamour

The Nain Rouge has worked for centuries to undermine and destroy the City of Detroit and its inhabitants, but he didn't do it alone. Sometimes when Detroit grinds up a person and spits them out, the Nain will approach them with a mephistophelean bargain: serve the Nain in helping to destroy Detroit, and all of your fortunes will be reversed. Made short sighted by their desperation, many mortals (and even changelings) accept his offer. After all, it seems to make sense. Why struggle to save a dying city when helping to push it in the direction it's already going could make you rich or powerful or beautiful or respected or feared? Often they don't realize how deep they've gotten themselves in until the Nain comes to collect on the promised favor. More than one member of the Society has found himself standing outside a well-known business or residence with a book of matches and a can of gas, wondering how he got himself into this mess.

Although the pledge lasts only for one season, most members of the Kevorkian Society renew their oaths to the Nain on a quarterly basis. Poverty and helplessness look even worse from the outside, and who among upstanding society would ever take them back if they knew what they've done or who they did it for?

Gear & Equipment

Book of matches, cigar case, half-empty beer bottle, pocket flask of bourbon (flammable), leather Red Wings jacket, Molotov cocktail

Attributes

Mental: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social¹⁶: Presence 3, Manipulation 5, Composure 2

Skills

Mental: Crafts (Sabotage) 2, Occult 3, Science (Fire Dynamics) 5

Physical: Athletics (Escape Artist) 2, Larceny 3, Stealth (Shadows) 3, Weaponry (Improvised) 4

Social: Animal Ken 2, Empathy 2¹⁷, Persuasion (Temptation) 4, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 3

¹⁶ While wearing the Mask, the True Fae take a -1 penalty to all Social rolls and do not reroll tens.

¹⁷ This skill is limited to one dot while in the mortal world and three in any other realm (such as the Hedge or Arcadia), and becomes an automatic chance die when used to create anything in *any* realm.

Contracts: Artifice ••, Hearth •, Elements (Fire) ••••, Moon¹⁸ ••••, Smoke ••

Goblin Contracts: Fair Entrance ••, Riot¹⁹ ••••, Sabotage²⁰ •••••

Merits: Barfly 1, Fleet of Foot 3, Fast Reflexes 2, Fair Haven 3²¹ (possible locations include: Zug Island, Michigan Central Station, and The Packard Plant), Language 3 (French)

Mien Blessings²²: Blurflesh, Sovereign Limb

Sovereign Limb (Tongue): Initiative 3, Dice pool 6, Damage 0B, Defense 4, Speed 15. Attacks against the tongue must be called shots (-2 penalty), but any damage it takes (*including* bashing damage) transfers immediately to the Nain.

Flaws: Dwarf (Size 4, cannot use Drive without special accommodations or an assistant)

Willpower: 5

Clarity: 0

Initiative Mod: 9

Defense: 4

Speed: 15

Health: 7 (immune to bashing damage, except against his tongue; see above)

Wyrd: 6

- **Frailty, minor (bane)** — Cannot bear to hear the laughter of children (i.e., mortal, non-supernatural humans under the age of 12).

Glamour/per Turn: 15/6

Incite Bedlam: Once per chronicle

Total XP: ???

Attacks	Damage	Range	Dice Pool	Clip	Size	Special
Brawl	0 (L)	n/a	1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Broken beer bottle	1 (L)	10/20/40	6	1	1	9-again ²³
Club, improvised	2 (B)	10/20/40	7	1	2	n/a

¹⁸ *Rites of Spring*, pg. 105

¹⁹ *Victorian Lost*, pg. 23

²⁰ *Victorian Lost*, pg. 24

²¹ *Autumn Nightmares*, pg. 72

²² *Autumn Nightmares*, pg. 68-70

²³ Because glass is *insanely* sharp.

Chapter Five: Seeds of Change



“Most people, they wanna save Detroit. You can’t save Detroit; you gotta *be* Detroit.”

– Antonio “Shades” Agee, Detroit graffiti artist
(as quoted in [“Taking Back Detroit”](#) by Susan Ager,
writing for *National Geographic Magazine*)

Depicting Detroit

Detroit is a real city, full of real people, who (like all people) are complicated and messy. Some of them *are* lazy and ignorant, whether they live in the projects or in the Manoogian Mansion, but most of them work hard to keep themselves and their families afloat, and many are working hard to improve their city, too.

To the rest of the United States, Detroit is mainly used as the punchline of a tasteless joke about union greed, or corporate greed, or race, or class, or any number of personal boogeymen. But to the people who live there, it’s more than a home, it’s their hometown. It’s what makes them *Detroiters*, and not just Michiganders or Midwesterners. Some revel in the looks of shock and horror on strangers’ faces when they tell them they’re from *Detroit*. They get the Old English D tattooed on their necks or forearms

or just above their bikini lines, and put it on their baseball caps and bumper stickers with pride. Detroiters wear their city's sigil like a talisman or fetish, making it physically part of their bodies, just as much as a changeling's mien is part of his or her self.

When Detroiters hear broadcasts about "the tragedy of Detroit", when they see news photos that feature only ruined buildings and not the human beings who still struggle to make their living in a city others merely sneer at, when they hear pundits and talking heads bemoaning "the death of Detroit", they want to stand up and shout "*Fuck you, we're not dead, asshole! We're still here! WE'RE STILL ALIVE!*"

Legends and Rumors of Detroit

- **The Secret of Indian Village:** In the midst of an ocean of urban squalor, the neighborhood of Indian Village remains safe, clean, and astonishingly well-preserved. In fact, the enclave of well-appointed Queen Anne homes has barely changed in almost a century. Did the residents make some kind of bargain to keep their neighborhood safe while the rest of the city collapsed around them? The Lost of Detroit may whisper and wonder, but inhabitants of Indian Village remain mute on the subject.
- **Slumberland Daycare:** Twice each year, just before the autumnal and vernal equinoxes, the dead body of a child is discovered lying in the center of the tile floor of this dilapidated former daycare center, stone-cold dead but bearing no sign of physical harm. No suspect has ever been observed to "drop off" the children, but the victims are always from Detroit, always less than seven years old, and always heartbreakingly beautiful.
- **The Last House on the Block:** Despite the fact that Miss White's cozy little Cape Cod is the only structure still standing in a sea of broken roofs and fire-gutted rubble, no one has *ever* broken into her house. Even the crackheads leave her alone; when asked why they don't harass her, the junkies just shiver and say they "ain't stupid". Come to think of it, if she lives alone, can barely lift her own oversized carpet bag, and can barely survive on Social Security and her late husband's tiny pension, then who mows her lawn and tends her thriving garden?
- **The "Nail Figure" (*Nkisi Nkondi*)** is one of the most recognizable pieces in the DIA's African art collection. Each of the dozens of iron nails and blades driven into the figure's torso represents a disagreement settled, an illness cured, or a problem resolved (analogous to signing a contract or banging a judge's gavel). Perhaps the spirit which inhabits the figure would be willing to sit in judgement on an important case, if it were properly appeased and asked politely?
- **Ruinenlust:** A group of college students from Ann Arbor have disappeared into the Hedge while urbexing near the players' home turf. All these police and volunteer searchers and reporters in the area are making it difficult for the players to maintain secrecy. Do they temporarily relocate until the whole thing blows over, or do they start combing the Hedge for the wayward thrill-seekers and pray that the kids don't tell the media where they've been and who rescued them? Then again, why should the motley stick its collective neck out for a bunch of spoiled trust-fund kids who treat Detroit like a free amusement park?

- **The Gratiot²⁴ Project:** For almost ten years, an anonymous fae artist has been turning abandoned structures into works of art by [affixing hundreds of small mirrors and shards to their exteriors](#). When finished, he seals each artwork with a little glamour, to help keep the Gentry at bay. But recently, person(s) unknown have started setting fire to his “installations”. The fires aren’t being set by magic (the wards he set would protect them against that), but every time one of his installations burns, the defenses he’s built around the city grow a little weaker.
- **A Thief in the Night:** Motormouth, a Wizen with a taste for classic cars, has a problem: someone is breaking into his garage and driving his cars at night. His security systems haven’t detected any intrusion, but every morning he discovers the chrome grille of his prized 1972 Gran Torino is splattered with [fish flies](#), and the odometer reads almost a hundred miles higher than it did the night before. He tried scattering sawdust on the floor of his garage, but not only did the thief not leave any tracks, neither did the car. Whatever’s going on here, he needs it to stop *now*: the [Woodward Dream Cruise](#) starts in just three days!
- **Community Garden:** Gnorn the Gnome, an Earthbones with a green thumb, has just opened the Delmar Community Garden Project: an initiative which uses unsuspecting mortals to cultivate and distribute “tomagics,” a new hybrid of mundane tomatoes and Goblin Fruit. Gnorn’s hope is that large numbers of Detroiters will eat these all-natural, organic, locally-grown tomatoes and thereby gain some small measure of protection against being noticed by the Gentry. But is this magical camouflage worth the strange, unsettling dreams which accompany their consumption?
- **The Good Stuff:** An entrepreneurial motley has set up an organic marijuana dispensary in Detroit, and their business is booming. In fact, they’ve put out a call for any changeling who can show them where to find the choicest Goblin Fruits in the local Hedge, for their “special clients”.
- **The Great Wheel:** Judge Woodward is said to have devised his plan for Detroit’s radial layout based upon his “vast knowledge of the celestial system.” What if the spokes of his Great Wheel weren’t just meant as an exercise in urban planning, but were intended to form a titanic solar calendar? Did the abandonment of the radial plan in favor of an easier-to-manage grid system affect its potency or accuracy? Could conflicting systems of metaphysical organization be the reason why Detroit is so troubled today? And most importantly, just *what* is it marking time until?
- **The Return of the Crown:** There’s a rumor going around that a member of one of the Courts (and not necessarily its current ruler) has finally manifested their season’s crown and declared themselves monarch! Has the crown truly returned, or is this simply a desperate power-grab, maintained by glamour and Detroiters’ willingness to believe that things will finally start to get better? More importantly, will the crown’s reappearance unify its Court, or cause it to plunge into bloody civil war?

Other Supernaturals

Changelings, fetches, hobgoblins, and the True Fae are not the only monsters which prowl Detroit’s darkened streets and burned-out buildings. Other, stranger beings also inhabit the 313, with their own inscrutable designs for the city and its inhabitants.

²⁴ pronounced "GRASH-it"

- **Vampires:** After the Courts fell apart, many Kindred moved into Detroit to stake their claim. Detroit possesses so many abandoned and poorly-maintained buildings that most vampires can afford to maintain three or four different Havens (though abandoned structures have an inconvenient tendency to attract arsonists). The Ventrue are heavily involved city and suburban politics, while the Daeva prowl the downtown nightclubs and the Gangrel make themselves at home on the urban prairie. The Mekhet hoard their secrets in forgotten places, and Nosferatu are usually dismissed as crackheads on the rare occasion they're sighted. Unfortunately, the same things which attracted the Kindred in the first place are also highly attractive to Belial's Brood and other troublemakers.
- **Werewolves:** Deer and pheasants aren't the only wild animals that have returned to Detroit: for the first time since the days of the legendary [loup-garou of Grosse Pointe](#), the Uratha have been spotted within the city's borders. It seems to be a pack of newly-changed werewolves who were displaced from their hunting grounds in Michigan's Upper Peninsula by an older pack. Detroit's wide-open spaces and urban prairie, coupled with spotty law enforcement, plentiful hiding-places, and lack of reliable streetlights make finding and subduing these dangerous beasts exceptionally difficult.
 - Alternatively, a pack of Iron Masters could have been living on the urban prairie for decades, and by now they would be *very* well-established. They know all the local spirits, have numerous of safe-houses and wolf-blooded allies, and regularly patrol each locus within their vast territory. They might even be members of the [Lodge of the Thousand Steel Teeth](#).
- **Mages:** Moros mages find their magic strangely amplified in the ruins of a post-industrial necropolis: Death spells are empowered in areas of blight and impeded on the urban prairie, while the opposite is true for Life spells. Thyrsus mages are especially drawn to the urban prairie, hoping to discover what caused the death of such a great city and seeing if it can be replicated elsewhere, in an attempt to return the Earth to its natural, pre-industrial state.
- **Prometheans:** Detroit's deserted streets and vacant homes are ideal for any Promethean who wishes to go unnoticed. With so few humans around, it can take a while for the Disquiet to set in, and when it does it's barely perceptible against the city's general backdrop of decay and violence. Any building that could hide a meth lab could easily conceal an Athanor, and the large number of unclaimed bodies in the city morgue makes it easy to obtain spare parts.
- **Hunters:** Detroiters are used to not relying on cops or the government for help when things look bad. If you need something done in Detroit, you do it yourself. The Union is by far the largest and most powerful Compact, followed closely by the Long Night. The Ascending Ones have a great many feelers and dealers in Hamtramck and Dearborn.
- **Geists:** The dead of Detroit are frequently restless, and often *very* angry. Detroit's murder rate is one of the highest in the United States, and more than 90% of all homicides go unsolved; as a result of such violence, the majority of Detroit's Sin-Eaters come back as Torn. Those who die in accidental fires often become Forgotten, while a particularly brutal winter may produce new Prey among the city's many homeless and vagrants. Those who die from diseases of poverty (such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma, heart attacks, and AIDS) sometimes return as Stricken.

- **Mummies:** Scribes are often eager to sift through the rubble of Detroit's lost history, while Shepherds often find it necessary to bring rest to Detroit's restless dead, lest ambient Sekhem be polluted by the ghosts' wild passions. Although the Detroit Institute of Arts possesses only a modest collection of Egyptian art and artifacts, it also boasts a tilework dragon from the Babylonian Gates of Ishtar; the famous [Scarab Club](#) building stands immediately adjacent to the museum to this very day. Further complicating matters for the Risen, Last Dynasty International is one of the many companies which are setting up new offices in the revitalized downtown.
- **Demons:** Tempters enjoy themselves immensely in Detroit, whether they prowl the crack houses or the hipster gastropubs or the Manoogian Mansion itself. Inquisitors are often frustrated by how much of Detroit's history is lost forever, but tantalized by the possibility of rediscovering lost lore. Guardians and Destroyers often turn their natural talents towards neutralizing criminals (from thugs to politicians) who threaten their Cover or valuable Infrastructure. Psychopomps see the city as a blank canvas, ripe for the implementation of choice Infrastructure.
- **Beasts:** The overwhelming hopelessness which blankets Detroit makes it more difficult for Heroes to awaken, but this often means that when those rare, exceptional mortals finally do realize what's really going on and who's behind it, the Family are often caught flat-footed and completely unprepared. Many of Detroit's ruined houses and broken lives are the work of Ravagers, while Predators often enjoy running down their prey under cover of gang violence. Titans barely need to do anything to make Detroiters feel helpless or hopeless, and the city's lack of functional streetlights gives Lurkers a plethora of hiding-places.
- **Mad Scientists:** Most of Detroit's Geniuses packed up their labs and skipped town when their funding ran out, but a few bold souls have made their way back in recent years, cheaply obtaining laboratories (abandoned warehouses, old factories, empty hardware stores, etc.) whose sheer Size would make them prohibitively expensive in other cities. Many who left couldn't afford to take all of their Wonders with them: to this day, many Ford-era Wonders are still lying under tarps in flooded basements or dusty garages, patiently awaiting the stray spark of Mania that will reignite their strange engines.
- **Leviathans:** The close proximity of Lake St. Clair (which is three times as large as Detroit itself), combined with an extremely desperate population and a general breakdown of law and order, creates a climate uniquely suited for the development of cults. Oceanid cults are especially appropriate for Detroit, since their inherent tribalism works well on both sides of 8 Mile Road. The presence of one or more Tanninim could explain a fair portion of Detroit's spectacular rates of violence and assault, while a Bahamutan could easily find adherents simply by offering suburbanites his or her "protection" against the encroaching blight and violence. It's even possible that a lone elder Leviathan could be single handedly responsible for Detroit's decline, simply through the enormous gravity of his or her Wake.
- **Magical Girls:** Blossomings are rare in a city which despairs as deeply as Detroit, which makes them all the more precious when they do occur. A few bold Princesses have been moved by tales of Detroit's plight and have relocated to the Motor City from across the country, striving to alleviate the city's suffering. There is surprising evidence that they're actually starting to make a difference, but only time will tell whether their heroic efforts are enough to reverse half a century of mundane corruption, supernatural Taint, and all-too-human failure.

- For more about *Magical Girls in Detroit*, download the free PDF of [Ashes of the Motor City](#) by [TheKingsRaven](#) and [Super_Dave](#).

This is Detroit
and every pothole
every decaying building
every makeshift
into a new business
is a character trait
where banks become pizza shops
and theaters parking lots
This is Detroit
where we still show up and party
for a football team that has never
won a Superbowl
This is Detroit
we are dangerous
we are lawless
we know our own
and we wouldn't want it any other way

-- "[Free World \(Detroit\)](#)" by [Jeremy Bean](#)