

# VICTORIAN LOST™

A Maze of Smoke and Hedge

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**VICTORIAN LOST**



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## NIGHT OF THE MURDERING SHADOW OR "THE TEARING SMILE"

*Being a tale of faeries and nightmares by the esteemed Mr Peregrine, presented in six parts by the renowned publishing house of Thomas and Webb — who accept no responsibility should the reader be overcome by this tale of horror and dark imagination (Part I)*

Maggie was lost, but still she ran. The fear of what might follow her had passed beyond mere terror into a dull sensation that was now almost forgotten as she pushed her way through the brambles. Her arms stung from a hundred tiny cuts and tears where the thorns had bitten her. They snagged at her clothing, tore at her face and hair, but still she blindly ran on. She had no idea where she was going. All she knew was that she had to get away and, worse, that something was coming after her.

Her pursuer was more of a presence than a physical shape. The crashing it made seemed so very distant, but each time she slowed down or tried to catch her breath, she felt it brush the back of her neck. Its touch was gentle, even seductive. Maggie felt as if she was being petted, which only made her run more. She was nothing more than a toy to this being, and she would never go back.

As she pushed hard through the stinging limbs of the hedge, all of a sudden she felt it open to her. Letting her arms drop from where they had been protecting her face, she could see a thin path ahead of her. A honey-yellow light rippled towards her from what appeared to be a distant lamppost. She could hear the sound of horses and the rattle of carriages. With

renewed hope she threw herself at the pathway, her hands reaching out desperately for escape.

She was close; so close she could see people moving under the shadows of the gaslight. She almost called out to them, but then thick arms wrapped themselves around her waist and the beast that pursued her barreled her to the ground. Maggie was pinned under its weight, and in horror watched as the hedge began to close. She felt the beast's hot breath on her cheek as it whispered a growl of delight into her ear.

"Maggie, I love you..."

She awoke to find herself sitting in the barroom of the Ten Bells, her head having thumped heavily on the table she was sharing with Liam and the rest of their motley. Liam unwrapped his arms from around her waist as she sat back up blearily.

"... I love you, Maggie," he said again, grinning. "Only you could doze off in this noise."

"Aww, she was pretty as a picture sleeping on your shoulder there, Liam," shouted Tom. "Until she fell off, that is!" Like the others, Tom's faerie nature was hidden under a mortal seeming, but when he was drunk, the great ram's horns on his head were a little more obvious. He reached forward to ruffle Maggie's hair from across the ta-

ble. She batted his hand away, in her grogginess more annoyed than usual at his antics.

Tom and Liam worked on the docks together, where people asked few questions if you did as you were told. Liam wasn't anywhere near as big as Tom, but he knew how to use what strength he had. Maggie had known him to be gentle, his embrace always careful and protective. She knew there was cruelty within him, hidden behind his handsome Irish features, but it had never been turned on her.

Something about her friends' happiness vexed Maggie. How could they be so insensitive after what she'd just experienced? She tried to shake it off. They hadn't been with her there, and in reality she had escaped. It had been a year since she had dreamed of Arcadia. So why was it haunting her again now? Why had it felt so real? Somehow it felt like a warning.

As the dream cleared from her mind, leaving an ache where her head had hit the table, everything began to shift back into focus. The three of them were at their usual table, which was just as crowded as you'd expect on a Friday night. It wasn't the best public house in London, but it was probably the best one to be found in Whitechapel. It served a decent bitter at an affordable

price, and had enough space for Maggie's group to be as loud as they liked without being noticed in the crowd.

Through the haze of pipe smoke, Maggie noticed a thin man in a cheap tweed suit slip furtively into the taproom. Maggie recognized him as Bill Hatch, another of their kind who worked as a clerk for one of the shipping firms at the docks. He looked around until he caught Maggie's eye and began sidling towards her, his expression grave. While the Ten Bells was one of the rare places the classes tended to mix, it was unusual to see Bill there. Anticipating bad news, Maggie nervously exchanged glances with Liam.

"They've found another one," Bill whispered as he eased over to their table. His voice hardly rose above a hiss, but his arrival had got everyone's attention.

"Another what?" asked Liam. Then he realized, with a quiet "Oh."

"It's a girl this time. They've just found her at the docks, cop-pers all over the place."

"Is she...?"

"Dead, or one of us? Both, I'm afraid, my dears."

A shudder ran through the group. Changelings were turning up dead and no one knew why. There was a rumor going around that the assassin had a smile that looked like knives, but who would know that but his victims? No one could go to the police. That would bring attention to themselves, and how could they explain the connection?

"I should be getting home," said Maggie, sleep and a lingering fear making her eager to be somewhere safe.

"I'll walk you," said Liam, suddenly more protective than usual, although Maggie did not find it unwelcome.

They bid farewell to each other quietly, a pensive silence having descended on the group. Together, Maggie and Liam made their way through the darkness of the cobbled alleyways. She hoped that the image of a smile of knives following them was nothing more than imagination.

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# INTRODUCTION

The Victorian era, especially in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was filled with a multitude of powerful iconic images — steam engines, Jack the Ripper, Sherlock Holmes, Oliver Twist, Scotland Yard, the British Raj, and the “dark satanic mills” where the masses of the poor labored for the benefit of the wealthy. The scientific romances of Jules Verne and H.G. Wells and supernatural tales like *Dracula* and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* have remained well-read classics that greatly influenced the development of modern science fiction, fantasy, and horror.

However, this era was more than just famous literature and a few well-known images. The 1890s were a time of great progress and exploration, but the same industrial nations that produced so many amazing technical advances were also filled with the sorts of oppression, brutality, and poverty rarely seen in the developed world today. The desperately poor and England’s elderly languished in the wretched squalor of Victorian workhouses, while many of those who had jobs worked long hours in conditions that were both unsafe and unhealthy. When some tried to rebel against these conditions, their attempts at strikes and organization were met with armed strikebreakers who were often aided by the police.

At the same time, the wealthy reaped the profits of increasingly more productive and efficient factories, and lived in lavish splendor. The rich took from the poor without thought or regret. Most of the wealthy considered this exploitation to be nothing less than mental and moral superiority, justifying the use of inferior people and “lesser” races who were only fit for servitude. The fact that this exploitation closely paralleled the way that the Gentry exploited their changeling servants was not lost on many of this era’s Lost.

The late 19<sup>th</sup> century was an era of strict and rigid social classes. However, it was also a time of increasingly rapid technological progress. Fortunes could be made or lost with the introduction of various technological developments, providing some members of the middle class with great wealth. Meanwhile, a number of nobles were impoverished and maintained their gently-decaying standard of living only by imposing upon the fellow members of their class. Even more importantly, the same technologies that helped build vast fortunes were also starting to transform society, such as typewriters’ vastly increasing the number of women working in offices.

This was also an era of explosive growth for London and most other large cities. From 1801 to 1891, London grew from one million to four million, and other cities grew this much and more. Only one in five people in the United Kingdom lived in cities at the beginning of the century, but by the 1890s three-quarters of the population of England did. This urban transformation filled the popular imagination, inspiring both wondrous imaginings of cities as shining technological marvels and apocalyptic visions of cities as amoral devouring beasts.

**Victorian Lost: A Maze of Smoke and Hedge** is a historical setting for **Changeling: The Lost**. This book contains information on the late Victorian Era, including both actual history and fanciful imaginings. You’ll find discussions of the occasionally violent tensions between the rich and the poor who worked in their factories and homes. This book also examines the competing visions of rural and urban life. Some Victorians saw the countryside as pure and cities as corrupt, while others viewed rural areas as ignorant and backwards, and cities as centers of progress and invention.

## THEME AND MOOD

The theme of this book is *being trapped between two worlds*. In this era, these two worlds can be the past and the future, the countryside and the city, the lower and upper class, science and superstition, and for changelings, the mortal world and Arcadia. The forces and groups dividing these worlds are becoming increasingly powerful, and conflicts between these various worlds are also increasing.

The overall mood of the book is *conflicted*. In this time of great changes, new hopes and new wonders were just around the corner, but so were new horrors. Great changes were upsetting the old established order, but none knew what the new order would be like, or if all would descend into chaos.

This was the dawn of the era of organized labor, with its vision of a unified front of workers facing off with their wealthy bosses, as well as the first days of the clash between science and religion. Darwin’s theory of evolution was only the first of the many public battles between reason and faith. This is also an era where the conflicting values of city and countryside became increasingly important. The timeless traditions and endlessly slow seasonal rhythms of rural life continued much as they always had, while cities began to hum with electricity and glow with streetlights, and the speed of urban life grew ever faster. By the 1890s, many who celebrated the moral and physical purity of rural life disparaged London as “the Great Wen”, while dreamers and novelists imagined vast utopian cities made possible by powerful new technologies.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

**Victorian Lost** is designed to allow players and storytellers to use **Changeling: The Lost** to tell stories set in the late Victorian era, and particularly in late Victorian England. This book is not a detailed historical description of this era as much as it is a mixture of fact, fiction, and fancy, derived from actual history, fictions written in this era, and later imaginings of the Victorian age.

**Victorian Lost** isn’t a history book; instead it’s designed to help you evoke the mood of the late Victorian Era. Sherlock

Holmes and Fagin's gang of criminal orphans are both entirely fictional, but introducing either of them into a **Changeling** chronicle could be wonderful indeed. This book is also inspired by elements of the scientific romances, especially the beautiful wonders and hideous terrors of steam-age technology. The setting may be historical, but **Changeling** remains a game about beauty, madness, torments, wonders, and fantastic beings, regardless of what era it is set in.

**Chapter One: The Yellow Fog** describes the history and culture of Victorian England in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Chapter Two: Among Mad People** provides information about changelings in Victorian England. This chapter discusses the particular challenges changelings face in this era, as well as providing some different clauses for Contracts and two Victorian Kiths.

**Chapter Three: The Shallow Know Themselves** examines Courts and Seemings in Victorian England and how they differ from their modern counterparts.

**Chapter Four: The Most Wonderful Fairytale** gives advice to Storytellers about how evoke the mood and flavor of the Victorian era as well as how to bring out the themes of this era in a chronicle. This chapter also includes suggestions for running Victorian LARPs.

**Chapter Five: The Worst of Times** consists of a series of story ideas. This chapter provides both brief descriptions for individual Victorian scenarios as well as outlines for entire Victorian chronicles.

**Chapter Six: Master of Men All** is a story designed for the motley described in the **Appendix**, showcasing the various conflicts of this era. The characters must deal with the problems and repercussions of one of the Lost's creating a railway through the Hedge by transforming a train tunnel into a gateway.

**Appendix: The Back Stairs Mob** contains descriptions and write-ups of a sample motley of young Victorian changelings. These characters can provide inspiration and serve as useful Storyteller characters, and can also be used as player characters for the story in Chapter Six.

## INSPIRATIONS

The Victorian Era has been a popular setting for novels, comics, and movies for most of the last century, and it also produced a wealth of its own literature. Here is an exceedingly brief sample of some of the many options that have the correct feel for **Changeling**.

### NOVELS

*Anno Dracula* (Kim Newman): This novel is about a world where Dracula married Queen Victoria. Featuring both Jack the Ripper and Doctor Jekyll, this wonderful alternate history captures the Victorian mood while playing fast and loose with history.

*Perdido Street Station* (China Miéville): Set amidst the Dickensian horrors and steampunk technomagical wonders of the nation of New Crobuzon, this is a novel of exotic drugs, mad scientist's experiments, and hideous oppression that provides much inspiration for what portions of Arcadia might have looked like in the Victorian Era.

*The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (Alan Moore): The first two volumes of this graphic novel contain a wealth of 19<sup>th</sup> century stories woven into an impressive and exceedingly cinematic whole, and containing most of the best-known Victorian fictional heroes and villains as characters.

*The Werewolves of London* (Brian Stableford): This is the first book of a trilogy about visions, monsters, magic, angels, and madness in the last days of the Victorian Era. The series is dark, brooding, mysterious, and perfect for setting a gothic mood. The final book of the trilogy, *The Carnival of Destruction* contains many ideas about the problems that particularly powerful and active members of the Gentry could cause in the mortal world.

*From Hell* (Alan Moore): This brilliant graphic novel used the Jack the Ripper murders as the basis for a tale of madness, visions, occult conspiracies, horrific murders, and the terrible ways that the rich use the poor. It captures the feel and the details of Victorian life perfectly, and is as much a portrait of Victorian London as a story about Jack the Ripper. This work is a must for anyone wishing to create a **Victorian Lost** chronicle that is particularly dark and grim.

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Lewis Carroll): This classic Victorian children's fantasy and its sequel *Through the Looking-Glass* contain a mixture of bizarre whimsy and occasional darkness that would be terrifying to characters who actually experienced such events. These books can provide inspiration for strange adventures in the Hedge and disturbing memories from Arcadia.

## FILMS & TELEVISION

*The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1984-1994): With Jeremy Brett as Sherlock Holmes, this TV series created a vivid picture of a slightly stylized version of Victorian Britain, while also providing excellent inspiration for scenarios. Perhaps a motley investigates problems for both other changelings and mortals in need of aid from supernatural problems. More ominously, perhaps one of the Gentry has taken up residence in London and is using its contracts and inhuman brilliance to track down changelings who have broken Arcadia's laws.

*Sherlock Holmes* (2009): For a very different, but also wonderfully fun take on the great detective, this adventure film with strange cults and dastardly plots using bizarre devices can provide a wealth of inspiration for action-oriented chronicles. The sequel, *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* (2011) provides even more action and deadly mechanisms.

*The First Great Train Robbery* (1979): Sean Connery and Donald Sutherland star in a caper movie about the theft of a vast sum of gold from a train. This film looks at London's criminal underworld, which could easily be an inspiration for the less reputable portions of London's changeling courts.

*City of Lost Children* (1995): Set in a bizarre steampunk world, this is a film about a mad scientist kidnapping children to steal their dreams. As a result, it's about as perfect an inspiration for **Victorian Lost** as you're likely to find. The strange inventions and exotic devices in this film could either be products of Wizenod's laboratory or dimly-remembered imaged from a changeling's Durance.

# CHAPTER I

## *The Yellow Fog*

*My Dearest Sister,*

I apologize that it has taken me so long to write. I confess it is not business that has kept me occupied, but my explorations of this strange new land of England. I am told the postal service is actually rather good here, so I have hopes that this missive will reach you sooner than I might otherwise have expected. However, I suspect the summer may have faded in New York by the time you read my words. I hope this letter does not find you too cold, although you might take some comfort that at least the rain is not as frequent as it is here! It doesn't seem to matter whether it is summer or winter; any day might offer a drizzle of rain. It is no wonder the English have so many different ways to describe the weather and speak of it constantly. However, I wonder if it is really to avoid conversation of any consequence.

My journey here was mercifully uneventful. The steamer that took me across the Atlantic made good time; it was perhaps not quite as fast as a tea clipper, but swift nevertheless. It still surprises me how these great metal ships, loaded with coal and steam engines, manage to stay afloat. I arrived in Bristol, where I was met by our cousin William and his wife Elizabeth. While we have no true blood tie to this couple, I find that I might have chosen no better a cousin than William. Rest assured he knows nothing of our secret world; his wife's artifice has generated our charade well. William offered me such honest regret on the loss of his uncle, who has, in truth, never been our father, that I felt some guilt at our deception. Still, I cannot regret our decision to take advantage of the situation and make a new life for ourselves here, in the heart of England's empire.

From Bristol, we took the train to London. Despite the size of this isle of Great Britain, it seems covered in train tracks. I am told but few towns do not have their own train station, and it is something of a fashion to take an excursion by train to the seaside to catch the few days of sunshine. Politeness required me to be impressed as William told me of the extent of the railways. I'll wager he has not seen the great lines that span our vast country! However, while this island may be small, it is no less varied than our own land. Each county is as distinct as any state, with its own customs and accents. Some of those we met in Bristol hardly sounded English to my American ear.

As the train took us through the countryside I was struck by the verdant nature of the place. It has none of our great plains and deserts; everything is woodland and fields. The only thing that marred the view was the occasional ruined farmstead. I asked William about this, and he told me that rural life has suffered somewhat with the expansion of the cities. The "dark satanic mills" of Blake's poem offer better wages than a pastoral life, and new machines have allowed farmers to employ fewer people. Smallholders have suffered most, unable to find enough people to help at harvest time, or to afford the new machinery that might make their land profitable. Many have sold up and moved to the crowded cities, leaving wealthier farmers to add more land to their domain.

While the English countryside is tinged with sadness, it is not as polluted as the city. The air grew noticeably darker as we drew into Euston, one of the great new stations that receive people from across the country to the capital. Dusk was settling as we arrived, and the thick smoke lent a somewhat oppressive air to the place. As we left the station, Elizabeth whispered that I should brace myself for the city. How needed her warning proved!

There are a thousand dreams in this city, and they hit you all at once as you step onto the streets for the first time. People come here looking for fortune, and while so many find only despair, the dreams take a long time to die. The Glamour was almost tangible, but also somehow slick with longing. Like the city, it is both rich and tainted. William understood my momentary confusion to be the result of a long journey and called us a hansom cab. Given that these small carriages, their drivers perched precariously on the back, are only built for two, it was something of a squeeze. However, we made good time to the well-appointed house we have "inherited," wherein I find myself writing you this letter.

I must finish now, my sister, as it is almost time to dine, although I have so much more to tell you.

Your Loving Brother,

Edward

Dearest Beatrice,

I realize I should have written sooner, but things have been very busy here since my arrival. I am so glad I wrote to you in the brief interlude after my arrival, or I would not have had any other chance to do so until now. How the English love their forms and systems! I declare they cannot bear to use only one clerk where two will do. I must say though, this love of detail comes not from a desire to increase their fees, but simply because that is how it has always been done. There is a weight of tradition in this place; it permeates everything. The stones of some of their youngest monuments outdate the founding of our country, and the English are so very proud of this. You would think the foundations of London were set before those of Jerusalem, to hear the English talk!

So, having mired myself in their forms and ledgers, I have finished securing the house we have "inherited." The pretense held well, with a few minor charms, and I have now set about establishing myself in society. However, I should warn you, dear sister, that our moderate wealth commands far less respect here than it does at home. Money is simply an accoutrement rather than a sign of position. Family, breeding, and manners are what the English value, and moving between the classes is extremely difficult.

Obviously the upper class finds its station the most comfortable, and works hard to see it remain exclusive. Only the few families who draw their wealth from land and title passed down through generations can be considered part of it. The members of these families train all their lives to master the labyrinthine rules of etiquette their forebears invented, simply so they might spot an interloper in their midst. Any conversation about money is considered vulgar in the extreme. Talking of money would suggest it was a concern, which would imply their wealth was not as extensive as it should be.

Even those of the lower class believe the upper classes are somehow born to rule. They are thought to have an innate breeding (though some might say an innate inbreeding!) that makes them natural leaders. Neither class sees anything wrong with the nobles' buying their way into positions of power. It is simply a way to exert their wealth to place them into a position only they are truly suited for. If you find the English an arrogant race, you would do well to avoid their aristocracy.

I am content for us to settle within their middle class. It is more suited to our sensibility, and allows us to make use of what money we have without calling attention to our manners. The middle class is something of a new invention to the English, with their having been used to only masters and servants for so very long. Interestingly, many of the middle class are wealthier than their "betters," having seized this new age in all its glory. But be assured this does not make them upper class. Fortunately, most have little wish to be so elevated. To the middle class, the members of the aristocracy are dinosaurs, ill-fitted to the new era. The middle class drives the empire forward with new factories and investments. It values enterprise and diligence, as long as its members don't have to get their own hands dirty!

Thankfully we have enough to maintain ourselves above the working class, who are even referred to as the "surplus population." I would not wish poverty on my enemy, but not all those in this layer of society lack for three square meals and a roof over their head. None have wealth, this is certain, and few even dream of it, but many can provide some sort of living and shelter for their family. But not all of them are so lucky. Some are forced to turn to crime by either greed or desperation, only to be marked "undeserving" by those who rest in finer homes. It is said that few women of the lower class manage to avoid selling themselves so they might eat. It seems the choice for the working class is simple: grinding toil in the factories, or a living of desperation on the streets selling whatever they can.

However, I have seen a pride among those with whom I have spoken. Granted, I have not lingered long among the truly desperate, but those I have met who manage to earn a solid wage for a day's work are strangely content. They tell me they take pride in the fact that while others command and make money, it is their hands that have truly built the British Empire. They have built the ships, unloaded the cargoes, and woven the cloth that has made England the power it is. While more money and position might make them more comfortable, it seems an awful fuss to some. Having such position brings responsibilities and an insistence for respectable manners, which does not sit well with their simple lives.

I cannot claim to understand the English, which is amusing, as my accent apparently makes my manners and intelligence quite transparent to them! However, I believe that having learnt what is expected of someone in my position, understanding those outside my circle is quite immaterial. It is as if three different species live in this city, side by side, quietly passing by as if invisible to each other.

I have heard that it is possible to change one's station a little, but not here, not in the heart of the Empire. Many have sought a new life out in the colonies where merit and wealth can often trump position, and to be English of any stripe puts one above all others in their Empire. This is why the middle classes flock out to new conquests, taking favored servants with them, and the aristocracy remain in their ivory towers as they have done for generations.

It grows late, and I fear I have rambled my way through this letter, my dear. Elizabeth is eager to write to you of the latest fashions, and I shall leave such feminine instruction to her more studied hand. Until then I shall remain your dotting brother,

Edward

Dearest Beatrice,

I was dismayed to hear it is taking so long to sell the house. I was hoping that, by now, you would be on your way here. If only the money were not essential for us to build a respectable position here I would tell you to step on the next ship for Bristol! There are so many people here to which I look forward to introducing you when you arrive. One of the first shall surely be Lady Argyle, with whom we dined last evening. I have yet to meet another member of the aristocracy with such charming eccentricity as herself!

Lady Argyle's home, just outside London, is an ancient, rambling building set within acres of verdant countryside. While I have written before of the value the English place on age and tradition, I had not seen one of these old mansions for myself. This one was originally built over three hundred years ago, and has been rebuilt and expanded by each generation. The stones hold such secrets and stories I could scarce bring myself to touch them, lest they make me their audience.

Lady Argyle herself is a grand old dame, who shares the same birthday as the reigning Queen. This and the loss of her husband some years ago have provoked Lady Argyle to cling to her tenuous connection to the queen, modeling her behavior so as to mirror her monarch. While she has never met the queen herself, she speaks as if they are boon companions, who share a pain no others can truly understand. Hence, like the widowed queen, she dresses only in black, and even keeps the mirrors in the house veiled. This tendency towards the Gothic sensibility is not uncommon. The monarch is, after all, also the leader of society, and the English have guiltily consumed somewhat lurid novels about vampires, ghosts, and dark mysteries since the Regency. However, while the queen's subjects were once quite sympathetic with Victoria's widowhood, their patience is wearing thin. The queen makes few, if any, public appearances, and has made even her daughters' recent weddings quite somber affairs.

Luckily, when we visited Lady Argyle, her son Richard was newly returned from abroad. He has been seeing to the family's extensive holdings overseas and is full of stories of exotic lands and strange cultures. To hear him speak of Africa and India, one would think he had just returned from Arcadia itself. The British now claim nearly a third of the globe, but they seem to have fallen in love with the places they have conquered. They serve curry in all the gentlemen's clubs, and spare no expense to bring over the spices and flavors they have grown used to in the colonies. Furnishers build cabinets and dressers in the Japanese style, and the wealthy litter their homes with objets d'art collected from their grand tours abroad.

Over dinner, Richard told us of the bazaars he had walked in the Middle East, and the forgotten temples he had explored in India. He spoke of tribes in Africa with which he had traded trinkets, and the stories he exchanged with a steamship captain as they travelled down the Amazon. He did not speak as a conqueror but rather as an explorer, and this reminded me that the British Empire is not so much a military conquest as a mercantile one. While the British have backed their claims with force of arms, and certainly not been shy about doing so, it is their merchant power that has claimed all this wealth. Most of their holdings traded away their freedoms, unaware of the worth of their goods. Only when they sought to complain did they find themselves facing the might and technology of a nation made wealthy from their toil. But even so, the British do love what they have conquered, like a child selfishly enjoying a new toy, and just as unwilling to share.

Still, the night grows long as my page grows shorter. Write soon, my sister. Tell me the house is sold and you are on your way!

Edward

Dearest Sister,

I'm sorry to hear you are feeling so unwell. Not only because I cannot be there to help nurse you, but because it prevents you once more from joining me. I wonder if there is something among the new marvels of the age that might heal you. It seems there is a potion for every ill available in this city. I chanced to have something of an upset stomach yesterday and considered calling upon a doctor. However, Elizabeth told me that most people nowadays visit their local pharmacist instead. It is certainly far cheaper, and now that pharmacists must take exams to practice their trade, they offer very sound advice for a variety of minor ailments. Many of these cures are modern distillations of old herbal remedies, and every shop offers a "cure all" of dubious quality. However, most also maintain their own laboratory behind the shop to research and produce new marvels of chemistry others have yet to discover.

It seems we live in an age of science, and new wonders appear with such speed I cannot remain abreast of all the innovation. It is not just the technology and the mighty steam engines that drive our industry. There is a revolution of thought in this era. The investigation of the natural world is no longer a philosophy, where men ponder and muse on the wonder of God's creation. This new science declares itself to be free of anything but the truth. It deals in uncovering facts, no matter how uncomfortable such truths may be. Mr. Darwin's work on evolution is still a cause for disagreement, but he is only one of many. I find this new understanding both fascinating and intriguing, but many see it as frightening. Science stands ready to throw away the foundations of all common thought and offers no promise of finding the answers to replace it. For all her virtue, it seems the truth is a harsh mistress.

One part of the new science I am reticent to experience is the séance. The cult of the Gothic, to which the English all seem to secretly subscribe, is fascinated with the afterlife. One of the most popular evening entertainments is to attempt to contact the dead. The séances are often given the veneer of scientific experiment. After all, any search for truth is science, no matter how strange the subject. However, many of these undertakings are simply a way to offer a new sensation or possible scandal. I fear what these reaches into the spirit world might contact and bring back. While many are parlor tricks and illusion shows, some have real power. It would not take much to reach past the Hedge and gain the attention of the Gentry.

Thankfully the prosaic advances outnumber the supernatural ones. I wonder if we are children of a bygone age already amidst the new gods of steam and fire. However, the world is changing so fast, even technologies that were new less than fifty years ago are becoming obsolete today. I remember being amazed at the new gas streetlights, but now I hear talk of adapting them to electric light. New machines beget new machines as the factories learn to create more precise parts. We once marveled at the idea of sending a telegram across the Atlantic, now the wealthy have telephones in their homes.

Still, for all these new wonders, the poor still go hungry, and hundreds die of the same diseases. As ever, the delights of this new era are mainly for the rich. I still write to you with pen and paper as I might have done a hundred years ago. Would that I had a telephone to hand that we might speak again! But I do not, and this missive must therefore suffice.

Be well, my sister,  
Edward

My dear sister,

You should not be surprised if this letter has a confessional tone, for I fear I have strayed onto a darker path. (I hope I will not shock your sensibilities, but I feel I must unburden myself.) Our evening last night began in quite a civilized style with a trip to the theatre in the company of William and Elizabeth. London has every kind of performance, for the English love their theatre. The nobility and aspiring middle class commonly attend ballet and opera. However, the city is also littered with music halls, and cheap productions in public houses called "Penny Gaffs."

We were to see a production of the melodrama "Murder at the Red Barn," as Elizabeth was quite surprised I had not seen the tale before. It seems that melodrama, and this story in particular, are so popular that almost every theatrical performance is actually some variation of the tale. Given the English tendency towards the overdramatic, this should not have come as a surprise to me. The production we saw was well performed, eliciting several gasps of shock at the right moments from an audience no doubt intimately familiar with the plot. I found it a little overplayed, but could not help but be swept along with the gruesome tale. It concerns the murder of a young girl and is drawn, so I am told, from a true story that caused sensation when it was reported in the newspapers.

This is an age of sensation, and London is the center of it. Since their Great Exhibition the English clamor for the next amazement, and there is certainly no shortage of them. Each new conquest has brought some new trinket or tradition to this island. Demonstrations of new sciences draw large crowds, as even learning has become an entertainment. It is spectacle that English crave. When Blondin risked his life on the high wire, his fame was assured. Carnivals and freak shows exhibit the twisted, marvelous, and inexplicable to capacity crowds. The world has become an arena for the English, and they revel in it.

I suspect I may have been more critical of the melodrama than I meant to, as William seemed eager to find some performance that might impress me. With a conspiratorial look at Elizabeth, they took me to a small building that advertised itself to be a "Phantasmagoria." We crowded inside the darkened room, lit only by the glow from a "magic lantern." A creaking barrel organ then issued a melancholy discord as strange images played across the room. Skeletons danced for us, to be chased away by demons and witches. Masques and ogres flew across the walls, followed by flame and fear. Once more the English love of the Gothic had asserted itself. While the spectacle was fascinating, it was also strange and disturbing. I knew it to be merely slides before the lantern, but it felt as I had been party to something truly dark and supernatural.

I was in need of a stiff drink to settle my nerves, so we retired to a public house in Whitechapel called "The Ten Bells." It was a simple place, but catered happily to all the classes, which is something of a rarity. It was here we met Sir Thomas, who was holding court among a group of artists. He noticed William and summoned us over to help settle a heated debate among his gathering. I must confess I have little understanding of what they were so incensed about. The gentlemen on both sides of the argument were quite drunk and their argument seemed to consist of quoting various philosophers until one side could think of no reply. It seems that this is the use an English gentleman makes of an education. I could see Elizabeth rapidly tired of the company, although I found the good-hearted bluster and bohemian philosophy quite entertaining.

As the hour grew late, William finally gave in to Elizabeth's withering stares and announced that he should take her home. As I was enjoying the company, I was quite glad when Sir Thomas offered to show me a little more of the city. I could tell Elizabeth thought little of Sir Thomas' character, but I had already seen the Darkling that lay under his seeming. Had I had less to drink I might have been in a more sensible mood. However, I longed to see more of London, and it seemed clear that Sir Thomas might show me sights that William and Elizabeth would or could not.

So, together, Sir Thomas and I made our way deeper into the East End. The streets here are darker and narrower than on the gentler side of the city. There is music in the air as well, raucous, primitive, and often passionate. It leaks out of the public houses, gin palaces, and music halls. Often it comes from the streets themselves, from beggars singing for a penny or a barrel organ playing for children. The shadows are longer in these streets, though, and as we walked we often passed insensible souls or wretched poor looking for shelter. I began to question our safety, but Sir Thomas had no fear of the place. The gentlemen come here to visit the brothels and opium dens that feed so many of the inhabitants here. Should too many of the wealthy fall to violence, they might find their pleasures elsewhere and deny a living to those who ply their trade here.

Sir Thomas first offered me a tour of the gambling dens of the East End. I am told that most bare knuckle fights are illegal, but there was certainly no shortage of spectators at the one we attended. Having done well by my choice of fighter, I was eager for more sport. While I had not thought it possible, Sir Thomas took us on to a more brutal affair, that of rat baiting. Here, a dog is placed in a pit full of rats, and wagers are made on how many rodents the dog will tear apart in the time allotted. Sir Thomas seemed to revel in the gore, but I found it not to my taste and requested we find something more sedate.

Turning towards Limehouse, we found our way to a house decorated in velvet and satin. Soft-spoken Orientals welcomed us, and we took our place in a private room among cushions and lanterns. We were offered sweet-smelling wine as a carnival of exotic women

paraded before us. Sir Thomas picked out three of the girls, who began to minister to us most sensuously. The drink and heady atmosphere of the place gently slid away my concerns and I found myself quite carried away with an eager passion. So lost was I, that when Sir Thomas passed me a pipe I thought nothing of taking it from him. The smoke opened another level of sensuous tranquility, and I felt myself leaving my senses. While I felt apart from the world, the girl's lips upon mine seemed far more intense. I surrendered gladly to both experiences.

I do not know how long we spent in the opium house, but I felt as if I might spend the remainder of my life in this haze. However, I was shaken from the reverie most suddenly. I know not whether it was the opium or his seeming, but when I turned towards Sir Thomas I saw him stealing more than just a kiss from his companion. It was the look on his face that filled me with fear, a smile that seemed like the devil's own. It terrified me so much I shoved the girl I was with aside and found myself blundering out onto the streets.

The images from the Phantasmagoria played before my vision as I staggered on, and in my reverie I called upon several bargains with the dark to protect myself. The mood passed eventually, although I cannot say how long it lasted. It may have been my imagination, but I fear I stirred something with my efforts that night. In my madness I sensed I had touched a great and terrible presence with my misspent magics.

Sir Thomas took me home, and has invited me to dine with him tomorrow. Civility insists I not decline. However, I do not think I shall pursue a friendship with him, and wish I had heeded Elizabeth's unspoken warning.

Yours,  
Edward

### My Beatrice,

My spirits are lifted by your news that the house is sold and you are soon to join me here. I have busied myself with seeing to the house in preparation, but I confess I am nervous to leave it.

My dinner with Sir Thomas was thankfully less eventful than our last encounter, and I was able to meet his charming wife, Marianne. What did concern me was that Lady Marianne had a large bruise on her face that had resisted her attempts to cover it with powder. Upon my voicing my concern, she smiled and told me she had slipped and simply walked into a door. However, her furtive glances towards her silent husband made me suspect otherwise. Her situation saddened me, but there is little I can do. An Englishman's home is truly his castle, and not even the victims will speak of what happens behind closed doors. Outside the home there is civility and respect, but inside there is only the law of the master of the house.

I had thought we had come so far. Women may now own property, and those possessions with which they enter a marriage are no longer owned by their husband once the nuptials are complete. Some women are able to pursue a respectable career such as pharmacists, teachers, telegraph workers, or even doctors! However, women are still trapped between the images of temptress and angel. On one hand, they are blamed for man's temptations and, like Eve, are thought to lead men into disgrace. On the other hand, they are placed on a pedestal as the very image of virtue as long as they remain silent and obedient, in command of an ordered home.

Luckily, behind the doors of our home, you will be free to do as you will, my sister. The English reluctance to pry, lest their own secrets be brought into the light, protects us. However, we must tread carefully among our own kind here. Among the freeholds the same rules apply, and we must take care whose hospitality we accept.

I shall keep you from your packing no longer, for I greatly look forward to seeing you again. My experiences in Limehouse still haunt me, and I feel watched whenever I leave the house. I am sure it is foolishness and that this dread will vanish once you are with me again.

Your Brother,  
Edward

Beatrice,

My unease was not fancy and I fear for my life. I awoke something that fateful night in Limehouse, and now it hunts for me. I beg you not to step aboard that ship, but to stay safe until I can send word again. I fear Sir Thomas is at the heart of it, and I have not heard from William or Elizabeth for too long. If this shadow claims me, I take solace in the thought that it shall not claim you too. Stay in America, dear sister; this place is not safe.

Edward



## THE TEARING SMILE (PART II)

For the third time, Detective Inspector Simmons tried to light his pipe. Once more, the wind that swept through the London dockside blew out the match before he could put it to the tobacco. Cursing, he gave up and turned his attention to the matter at hand. He motioned to one of the constables to join him by the body of the young woman sprawled on the dockside. She had been ravaged, as if by some wild animal. She lay twisted at the detective's feet, her eyes wide and staring as if she were still imploring her assailant to stop.

She was just like the others. The constable confirmed Simmons' suspicions: she wasn't a local, and no one knew her name. Her clothes looked like they might have come from an asylum, but there was no clue as to which one.

Finding dead bodies wasn't a rare occurrence in the city, especially in the areas inhabited by the lower classes. There was a great deal of hunger on the streets, and it often led to desperate bloodshed. However, over the last few months, more than the usual amount of these lost souls seemed to have some taint of madness. The problem was that, without a name, there was no way to check any asylum's records. It was a tenuous link anyway, as the victims — men and women, English and foreign — had only poverty and insanity in common. Simmons left the scene to the constables. There was nothing more to learn there.

"You're going the wrong way, sir," said a ragged old woman

huddled in the street as Simmons passed by, looking for a place to finally light his pipe.

"Excuse me?" he replied, warily approaching her. She was very old; the few parts of her that poked out of the layers of rags she wore were wrinkled and dotted with liver spots. However, from under the hood of her tattered cloak, her eyes were keen and sharp. "Shouldn't you be inside, old woman? It's cold out here."

"My name's Old Meg, not old woman!" she snapped, "and cold don't bother me none. I struck a bargain with the wind and rain not to chill me, although they are both as old as I am and often forget."

The woman was obviously insane, and Simmons decided it might be best to be on his way.

"I said: you're going the wrong way, Detective Inspector Simmons." He hadn't told her

his name, and that made him stop. "You'll be wanting to ask about young Sarah Parish at the Hearthstone asylum."

"How do you...?"

"I've several bargains with the wind, Simmons, and it's a better listener than you are."

Feeling strangely put in his place, Simmons decided to give this woman his attention.

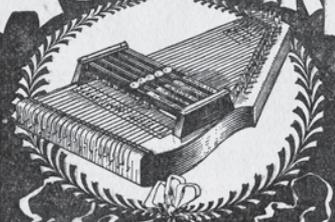
"Hearthstone? Lord Worthing's asylum?" If there was one thing that made Simmons nervous, it was the upper classes. "It's miles away, past Limehouse."

"But it's quick by boat, if you want to dump a body on the docks."

"How do you know this? I can't go accusing the gentry of being involved in murder without evidence."

"You ain't never met the Gentry, boy. But those of us who have, we know each other's names."

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# CHAPTER 2

## *Among Mad People*

During the Victorian era, as in earlier eras, the Lost were free to reinvent themselves in ways impossible in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The lack of anything remotely like identity documents or national databases means that people were generally assumed to be who they said they were or who they seemed to be. A changeling living in London who claimed to be a physician from Birmingham would be accepted as such, provided they knew medicine and enough about Birmingham to fool people who knew the city. The only exception to this ease of acceptance was among the wealthy, and most particularly among the peerage. Wealth, inheritance, and power were matters of great importance, and people took great care with them. Anyone who was competent at the work of an engineer, solicitor, surgeon, barber, carpenter, or clerk could easily impersonate and work as one. However, while someone could become a wealthy land-owner simply by having money and buying land, claiming to be a member of the nobility required verification, especially if any sort of inheritance was involved. As a result, the few changelings of noble birth were doomed to live as commoners unless they could either dispose of and replace their Fetch or find some way to explain their disappearance if they did not have a Fetch.

### BECOMING PART OF THE PEERAGE

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even the poorest nobles had status and advantages unavailable to ordinary British people, including the fact that other members of the nobility were often willing to at least provide some help to one of their own. In addition, the police, lawyers, and other public officials were often willing to ignore all but the most serious crimes committed by peers, especially if the victim was a commoner. As a result, the life of a peer was far easier than that of a commoner, even if they both had the same amount of money. After years or decades of service to one of the Gentry, some changelings wish to have nothing to do with nobles of any sort, but others are overcome with the desire to become members of the nobility. However, only a handful were likely to have been nobles before their Durance, and legitimately gaining a noble title required the changeling to be knighted by Queen Victoria, which was so rare as to be practically impossible. However, there were other options.

Simply claiming to be one of the peerage and creating false paperwork would not work – there were less than a thousand members of the peerage in the entirety of Britain, and most knew or at least knew of one another. Also, since the beginning of the century, publications of books listing the entirety of Britain's peerage allowed any educated and interested reader access to this knowledge. The appearance of a previously unknown and unlisted noble would cause both gossip and investigation.

Without at least one well-established noble to vouch for them, impersonating a member of the British peerage to other peers was usually impossible. However, some combination of bribery, pledges, and blackmail could cause a reclusive member of the nobility to declare a younger changeling of the appropriate age to be their legitimate descendent by a secret marriage. Alternately, a changeling could claim to be a noble from another western European nation. However, unlike most people in this era, nobles have both the money and the time to travel widely, and long European journeys are immensely popular. Many have visited whatever nation the changeling claims to from, and regardless of their origins, nobles know and spend time with other nobles.

### CLASS DIFFERENCES

Newly-escaped changelings often talk about how all of the Lost are their fellows, but even among changelings living in the same city, their differences can easily be as great as their similarities, and one of the biggest differences is that of class. There are only a handful of changelings of noble birth, but they are quite loyal to one another and most regard rulership of their freeholds as their natural right, while some other changelings resent their privilege and their assumptions.

There are almost as many middle-class changelings as poor ones, and while many Lost from both classes resent the few noble changelings, many find that they have little in common with changelings of the other class. Changelings who belonged to the middle class often regard poor changelings as crude, brutal, and fit only to be servants. Changelings of lower-class birth consider these condescending middle-class changelings to be little better than the Gentry, and distrust middle-class changelings who seek to find common



members of such motleys are often subject to gossip and derision by other changelings. Their mortal friends and loved ones are also usually concerned that the members of this motley are either “getting above their station” or associating with “the wrong class of people.” A few such motleys dissolve because the members could no longer handle the social pressure from both mortals and other changelings. These sorts of tensions could become an important element in a chronicle containing characters of different social classes.

## DURANCE BY GASLIGHT

For many Lost of this era, their Durance was similar to those of later changelings. The Gentry forcibly abducted some, while others had a series of strange dreams and then one morning awoke into a living nightmare. Changelings from middle- and upper-class backgrounds most often fall into this category. However, there are other changelings whose path into and out of Arcadia was very different indeed.

For the poor, choices were often limited to a life of crime, starvation and begging, or confinement to brutal and overcrowded workhouses. The Lost come from all ranks of society and, like the rest of the population, a quarter of them were on the verge of starvation before they were taken by their Keeper. With little opportunity for education and few prospects, anyone on the streets or in a workhouse could easily see the Gentry as benefactors.

The same was also true for many people of color. For Chinese, Indian, and other minorities living in the UK, there were no protections and a vast amount of prejudice, especially for the poor. More than a few impoverished Irish, Chinese, Indian, or Jamaican changelings found that life in Arcadia was no worse than the abuse that was their daily lot in the mortal world. This was also an era when few laws and even less enforcement governed behavior inside the home. Teens with abusive parents, women with abusive husbands, and servants with masters who beat or assaulted them could also easily come to see the Gentry as saviors rather than kidnapers.

Once they were in Arcadia, some of these unfortunates discovered terrors and abuse worse than they could have imagined, learned to regret their decision, and eventually escaped. However, for many of the poor taken to Arcadia, life with the Gentry was at least a small amount better than their previous wretched existence. Most of these changelings remain with their Keepers. However, the Gentry are deeply alien creatures with unknowable motives, and occasionally they tire of will-

ground with them. While almost all freeholds contain both poor and middle-class members, some of the largest industrial cities, including London, contain at least one freehold composed solely of lower class changelings, and who forbid any members of the middle or upper classes from joining.

The easiest way to overcome class differences is within a motley. Many motleys are made of up changelings who all were born into the same class, but some consist of changelings of different classes; the harrowing experience of escaping from Arcadia together often creates bonds that can transcend even the deep and lasting barriers of social class. Unfortunately, the

## *The New Identity Merit in the Victorian Era*

Most changelings in the Victorian Era will have no need for the New Identity Merit (see *Changeling: The Lost*, p. 98), because the state of identity documents is too primitive to warrant purchasing it. Most people can simply claim whatever reasonable and unassuming background they wish. That said, there are two reasons to have this Merit: to gain access to one of the various prestigious professional licenses, or to be counted as a member of the peerage.

The two most common types of professional licenses were for physicians and lawyers (including both barristers and solicitors). Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the only essential credential for either was passing a local examination, but a false identity could negate the need to do even that. Given the ease of acquiring false registration as an established physician or lawyer, treat the one-dot New Identity Merit as providing all of the benefits of the two-dot Merit, and the two-dot Merit as providing all of the benefits of the four-dot version of this Merit.

Individuals who have escaped from a prison or asylum can also purchase this Merit at the same reduced cost to help make certain that they are not recaptured. For professional licenses and false identities designed to avoid imprisonment, the appropriate authorities will only see through the one-dot version of False Identity if they have a compelling reason to engage in an investigation careful enough to discover discrepancies. As further protection, such an investigation will likely take several weeks or even several months.

However, becoming a member of the peerage is far more difficult and risky. Treat such false identities as per the normal version of the New Identity Merit. Also, the one-dot version is largely useless when dealing with any other members of the peerage, and the penalties for being discovered impersonating a member of the nobility can include everything from being soundly beaten and thrown out on the street, to arrest and imprisonment.

ing servants and either free them to make their own way back home, or simply drop them off there with instructions never to return. Instead of having the pride of escaping from their Keepers, these changelings return to the mortal world confused and often devastated. Some become Loyalists, and attempt to regain their Keeper's favor, while others attempt to find their own way in a newly foreign world.

For other changelings, their time in Arcadia was when they began truly yearning for a better life. Not starving and being beaten less than they had been before gave these Lost time to consider that a better life might be possible, only to realize that they were never going to find that life in Arcadia. Those who could escape returned home to attempt to become masters of their own fate.

## **RADICAL LOST**

Some who were abandoned by their Keepers or escaped captivity only to return to a life where they are still poor and oppressed now long for Arcadia. Even those who do not become loyalists may wander back unless their fellow changelings help them find some reason to remain in the mortal world. However, most of the Lost either return with a burning passion for freedom, or discover this passion soon after escaping from Arcadia. The late Victorian age was an era of revolutions, uprisings by oppressed workers, and the radical new theories of communists like Karl Marx, anarchists like Mikhail Bakunin, and British utopian socialists. Many Lost find these ideas extremely compelling. Especially among the lower class, some changelings see that their lives were defined

by oppression, first by the wealthy and then by the Gentry. Now that they are back home, many decide that they will never again submit to another's will, and some now believe that the wealthy and the powerful have no right to rule over the poor and weak — regardless of whether the rulers and the ruled are Gentry and the Lost or the rich and the poor.

These changelings often seek to help the poor and some strike out against the wealthy, either through violence, unwitting pledges, or occasionally bargains that have terrible consequences if they are broken. Many of these same changelings also apply these ideals to their local Freehold and to the larger community of the Lost. While most British changelings find the idea of their Courts and freeholds being ruled by a king or queen who is noble-born attractive, these radical Lost see such unelected rulers are having far too much in common with the Gentry or the nobility who control their mortal nation. Some of these rebels form their own small and anarchic freeholds, while others agitate for reforms within larger freeholds, such as elections, choosing court rulers by lot, or even direct democracy (although this is less and less radical of an idea as the years go by). Some changelings see these attempts at reform disruptive and threatening, but others find merit in these radical ideas. Currently, the structure of some freeholds is in flux as discussions about the virtues of monarchy, democracy, or various sorts of anarchy are all actively debated.

## **TOWN AND COUNTRY**

The division between the city and the countryside has always been strong, but with increasing urbanization and in-

dustrialization, this division became far more contentious in the mid and late Victorian era, and this conflict was reflected in the nature of Arcadia and the Hedge, as well as in the attitudes and behavior of the Gentry. As always, Arcadia, the Hedge, and even the Gentry all respond to and mirror changes in mortal ideas and mortal life.

## THE URBAN/RURAL CONFLICT IN ARCADIA

This is an era of conflict between different factions of the Gentry. The more conventional Gentry inhabit portions of Arcadia that look like exotic wilderness areas, strange isolated manor houses in the midst of fantastic fields and forests, or bizarre and archaic faerie-tale lands. In vivid contrast, more daring members of the Gentry now live in portions of Arcadia that appear to be dense and fantastic cities. Here, strange and ever more complex vehicles carry the Gentry along the ground and through the air. Changelings pilot these vehicles, labor in the factories, and serve these Gentry in their homes. The rural Gentry mostly abduct or coerce mortals from farms and small towns into their service, while the urban Gentry prey upon the inhabitants of London, Manchester, and the other large industrial cities.

The Gentry have always gone to war with one another, which is one of the reasons they need Ogres, Wized soldiers, and many others to fight their battles. During this era, the majority of battles between the Gentry involve conflict between urban and rural Gentry. The urban Gentry seek to expand their influence and spread their wondrous and terrible metropolises across all of Arcadia, while the rural Gentry seek to repel these advances and destroy the strange new cities. Many changelings took part in or at least witnessed these battles. Some may have escaped when their Keepers lost a battle, while others perhaps knew fellow changelings who were killed, captured, or hideously mutilated during these wars. Despite now loathing their Keepers, many changelings were in Arcadia long enough that they share their Keeper's attitudes. In Arcadia, rural and urban changelings usually only encountered one another in battle, and back in the mortal world there is often little love lost between members of these two groups.

## THE HEDGE AND HOBGOBLINS

The urban and rural divide is also reflected in the Hedge. In areas of the Hedge that are adjacent to farmland, moors, forests, or other rural areas, the Hedge is a thorn-filled thicket filled with all manner of exotic plants and animals. However, those portions of the Hedge that adjoin any of the large industrial Victorian cities are very different indeed. In some regions, there may be unnatural plants intermixed with decorative metalwork, much of which is adorned with long and exceedingly sharp spikes. In a few areas, the Hedge itself

begins to resemble a fantastic factory, with spiked gear wheels and moving pistons made of brass and strange living metal. Hobgoblins also reflect these differences. In the wild regions, hobs live in small villages and farm goblin fruit, and hedgebeasts lurk in the forests. In the more industrial sections of the Hedge, though, hobs and other hedge-dwellers may manufacture their food in bizarre and complex machines, and some sport clockwork limbs. In these same industrial portions of the Hedge, strange steam-powered creatures stride or scuttle amidst thickets of complex living mechanisms.

## URBAN AND RURAL FREEHOLDS

Although Britain's urban population is almost three times as large as its rural population, there are only slightly more urban changelings than ones living in rural areas. As a result, there are still many rural freeholds, though urban freeholds continue to grow.

Britain's largest rural freehold is located in and around Salisbury, near Stonehenge. It is home to more than fifty changelings who make their homes both in Salisbury and in the various small farming towns located throughout the south of England. The Lost in this and the other rural freeholds consider themselves to be true and "proper" changelings, and regard urban changelings with suspicion, especially since more than a few of these Lost faced changelings from London, Manchester, and other industrial cities on Arcadian battlefields, or watched their friends sent away to die fighting them. Tradition is exceedingly important in rural freeholds, where the ceremonies for handing over power on the equinoxes and solstices are many centuries old. Almost all these changelings feel deep ties to the land, which is part of what allowed them to escape from Arcadia.

However, Britain's largest freehold is in London. Many London changelings (both rich and poor) regard themselves as smarter and far more modern than their rural counterparts, whom they consider to be ignorant and hide-bound. Also, as the mortal population of London continues to grow, the number of changelings in London is also increasing, causing some freeholds to expand and others to splinter off into several smaller freeholds.

## TRAVEL AND ISOLATION

The Lost have always had the capacity to be exceptionally mobile, but in this era, few people except traveling merchants, soldiers, sailors or wealthy nobles have seen more than a few cities, and many people still live and die within a hundred miles of their birthplace. Also, travel is strongly associated with social class. The wealthy and peers usually travel a great deal and have often visited several nations. Some members of the middle class have travelled widely, but almost none of the poor travel much. Rural members of the poor and middle class rarely travel further than the nearest



three or four towns. For many changelings from rural areas, being abducted to Arcadia was the only time they ever traveled more than a few dozen miles from their home.

As a result, many of the Lost cannot use the Hedge to travel to distant cities or towns unless they have another of the Lost first show them the way. Many changelings in this era are almost as isolated as their mortal counterparts. This isolation serves to increase the strong tensions between urban and rural freeholds, because few of the Lost can walk the Hedge between small towns and large cities, even if they desired to do so. Even among their own kind, changelings who travel frequently and widely are often regarded with suspicion or at least wariness; the habits of growing up with little or no expectation of ever traveling more than a few dozen miles from home is as powerful in many of the Lost as it is with a large number of mortals.

## BELIEF IN FAERIES AND THE SUPERNATURAL

Among both uneducated rural folk and sophisticated urbanites, there are people who not only believe in “faeries,” but who are passionately interested in them and hope to see or otherwise make contact with them. People regularly attended lectures, read books, and gaze with rapt fascination at photographs of faeries. The more ambitious have attempted every-

thing from old rural folk magic to sophisticated tricks of photography in their attempts to see the “fair folk” for themselves. Most are fakes and charlatans, either due to greed and a desire for acclaim, or because their continued failure and the eager willingness of others to believe has fed their cynicism. However, a few of these people have succeeded in their quest. Those who managed to gaze upon or photograph the Gentry often learned the folly of their deed, especially if the Gentry noticed these efforts. Some are cursed with madness, while others are abducted and replaced by Fetches who either repudiate their previous efforts as frauds or whose careless chicanery is soon revealed to be fraudulent. It’s possible that someone in the local Freehold became a changeling because he saw too much.

However, the Gentry were not the only ones who were revealed by such efforts. Although a changeling’s Mask is exceedingly durable, there are tricks that, if performed in exactly the right circumstances, can allow someone to catch a brief glimpse of the changeling’s mien. Sometimes, someone who wishes with sufficient passion to see faeries spontaneously catches a glimpse of a changeling’s mien. Such efforts allow only the person attempting the folk charm, spiritualist trance, or similar ritual to see the changeling’s true appearance, and this vision lasts for the briefest instant. However, even this glimpse could reveal that the changeling had horns and hooves or was made of living clockwork.

Most people who succeed in seeing a changeling's mien are fascinated by the fair folk. They are full of questions and requests to see other fair folk or even to visit Arcadia. Such people believe lies as easily as the truth, and are actually far less likely to believe the truth about the Gentry than they are to believe lies about how the changeling was a visiting princess from Arcadia who had come to share her magic with a few select mortals.

Such people are often perfect choices for making pledges that benefited both them and the changeling. However, these people can also be exceedingly dangerous, especially if they spread stories about the changeling. The Gentry may also hear these stories, and other people fascinated by the fair folk could follow and interfere with the character. Luckily, wealthy Lost may simply request servants and the police keep such people away from them, and threaten to have anyone who fails to keep away beaten or arrested. Changelings who are obviously very poor rapidly cease to interest believers in the fair folk, especially if the changeling frequently asks for money in return for alleged secrets. However, those of more moderate means and station are fair game.

Magic, theosophy, and spiritualism are also very popular in this era, and a would-be occultist or medium who caught a glimpse of one of the Lost or Gentry might believe they had seen a mystical ascended master, a guardian angel, a magical spirit from a "higher realm of existence," or even a demon. A changeling seen by such a person might receive all manner of questions and requests, occasionally even including demands to make a demonic pact or purchase the person's soul. The fact that some of these occultists are relatively wealthy and powerful makes it even more difficult for a changeling to either keep the person out of the Gentry's clutches or to protect their own secrets from the Gentry and the general public.

## NEW KITHS

The following two kiths existed in the Victorian era, but eventually fell out of fashion among the Gentry over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### DARKLING: LURKER

The thriving criminal underworld of the Victorian era was mirrored in Arcadia, where devious Gentry criminal masterminds employed gangs of changelings to steal from their rivals. Darting from one shadow to another

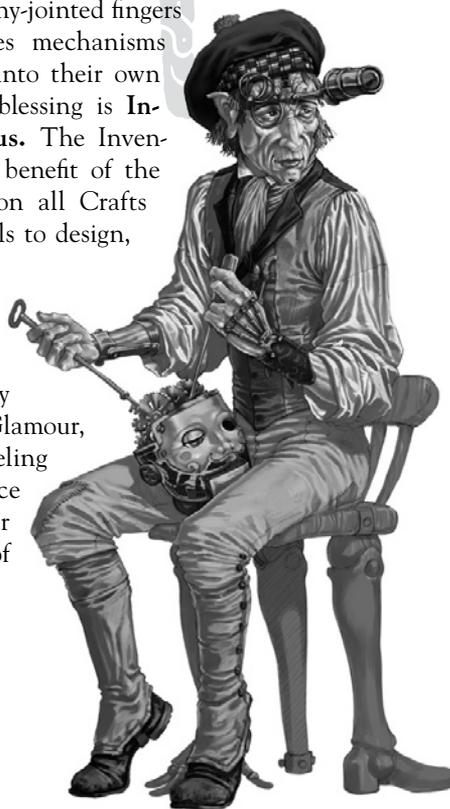
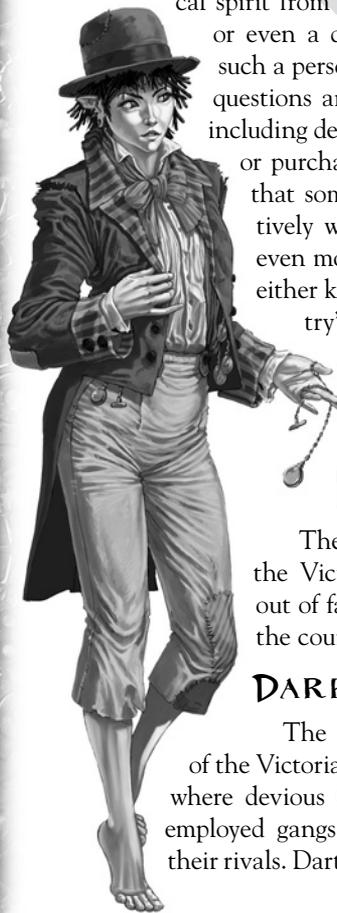
and either slipping unnoticed into dwellings or snatching valuables from wealthy pockets, lurkers are used to taking what they want without regard for whom it belongs to. This kith was common until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, but eventually the more powerful Gentry hunted down these Gentry masterminds and their changeling thieves.

Their blessing is **Larcenous Fingers**: The lurker gains the benefit of the 9-again rule on all Larceny dice pools, and their nimble fingers mean they never suffer penalties for poor equipment on these rolls. They can also spend 1 Glamour to gain a +2 bonus to any Larceny roll. In addition, lurkers gain the benefit of the 8-again rule on all Stealth dice pools, instead of the 9-again rule other darklings possess.

### WIZENED: INVENTOR

This Wizen kith was common between the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and WWII. During this era, many amazing inventions were made by a single dedicated and often eccentric mortal, and Arcadia was filled with reflections of their dreams. As with all human imaginings and passions, the Gentry wished to have servants to create all manner of clockwork, steam-powered, or electrical wonders for them. However, eventually, mortal dreams moved on to labs and factories filled with faceless technicians, and the Gentry found other interests.

Blessed (or perhaps cursed) with long, many-jointed fingers and sometimes mechanisms incorporated into their own bodies, their blessing is **Inventive Genius**. The Inventor gains the benefit of the 8-again rule on all Crafts or Science rolls to design, build, modify, or repair any sort of device or mechanism. By spending 1 Glamour, the changeling can add dice equal to their Wyrd to any of these rolls.



## NEW AND CHANGED CONTRACTS

Contracts and their clauses sometimes change over time. The dreams of the era affect some Contracts, as do the fashions and fancies of the Gentry. The following are some of the more notable changes from modern Contracts.

### CONTRACTS OF ARTIFICE TATTERDEMALION'S WORKSHOP (••••)

(Changeling: The Lost, pp. 135-136)

In the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the wonders of mechanical technology were relatively new. Far more seemed possible, because far less had been invented. This was especially true in the hands of a changeling inventor. As a result, changelings using this clause can create wondrous inventions, the likes of which won't be seen for many decades. One limitation to this clause is that the capabilities of the finished device may inspire mortal inventors who see it, but it cannot be copied by anyone except another changeling, and is impossible to put in mass production.

#### Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-1	Creating a device that won't be invented until between 1900 and 1930
-1	Create a device that is half the size and weight of a normal device of its type
-2	Create a device that is one-quarter the size and weight of a normal device of its type

### CONTRACTS OF VAINCLORY SPLENDOR OF THE ENVOY'S PROTECTION (•••)

(Changeling: The Lost, p. 147)

In this era, social station mattered even more than appearance. When a changeling uses the three-dot clause Splendor of the Envoy's Protection, instead of gaining the four-dot version of the Striking Looks Merit, the character gains only the two-dot version of this Merit. However, the changeling also gains two dots of the Status (Society) Merit, convincing onlookers that the changeling is a member of the nobility.

### CONTRACTS OF SMOKE

(Changeling: The Lost, pp. 132-134)

Coal burning produced the pea-soup fogs of London, Edinburgh, and many other large cities. Common year-round, and especially in the fall and winter, urban changelings learned to take advantage of them. As a result, there was an alternate four-dot clause of Contracts of Smoke, often learned by urban changelings. This clause can still be

learned today, but it requires dense smog or fog that limits visibility to no more than 30 yards, and so is rarely used.

### SMOKE-STEPPING (••••)

This clause allows the changeling to move through the fog at the speed of thought, disappearing from one location and appearing in another. This clause can only be used outdoors in thick fog or smog where visibility is no more than 30 yards.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The Contract is used within 10 minutes of sunrise or twilight, or on a day with thick clouds and little sunlight.

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The changeling becomes disoriented in the fog and spends the next three turns stumbling around, unaware of who or what is around him, and possibly bumping into walls or passers-by.

**Failure:** The changeling remains in her current location, unaffected by the Contract.

**Success:** The changeling instantly moves to any location that is both also within the fog and within a number of miles from his current location equal to his Wyrd. The changeling must have seen the desired location before and know it well enough to concentrate on it.

**Exceptional Success:** The changeling arrives as her destination, where she briefly remains as insubstantial as mist. In this invisible and intangible state, the changeling is free to spend a second moving to a location where she wishes to appear. She can only appear in locations that are also within the fog, and can only move a distance up to her Speed in yards, but can appear facing any direction.

#### Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-2	The day is bright and sunny
+1	Visibility is less than 10 yards

### NEW GOBLIN CONTRACTS

The spirit of rebellion was strong in this era, and caused the development of two powerful Goblin Contracts.

#### RIOT (••••)

The changeling can cause a crowd of at least two dozen people to riot. To use this Contract, the majority of this crowd must be experiencing a negative emotion such as sadness, frustration, or anger. Workers who have just been laid off, the audience of a terrible speech or performance, or the mourners at the funeral are all examples of such crowds. However, the drawback of this Contract is that many people

in the area, including both bystanders and participants, vividly remember the changeling and associate her in some way with instigating the riot.

**Cost:** 2 Glamour + 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Wyrd

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The changeling addresses the crowd and urges them to violence immediately before using this Contract. The changeling must be heard by a significant portion of the crowd for this catch to be effective.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The crowd remains largely peaceful, but several members become extremely hostile towards the changeling and may become violent towards her.

**Failure:** The Contract fails and the crowd remains peaceful.

**Success:** The crowd becomes violent, yelling and destroying property. If there is an obvious target for the crowd's negative emotion, like a boss that just fired a large number of workers or the fans of a rival sports team, the crowd attacks them or their property. Otherwise, the crowd becomes randomly violent, destroying property and attacking anyone who attempts to stop them. However, serious threats like armed guards cause the crowd to disperse.

**Exceptional Success:** The crowd becomes exceptionally violent, starting fires, causing massive property destruction, and attacking with murderous violence anyone who is an obvious target. The crowd is also motivated enough to march as far as a mile or two to gain access to an obvious target. If there are other people nearby who would have any chance of joining this riot, they will, and the riot can easily spread.

### Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-3	The crowd is peaceful and subdued, and a riot is exceptionally unlikely
-1	There is no clear target for the crowd's negative feelings
+1	An obvious target for the crowd's negative feelings is nearby
+3	The crowd is already angry and could potentially riot without incitement

## SABOTAGE (•••••)

The changeling can damage and disable a factory full of machines or another large collection of industrial machinery, like a rail yard full of trains. To use this Contract, the changeling must touch one of the machines. Unfortunately, when the machines break down, the one that the changeling touched breaks in some dramatic fashion and causes the changeling a number of dice of bashing damage equal to her Wyrd. This damage cannot be dodged or otherwise avoided, but armor protects against it.

**Cost:** 3 Glamour + 1 Willpower

**Dice Pool:** Wyrd + Crafts

**Action:** Instant

**Catch:** The changeling has at some time been employed to work on or with machines like the targets.

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The machine the changeling touches causes the changeling a number of dice of bashing damage equal to his Wyrd, but it and other machines are unharmed.

**Failure:** The Contract fails and the machines function normally.

**Success:** All of the machines in a factory break and require repair. These repairs require an extended action, with one roll made every minute for each machine. The number of successes needed to complete the repairs is equal to the number of successes rolled by the changeling + the changeling's Wyrd divided by 2 (round up).

**Exceptional Success:** The machines are badly damaged and the needed repairs require an extended action, with one roll being attempted every 10 minutes for each machine. The number of successes needed to complete the repairs is equal to the number of successes rolled by the changeling + the changeling's Wyrd.

### Suggested Modifiers

Modifier	Situation
-1	The changeling wears armor to protect against the damage
+1	The character makes a loud speech about why the machines need to be destroyed as they use this Contract

## THE TEARING SMILE (PART III)

"Come now, Maggie. Try to breathe," she said to herself. "Just one little breath." She closed her eyes, forcing her heart to stop pounding. Slowly, the breaths came, shallow and fearful, but growing deeper as the panic began to leave her. Her whole body felt weak from running; her muscles ached. She pressed her back against the cold bricks of the alley wall, finding the hard stone a little comforting. Her hands, flat upon the wall, spread slightly to draw on that strength. Finally, she was calm enough to open her eyes.

The alley she stood in was dank and dark. Although it was a clear night, the rain from the afternoon had run downhill, making the cobblestones slick with moisture. If her tattered skirts had been a more proper length they would have been soaked. Fortunately, the night was quite warm. The factories here spilt a trickle of heat onto the streets, and the black smoke insulated it with the smog in the alleys and thoroughfares. Maggie was thankful for the small mercy of decent weather, but it wasn't the cold that was making her shiver.

She steeled herself to look back around the corner. The fog was still thick, and the pale yellow tint of the gaslight threw sepia shadows along the walls and the streets. She could hear laughter from a nearby gin palace and the clip-clop of a cabbie's nag. But there was no sign of Liam. She stared out, hoping to see him step from the fog, but there was nothing. Instead, she heard the familiar tap-tap-tap of a walking

cane gently striking the cobbles, and a cold terror returned to her throat. Before the elegant shape of a gentleman breathed itself out of the smoke, Maggie ran once more.

Her feet slipping on the wet cobblestones, Maggie turned the corner to the street where she lived. She shared one of the cramped tenements with two families, but she had never been happier to see the place. She paused a moment under a railway arch to catch her breath and check that no one was around. But she had let her guard down too early. A graceful, feminine arm slid 'round her neck from the shadows. Expensive lace brushed Maggie's face, and a velvet sleeve felt soft against her throat.

"Don't struggle, my dear," suggested the woman in a refined accent, as Maggie felt a blade slip into place at her ribs. "The less you

struggle, the longer you'll last, and we do so want you to last."

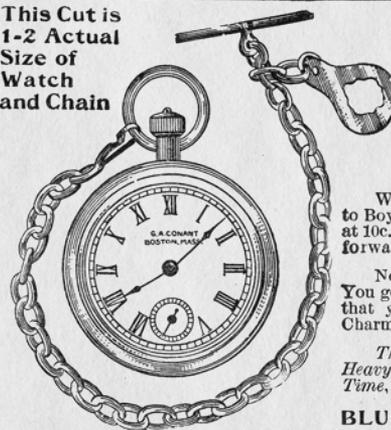
Maggie couldn't move, but whether by terror or enchantment she couldn't tell. "What are you; what do you want?" was all she managed to whisper.

"You know what we are, and you know what we want," she whispered with snake-like sibilance. "But if it helps, you can call me Eleanor..."

Maggie could do little more than stare out into the fog as the gentleman who had been following her stepped out of it, as if casting off a cloak. He was dressed in fine eveningwear, with a top hat and cloak of exceptional quality. He looked at Maggie and smiled with a grin that took up too much of his face.

"...and this is Mr. Smiles," whispered Eleanor, as she covered Maggie's screams.

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# CHAPTER 3

## THE SHALLOW KNOW THEMSELVES

Changelings are complex creations. Their base material, formed by their experiences in the human world, is molded and shaped by their Durance and escape from Arcadia, and then tempered and scarred by their return to mortal society. Who they are today is a product of who they were, what they've endured, and how they've reacted to those experiences.

While the nigh-eternal Fae exist unfettered by the plodding transition of mundane time, the same cannot be said for changelings. The Mad Artisan may be timeless, but the clay he works with — the mortal man, woman, or child he kidnaps and brings back to his Arcadian studio — varies as human society changes.

And change it does.

Certain eras within human society progress more rapidly away from the past than others. While almost all abductees who will ever return to the mortal world do so within the first fifty years of their Durance, the Lost who emerged into Victorian London may have been kidnapped from the early 1800s and found themselves in a town that had grown from a million people in 1800 to almost seven million by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In that same period, covered sewers were implemented to deal with a sanitation nightmare that earned London the nickname “The Venice of Drains.” The first World's Fair was held, heralding a new era of scientific exploration, while mediums and secret occult societies held sway behind closed doors. Railways were introduced to the city, connecting London to the furthest reaches of England. Jack the Ripper still lingered in the popular memory. The chasm between the “haves” and the “have nots” grew deeper and wider than at any time since feudalism.

Change was everywhere.

These changes, along with the prevailing atmosphere of the era as a whole, cannot help but affect the inherent nature — the base material — of who the Victorian Lost are. New Kiths have cropped up, some which die out almost as quickly as they appeared (see some examples on p. 22). New entitlements have been developed, some short-lived, but others so secretive that although thought of as defunct in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century setting of **Changeling: the Lost**, it is possible they survive.

### THE LOST AND SOCIETY

Certain social movements within human society spark similar efforts among the Lost, or vice versa. Joanna Smythe, a Summer Muse, is credited with inspiring several of the leaders of the early Women's Suffrage movement, as well as the push to provide charity for orphans, unwed mothers, and those born within the workhouses.

Unfortunately, Ms. Smythe has herself been an unfortunate (and accidental) victim of social activism as well. The Lost Entitlement that call themselves The Anti-Gentrification League carried out a short but deadly coup to rid London's Lost Society of the “weight of Fairest rule.” Ms. Smythe had the misfortune of being in the company of Doctor Elijah Mansfield, one of the city's most outspoken Fairest-supremacists, when the AGS beset his home, “freeing” all of his Wizened servants and surprising the Doctor and “his doxy” in his bedchamber. Smythe, along with her companion, were cut down by an iron-wielding mob while *in flagrante delicto*, and it was not until the following morning that the “doxy” was revealed to be the (largely) beloved advocate who had done so much for the poor of the city (Lost and human alike). The Anti-Gentrification League's popularity waned after this debacle (see sidebar), especially after it was pointed out that the Doctor's staff was rendered jobless, and many were forced into the workhouse after being “rescued.”

The culture of change certainly affects the lives of those Lost dwelling within London. Perhaps even more interesting is the effect that the time period has on two of the major identifying features of changelings: their Seemings and their Courts. Although each seems like a timeless aspect of Lost society, even these are rendered mutable before the overwhelming might of transformation running roughshod over the status quo of 19<sup>th</sup> century London.

### SEEMINGS

Since the social, economic, and philosophical stratification of Victorian Era London is remarkably stark, the nature of those individuals living within it is similarly divided. An

## *Victorian Entitlement: The Anti-Gentrification League*

Little is remembered in the 21<sup>st</sup> century about the Entitlement that called themselves The Anti-Gentrification League (vulgarly abbreviated “AGL”). Titles used within the League, the process of joining, what physical effect association imparted to its members, and the details of any benefits bestowed upon them were lost sometime in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Their stated purpose is to “rid Lost society of the deplorable oppression inflicted on its numbers by the servants of the True Fae.” To the League, every Fairest falls into that category, by virtue of their “obvious” similarity to the Gentry.

In a period widely considered the cradle of moral reform, many positive and charitable organizations were founded. However, alongside them are those based on a volatile combination of moral outrage, shaky science, and xenophobia, springing into being as little more than organized mobs. The AGL is just such a group.

For the past ten years, AGL members have been a thorn in the side of London Fairest, using social pressure, financial boycotts, supernatural powers, and guerilla tactics to thwart every effort made by members of that Seeming. A favored tactic (but one which gained them disapproval from many Lost and the official condemnation of the Black-bird Bishopric) is to force Fairest into situations where their Clarity would be challenged, then arrange for the reeling changeling to be “put down” for the greater good.

They have been generally effective in their goals, but since the mistaken murder of Ms. Joanna Smythe, the organization’s popularity is quickly fading. By the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, no members will still claim public affiliation with the young Entitlement.

Because of the League’s poor reputation, League members find their interactions with other Lost to be at a strong disadvantage (-2 traits on any Social challenges with non-League Lost). This disadvantage does not apply if the League member’s affiliation is unknown, but once such a tie becomes public, it can be assumed that most Lost hear of it. However, their fervor also gains them a +2 trait bonus (+4 traits if their affiliation has been made public) on any offensive action (physical or otherwise) taken against a member of the Fairest Seeming.

Though this Entitlement is best suited to a Victorian Lost game, it is possible that members of (or individuals with views akin to) the Anti-Gentrification League still exist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, making the concept usable in a **Changeling: the Lost** game. Modern members of the AGL may be working clandestinely as a splinter cell of anti-Fairest terrorists, or moving subtly behind the scenes to ensure that Fairest efforts to take and hold control in Freeholds across the world are thwarted.

injured soldier home from the war is expected to live entirely differently than a laundress, who in turn has a daily existence utterly different from that of the nobleman she serves, the priest she confesses her sins to, or the “orphan” she abandoned to the workhouse because she couldn’t feed him.

This means that, even with an identical Durance, Lost of the Victorian Era are strongly influenced by the subset of society in which they dwell, the role they play within it, their upbringing and education they received, and the resources (physical and esoteric) available to them. As all of these factors contribute to determining a Lost’s nature — her Seeming — when she finally returns through the Hedge, certain differences are apparent between Victorian Era Lost and her modern equivalent.

Victorian Lost tend to see Seemings as discrete social sets. A given city may have a “Speaker for the Beasts” in

a freehold, or an “Eldest Elemental” who is consulted to speak for others of the Seeming. Moreover, certain Seemings (or even certain Kiths within those Seemings) tend to be viewed as being inherently higher in social standing, while members of others are viewed as only suited for certain roles. Wizedened are (in general) expected to cook and clean and Ogres to guard and do menial labor, while Fairest are seen as more akin to the noble class, and thus better suited to rule. Exceptions exist, but they are seen as such, and often pay a social price for breaking the inviolate class boundaries of Victorian society.

Some Seemings — Darklings, Beasts, and Elementals — fall less clearly into the mortal stratification, and are less likely to be earmarked for a particular specific role. Nevertheless, the mundane perceptions of their individual natures still strongly influence how they are seen in Lost society.

## BEAST

Perhaps no Seeming in the Victorian Era is as dynamically divided among itself as those who once wore the fur and feather. The lines are drawn between predator and prey: those who, in Arcadia, took what they needed, and those who gave — their service, their loyalty, or their lives.

There is no middle ground, unless one had the resources (from patronage or earlier predation) to attempt to claim it. Even scavengers who were formerly innocuous and living on the detritus of others find themselves forced by the flood of competition and dwindling resources to make a choice: get tough or get dead.

Ruthlessness runs swift and deep beneath the surface of Victorian London, and no one feels the city's quickening heartbeat as strongly as the Beasts.

## GREEN GONE GREY

As urban London consumed the hamlets and villages that had surrounded it for centuries, the natural world was pushed back with a pragmatic indifference. Once-pastoral meadows and thick woodlands have been claimed by houses and markets, roads and railway stations. There is no room for Nature in the city, but there are still animals to be found.

Amongst the nobility, rare and dangerous (or at least expensive) beasts are often kept as pets or symbols of wealth and power. Dogs, from the massive wolfhound to the miniature whippet, are often seen in the company of their masters and mistresses. Menageries are a part of many noble estates, with tigers, bears, wolves, and other impressive animals displayed for their owner's entertainment alongside flocks of peacocks, flamingoes, or other exotic birds kept for their beauty. Of particular interest to the Victorian upper crust obsessed with earlier and more "noble" times are any animals represented on their family's coat of arms. Stags, lions, leopards, and wolves are not uncommon, and one family apparently offered a reward of enough money to pay for their estate several times over to the individual who could capture and bring them the beast from their family crest: a live unicorn.

But in the animal population, as in the human one, stratification exists. The middle-class household might have a pet, though it was more likely to be a mongrel than a purebred hound. They might keep a songbird in a cage, or a cat to catch rodents. The increase in humane societies such as the RSPCA led to more families adopting and caring for animals than ever before. The poor Londoner, on the other hand, is unlikely to have enough scraps to feed his family on a reliable basis, let alone a pet. That is not to say that animals are absent from the lives of the poor. Rats and other vermin are everywhere. Stray dogs — often feral — roam the streets, surviving on vermin, birds, wild cats, and, during lean times, on the refuse that littered the city. The only large animals found in the poor parts of London are the horses and oth-

er draft animals that pull carts and carriages through the streets, although by the end of the Victorian era even these gentle presences will be replaced by motor vehicles, electric trams, and water transport up the Thames.

## KITHS AND KIN

While the Wyrd does not cater to Nature's whims, it seems that the two sometimes reflect one another in curious ways. As London's animal population grows more and more stratified, so do the Beasts who emerged from the Hedge in and around the city.

More Beasts have arrived with slipshod memories of existences spent scavenging for their Keepers, or of feeding on the refuse of their Fae cities. Of existences spent in hunger and need, fur-covered pelts stretched taut over empty bellies. Of devouring other Lost to survive or for their Keeper's entertainment. Of being devoured.

Roteaters, Venombites, and Skitterskulks abound during this period. Most quickly find a place for themselves among the burgeoning population of human scavengers: desperate people too occupied with survival to ask many questions about even the strangest of the newly arrived.

Drudgery and servitude are also common; Broadbacks, quiet and enduring as they carry out their duties, are a part of almost every freehold in the city. Runnerswifts pass messages within the burgeoning town, and — like the nascent railroad system — well beyond its borders.

For most of the Victorian era, these servants and scavengers represent the majority of the Beasts who fought their way out of the Hedge near London, but they are not alone. Whether inspired by the noble menageries, anachronistic heraldry, or the ruthless and predatory nature of the city's upper echelon itself, Hunterhearts have a strong presence in the freeholds of Victorian London. Noble lions, fierce wolves, and stalwart bears all represent the other side of the Beast population. They walk the city's streets and the hallways of London's freeholds with heads held high, confident in their own worth: masters of all they surveyed.

Some have formed pack-like motleys, recruiting "lesser" Lost to their banners like feudal lords of old. These minions (for there is rarely room for more than one "alpha" in the motley) are often seen as resources more than companions, trading their skills for the protection of their leader and the benefits he or she offers. One example of this mentality is the freehold of Beasts who run like a wolf pack outside of London. Most, although no less ruthless, are not as extreme, but like their mortal counterparts, they recognize their place in the world in which they dwell: to take, to conquer, and to rule.

Unfortunately, for them at least, these views often bring them into direct conflict with the Victorian Fairest of the city, who perceive those roles to be their own.

## DARKLING

Unfettered by modern hindrances such as electric lights, video cameras, or computerized identity databases, the late Victorian era might be said to be the heyday of the Darkling. Whether navigating the candlelit halls of London's great estates or slipping through the gaslight fog of the crime-plagued East End, the Darkling's nature is at home in shadowy England.

### DARK ALLEYS AND DARKER SOULS

Darklings are a perfect reflection of the era's criminal element. Whether stealth, cunning, or duplicity, the Seeming's inherent qualities could hardly have been better suited to a life of crime.

In an era where identity is established predominantly visually and where signatures are the be-all and end-all of financial documentation, who could run a better con than a Darkling? A talented Mirrorskin can pass as virtually anyone — at least long enough to empty a bank vault, walk away with a satchel of deeds or purloined art pieces, or purchase a king's ransom worth of portable valuables on in-store accounts. For those with loftier goals, elaborate confidence games are certainly possible.

Chicanery is not the only criminal skill available to the Seeming. Many Darklings excel as thieves and footpads — or as killers. Many Leechfinger victims have been misdiagnosed as having fallen prey to consumption or other slowly debilitating diseases, while it was commonly held that the victims of Spring-heeled Jack, Jack the Ripper, and several other Victorian killers had likely all fallen prey to a single low-Clarity Razorhands who was eventually dealt with by the local Lost.

As spies, Lurkgliers haunt the city's rooftops, while Antiquarians, Gravewights, Palewraiths, and Whisperwisps provided the Seeming with an unrivalled information network. With access to power, information, and wealth (as well as being damned hard to deal with directly), the Darklings as a group are often the most powerful changelings in Victorian London. Of course, the rest of the Lost population would never admit it — even if they realized the truth of the matter.

Perhaps the only drawback for this Seeming is that their reputation is *too* widespread. Not every Darkling is a criminal, but every one is often painted with the same brush. Even other Darklings viewed any apparently well-intentioned member of the Seeming with a certain level of wariness. It is not uncommon for Darklings to require intricate oaths of each other before being willing to parlay, from variations on the Good Neighbor's Pact to insure non-interference all the way up to motley-type pledges for long-term endeavors.

Those Lost who fancy themselves to be honest or above-board are unlikely to be willing to do business with Darklings in anything but the direst of circumstances. Fortunately for

### *The Shadow Behind The Throne*

While much of the Seeming's criminal activity takes place in the back alleys of London's lower-class districts, not every Darkling's sights are set so low. While the counterfeit's identity has never been confirmed, rumors persist that a key member of Queen Victoria's advisory staff has been replaced or impersonated by a Mirrorskin throughout the majority of her reign.

This shadow advisor is reported to have influenced Her Majesty's decision making, especially after the loss of her beloved husband, although to what particular end was unknown. Investigations have produced contradictory information, at best; during several key political periods in her monarchy, the advisor was credited with being different individuals, even at the same official event. Those who do not believe in the existence of this mysterious advisor assert that this contradiction indicates that the "shadow advisor" is an invention of crackpots and madmen: a product of the high level of tension and intrigue taking place in the upper echelons of the country's governance at the time.

Believers, on the other hand, are quick to point out that the contradictory information could have been nothing more than a ruse thrown by the advisor to cover his or her true identity. More radical theorists point out that the seeming contradiction in the advisor's identity could well be explained by the presence of more than one Mirrorskin in the royal court.

the Darklings, dire circumstances aren't particularly uncommon, making their reputation as much a boon to their business endeavors as a drawback.

### KITHS AND KIN

Among the murky shadows of gaslit London, it is difficult to know who to trust, so for many Lost, it's almost a relief to be able to identify an entire Seeming as untrustworthy. While individual Darklings certainly may prove themselves the exception to the rule, they are generally thought of as shifty characters, capable of almost anything. In some situations, this causes serious complications for the Seeming: during several Summer monarchs' reign, Darklings were banned from certain freeholds' territories until the turning of the season (see the Summer court description on p. 36 for additional details).

But there are two sides to every coin. While Darklings' reputation may bar them from certain social circles, it also acts as advertising for those whose work relied on such skills.

## Honor Amongst Thieves

Of course, not all Darklings of the Victorian era are criminals, charlatans or con artists. Antiquarians are often drawn to the city's historic archives and universities, some of which hold tomes and artifacts dating back to the Roman era. Gravewights and others who can speak with the dead use this ability to help ease the pain of those who had lost loved ones, while Tunnelgrubs play a vital part in the city's development of a modern sewer and underground rail system.

However, those who wish to walk a straight and narrow path often discover the road to be much harder than they expected. Other Seemings often distrust the "honest" Darkling, assuming that their integrity was nothing more than a ruse for some darker intention.

This makes honest trade more difficult to arrange, and frequently offends the genuinely criminal element with their self-righteousness, leaving the well-intentioned Darkling with fewer allies on either side of the moral line.

When one needs something that "proper" Victorian society deems distasteful — a weapon, a market for stolen goods, a paid companion, or an illicit substance — Darklings are often the first ones approached.

## ELEMENTAL THE MISUNDERSTOOD

Unlike modern attitudes, Victorian society assumes that there are clearly discernible differences in the value, destiny, and rightful duties of each individual. This leads to intolerance and segregation as people are expected to associate in certain fashions with certain individuals. Any difference — wealth, religion, gender, age, nationality, occupation — indicates the clear distance between "us" and "them."

This is a system within which the Elementals are doomed to fail. Here are people who are — at their essence — no longer people, even by the loose standards Lost apply to themselves. They are *things* in the shape of people. They had not served as entertainers or servants or generals or prostitutes during their Durance, but as objects, plants, weather — even the earth or sky itself. Or things stranger yet, such as electricity, which is barely heard of outside of scientific circles. How could someone *be* that? Even the Beasts, whose feral Durances cause similar reactions in other Lost, retained some essence of their living nature while in Arcadia. How could one be expected to believe, let alone trust, an indi-

vidual who claimed that they had spent decades as a stone wall, a sand dune, or a storm cloud?

The lines practically drew themselves.

## THEIR OWN WORST ENEMIES

The Elementals' inhuman natures only add to the alienation that they often receive from those not of their own Seeming. Years spent as flames or rivers or moonlight left them unable to truly grasp how disturbing they are to other Lost, let alone to overcome those breaches in social connectivity. Some try, but their awkward overtures of friendship are often disastrously interpreted as further signs of their alien natures.

More difficult still is interacting with mundane society (which has even less context for the Elementals' lack of empathy) or attempting to reclaim their old lives. Some struggle to do so, killing and replacing their Fetches if the time disparity between mortal and Arcadian time was such that they had hopes of returning into their past existence. Most, however, find that even in ideal circumstances, they no longer have any hopes of passing as the people they'd once been; their Durance has stripped too much of their humanity from them.

Prejudice exists within the Seeming itself as well. Once upon a time, a Blightbent made his home in London. The eldest son of an ammonia factory owner, Edward Whitman spent a decades-long Durance supervising his Keeper's Arcadian production factory, slowly becoming so tainted by its pollution that his touch could kill. He escaped, taking the name Grimmaulkin upon his re-emergence in London. Less than a year later, he was captured and executed without trial by the local Lost for the crime of poisoning a public well, which resulted in the death of more than a dozen changelings. Later research indicated that the deaths were likely a result of a nearby dye mill, but the information was found too late to save Grimmaulkin.

## KITH AND KIN

Not all Elementals are social pariahs. Amongst themselves, they share a connectivity that few other Seemings can rival — perhaps in part because there is no other company in which they are as wholly accepted. Many Elemental-only motleys exist in Victorian London, and for a time, a freehold situated near the newly-built Royal Albert Hall had only Elementals as members (although whether that was exclusionary by design, circumstance, or because no one else wanted to join it is unknown).

It's possible for a motivated Elemental to make a place for herself in the larger society of Victorian Lost, given the right combination of personality, opportunity, and talent. Levinquicks, Manikins, and Metalflesh, for example, are very popular amongst The Honorable Order of the Third Hour as members and associates (and, occasionally, test subjects). Many Elementals (especially Earthbones) were on the teams responsible for the design and construction of the city's sew-

age system. They were uniquely suited to the job because of their understanding of the inherent nature of the materials and environment, their strength and endurance, and their tendency to be less revolted than the average person at the idea of slogging through human waste. In addition, the Fairest freehold of London employs several Woodblood gardeners to tend their estate's grounds, and one of their Winter Kings reportedly kept a Snowblood concubine as a lover for several years before the cold-hearted woman was revealed to be acting as a loyalist spy for her Keeper.

## FAIREST

The Fairest of London, more than any other Seeming, find themselves subjected to what is commonly referred to as the "Victorian Compromise": the duality of concerns for the individual weighed against the greater good.

For mortal Victorians, this compromise is the challenge of personal success based on the exploitation, corruption, and pollution of the world around them, versus "all for England" nationalism and a philanthropic desire for a stronger, better, more wholesome country. For the Victorian Lost, it pits self-interest and a need to reclaim or rebuild a safe and comfortable life at any cost against a selfless concern for the rest of their kind: Fairest in specific, fellow Court members, or even Lost society as a whole.

## THE WORLD AT YOUR FEET

If any Seeming appears tailor-made to reap the benefits and avoid the dangers of Victorian Society, it's the Fairest. Their impressive physical appeal, adroit social skill, and adeptness with supernatural powers of manipulation ensure that they are the Seeming most likely to integrate themselves with the people of power in Victorian London. While genuinely aristocratic Lost might find it difficult to reclaim their former holdings, the Fairest's strengths best suit them to tackle the task, or to convince other nobles that it is in their best interest to support the Fairest's "recently discovered" claims to land and title (see p. 19 for the unique challenges of Identity for Victorian Lost).

Fairest are also ideal for another role which allows them to move among London's high society without possessing their own titles: professional celebrity. Many Fairest have found that no title or claim to lands is necessary for them to integrate. It is a simple matter to wheedle their way into the concert halls, theaters, banquets (and boudoirs) of London's upper crust just by doing what they do best: being the Fairest of them all.

In many ways, London is *the* city for Fairest. The city is the largest in the world and the seat of British royalty. It is therefore home to an expansive culture that melds traditions and fashions of its own with those appropriated from colonies around the world. Shipping brings delicacies and fashions from abroad, and cultural stratification (and population

boom) ensures that servants were not only inexpensive but particularly talented.

Fairest love London, and, despite not knowing their true nature, London loves its Fairest as well. Victorian celebrities are often known as much for their associations as for their skills. A talented ballerina might be known because she had danced a command performance before a certain Duke and Duchess, or a singer because her voice had reached the Queen's ears. Being a guest of a noble family or royalty ensures that you are treated as such yourself, regardless of your credentials. It is a marvelous time to be a Fairest.

## WOLF AT YOUR DOOR

Life is not *all* oysters and sonnets for Victorian Fairest, however. All prizes have a price, and the cost of fame is sometimes fame itself.

Loyalists and privateers have no problem blending into the thronging crowds surrounding Fairest celebrities, waiting for an opportunity to kidnap, blackmail, or rob an obviously well-off changeling. Even the Hedge is often not sufficiently thick to hide such shining stars from the Others' attention, and more than one Fairest has discovered that their own notoriety led their Keeper straight to them.

Nor are the Fairest themselves the only ones to suffer for their pleasure. When the Gentry and their minions target a city, everyone suffers. And while they certainly can't be held solely responsible for the attention London received from Keepers, the Fairest certainly bring more than their fair share of the Others' eyes towards their city.

## KITHS AND KIN

The "greater than thou" attitude of many Fairest is only bolstered by the clear-cut social stratification prevalent in Victorian society. And for a reason: the common folk live lives devoid not only of any luxury but often of necessities as well. Unemployment is rampant, as is abject poverty. Those who do have work often find it directly in service to one of the "haves" — nobility or royalty — or otherwise providing for the needs of the privileged. Those who opted not to serve live in squalor, doing whatever is necessary to keep themselves from starving, being brutalized by those who were stronger than them, or dying from illness or exposure.

It is a terrible time to be a "have not."

This has often led to a "if you can't beat them, join them" attitude by other Lost. Not possessing the social skills, manipulative ability, or inherent resources of the Fairest, members of other Seemings often join their households, serving in order to garner the protection and providence that the Fairest's ties to wealth and fame can muster.

Ogres, Elementals, and Beasts make intimidating bodyguards, each with their own innate skills. Darklings delve out secrets that the Fairest may parlay into more wealth and security for the household. And the Wizeden? Well, they do all the rest.

Some serve their Fairest “masters” loyally, grateful to not be faced with the alternative. Others chafe at their roles, likening the Fairest’s taking advantage of other Lost to the Durance. Still others learn as they serve, using the talents and tricks they witness the Fairest using to hone their own skills and eventually carve niches for themselves in the growing middle class, often to their former employers’ chagrin.

## OCRE

For all its veneer of gentility, Victorian London is far from idyllic. Within each social stratum, from the reigning monarch to the lowest pickpocket, there are significant portions of the population who saw those around and below them as little more than opportunities to be taken advantage of, tools to be manipulated, and resources to be used. And in such a brutal environment, the strength, endurance, and violent potential of an Ogre is too tempting to resist.

Physically speaking, those of the Ogre Seeming are well-suited to avoid being enslaved by humanity or their fellow Lost. Powerful, strong, and capable of taking (and giving out) inhuman amounts of damage and punishment, it takes a puissant master indeed to physically force their compliance.

Unfortunately, those who seek to bind these strong fae to their wills rarely rely entirely on violence or physical brutality to do so. Many Ogres have been tricked into indentured servitude by fast-thinking, glib-tongued mortal confidence men who preyed upon the Ogre’s often meager wit and misled them into signing away their freedom in exchange for a pittance of pay at some back-breaking job. Others find themselves oath-bound to motley leaders or monarchs who see them as little more than weapons or brutish enforcers of their master’s will.

And yet, Ogres endure. Their fae nature was not sculpted or carved or molded into being; it was hammered and forged through brutality and violence and tempered with an instinct for survival that few other Seemings can equal. In time, they know, the tables will turn, and their oppressors’ weaknesses will be revealed.

Then — as it was when they made their escape from Arcadia — those who sought to chain them will learn the consequences of such action.

## STRONG BACK, STRONG FIST

Whether independently or in service to another, there are plenty of roles for an Ogre in the working class of Victorian London. Many city projects are built during this time period, and construction relies heavily on human strength and endurance. Menial labor may not pay well (or at all, if the crews were part of prison gangs, poorhouse teams, or other “charity” workforces) but it is plentiful. By virtue of receiving at the minimum food and a roof over their heads, even the prison or poorhouse crews often have it better than the utterly destitute.



## Common Noble, Noble Commoner

It would be a simple assumption to liken all Fairest in Victorian London with the noble class of mortal society during that period, and other Seemings to the poor or middle class. Certainly there are those (including many Fairest) who feel themselves to be the aristocracy of Lost society. Not all Fairest, however, were drawn from nobility, wealth, or fame. Nor was every abducted nobleman guaranteed a Fairest's Durance once in Arcadia.

Some Fairest are soldiers: Summer Draconic Benjamin Drake led an entire battalion of Her Majesty's finest in one of the key battles of the First Boer War. He returned a war hero, and was decorated by the Queen herself for his bravery.

Others devote themselves to philanthropic causes (see *Lost and Society*, p. 26) or to the advancement of science. The Honorable Order of the Third Hour (see p. 35) was founded in a joint effort by a trio of Wizen and a Fairest Telluric, whose unyielding attention to detail is said to have contributed to the development of the concept of Universal Time (later known as Greenwich Mean Time). Likewise the Weisse Frau, Clara Goode, helped establish a free hospital in London, including a children's ward dedicated to helping youth who had been injured in the city's factories.

Despite these individuals, there is still rampant distrust of Fairest by those of other Seemings. These pockets of Anti-Fairest sentiment in the city sometimes lead to violent civil unrest among the Lost (see *The Anti-Gentrification League*, p. 27). Key amongst those who seek to bring down the Fairest are nobles who had been forced to endure ironically downtrodden Durances. A blue-blood who returned from serving in Arcadia as a scullery maid, a chimney sweep (or worse yet, a chimney) might well resent a former peer who spent their Durance playing whist or riding on fox hunts with their Keeper, almost as much as they disliked a once-grubby flower girl who returned a Flowering beauty, or a lamplighter turned Bright One.

Coming from a society where a person's place in life was so clearly seen as a mark of their value and their inherent nature, Victorian changelings were deeply shaken when those expectations were turned on their head after their (or their fellows') abduction. This conflict only lends another level of internal and external challenge faced by Lost during this era.

Another role seemingly tailor-made for returned Ogres is military service, either with the British Army or privately acting as a soldier or bodyguard (see *Kith and Kin*, below). Some Ogres join the London Metropolitan Police Force as well. Each is a system where (unfortunately for victims and the general citizenry) physical might backed by legal authority makes for a powerful position that is ripe for abuse. This makes it perfect for a Victorian Ogre, newly returned from a similar situation in Arcadia, to fit in.

### BULL IN A CHINA SHOP

Not all Ogres are born of common stock. A changeling is as much what his Keeper inflicted upon him as he is how he was brought up, and more than one nobleman's heir has found himself in Arcadian chains, bound to an Ogre's Durance. For these unlucky souls, reclaiming their former lives is more challenging. In the parlors and gardens of London, there is little room for a changeling who has learned physical might and ferocity as a primary tool for accomplishing his goals. This path is even more difficult for a female Ogre of noble heritage. While certain allowances might be made for the boorish behavior of an errant son, no such leeway is given for one who was expected to epitomize the "delicate flower" of womanhood.

Perhaps the only Ogres who more keenly feel the negative effects of their time in Arcadia are those who had been craftsmen before their Durance. While the makers of musical instruments, jewelry, or porcelain gewgaws may not seem

the most logical choice of raw material for a Gentry seeking a bullyboy or brute, the Others' wills and whims are sometimes odd to the point of irony. How sad would it be to forge your way through the Hedge and back to your beloved workshop, only to find yourself left with the mind and spirit of a watchmaker but giant fingers and hands like hams?

### KITHS AND KIN

As might be imagined, Ogres in Victorian era London are treated much like the weapons they could easily be. Those who align with them (or have power over them) see them as useful tools in the oft-brutal environs of the city. An Ogre bodyguard is practically *de rigueur* for most freehold monarchs, as well as for those who fancy their hides worthy of such protection (and who have the means to buy it). When a rash of anarchist dynamiters began protesting the condition of the poor and working class by setting off explosions in and around estates, mansions, and businesses of the city's rich and powerful, an entire brigade of Ogres was recruited by the Fairest freehold, who feared similar dissent might come to a head within the Lost population.

Those who do not have their loyalty (or at least their service) often see members of the Ogre Seeming as unstable powderkegs of potentially lethal violence. It's hard to trust someone who could pull an adversary's limbs from their body, toss a workhorse over the nearest factory, or punch a steam locomotive into submission without breaking a sweat.

Because of this, when given the opportunity, many Ogres form motleys exclusively of their own kind. There, if nowhere else, they can expect to be dealt with as equals, rather than tools or weapons. So tight are the bonds in such a group that a common changeling analogy of the time is “strong as an Ogre band,” meaning something that no force — mundane or magical — can tear asunder.

## WIZENED

If any Seeming could be said to embody the stoicism of the Victorian era, it must be the Wized. Whether from their lives before Arcadia or through their Durance (or both), these changelings understand the satisfaction of hard work, but even more so, they understand its inevitability. During this period, American writer Charlotte Perkins Gillman said “The one predominant duty is to find one’s work and do it.”

## SO MANY GO

Often drawn from amongst the working class — craftsmen, servants, soldiers, and skilled laborers — Victorian Wized are familiar with hard (and often dangerous) labor, demanding employers, and non-existent rights. It is impossible to guess exactly how many pre-Wized humans were abducted from London during the Victorian era. One of the city’s noblemen has estimated that there are more than thirty *thousand* “naked, filthy, roaming lawless and deserted children, in and around the metropolis.” Nearly seven million individuals live in the London metropolitan area; estimates place more than a third of that number — over two million men, women, and children — among the impoverished by 1900. Since recordkeeping for missing persons amongst the poor and working class is non-existent — and many likely were assumed to have fled the city or fallen victim to foul play, if they were missed at all — it is impossible to say how many of the lower classes were abducted from their squalor during this period. However, it is safe to assume that, as these classes form the vast majority of the population of the city at the time, the number is sizeable.

## SO FEW RETURN

What is interesting, however, is that the number of Wized who *returned* to London during the mid-to-late 1800s was no larger than the number of any other Seeming. While individual populations vary from year to year and location to location, there has been no great inundation of Wized either during or directly after the massive poor-to-middle-class population boom of the Victorian era. From a purely statistical perspective, their number should be far greater than that of any other Seeming of the time. Why, then, has there been no overwhelming flood of returnees?

Some Wized remained in Arcadia because their ties to London were fleeting at best. Recent immigrants make up a goodly portion of the working class. They have flooded

into the city from the four corners of the earth, but most find it as foreign and alien a locale as Arcadia could possibly present. They had left behind their friends and family, their culture and traditions, and don’t have time or inclination to root themselves in their new home. For these, there is little chance of finding their way back to their newly-adopted homeland, even if they are fortunate enough to escape their Keeper’s demesnes. Both the Thorns and the Hedge-predators feed richly on those who tried.

Moreover, regardless of how inhumane their Keepers were, the reality they might return to isn’t much better. From a very early age, London’s working poor risk life and limb and work their fingers to the bone, often for compensation so low that an entire family could not earn enough to keep hunger from the door and a single room’s roof over their head. This is their reality, and so, for some, their Durance was just another job. With people starving in the streets of London and many more unemployed than potential jobs, at least being in Arcadia was steady work.

It’s very possible that many Wized may simply have never considered escape. Freedom for the masses may not be an entirely modern philosophy, but for all practical purposes, it does not exist for the commoner in Victorian London. They are as tied to their stations in mortal life as any changeling could be during their Durance; escape may well have never crossed their minds.

Because of this, a significant portion of those who have returned were freed by those who shared their Durance. Rather than forging through the Hedge on their own, they were befriended by (or deemed useful to) those of more forceful Seemings, and brought along as they made their escape. These sorts of bonds have only furthered the Wized ties to the rest of changeling society upon their return.

## KITHS AND KIN

While far from the most social Seeming in London, few could fault the Wized’s dedication to their craft, their duty, and their masters (should they choose to go into service). Although individual Wized might gain the animosity of other Seemings, as a whole, the Wized are seen as stable, dedicated souls, trustworthy to a fault and absolutely vital to the well-being of any freehold as well as to Lost society at large. If they are not always treated as equals or granted great respect, they certainly avoid the alienation that befell the Elementals, or the resentment which Fairest often face from other Seemings. Like a workhorse or table, they are often unnoticed but certainly utilized.

Barring an individual reputation for troublemaking or treachery, a Wized is likely to find herself welcome in any of the freeholds in the city (assuming, of course, she undertakes the proper protocols for her visitation). Her works, whether they’re services, sonnets, swords, or jewel-encrusted windup songbirds, do more than fulfill the needs of the rest of Lost society — they epitomize the culture and refinement of the era.

## NEW ENTITLEMENT: THE HONORABLE ORDER OF THE THIRD HOUR (THOTH)

Named in homage to Leonardo Da Vinci, whose grandfather's diary recorded his birth as happening "at the third hour of the night," this Entitlement was founded in the Victorian era for the purpose of actively advancing both scientific knowledge and its practical applications.

**Titles:** Knights of the Third Hour, Thothites

**Prerequisite:** Intelligence 3, Academics 1, Crafts 2 (or) Larceny 2

**Joining:** The Honorable Order of the Third Hour actively seeks members who display the potential to think beyond the boundaries of known science, and who are willing to dedicate themselves to applying new knowledge in unique and inventive fashion. They welcome those who, rather than creating their own advances, seek out lost technologies within the Hedge or ancient cultures, and thus contribute to the advancement of the status quo. Prospective members are inducted by swearing a formalized oath to the Order, witnessed by at least one existing member.

Their membership is predominantly (but certainly not limited to) the Wizeden Seeming, attracting not only Inventors (see p. 22), but copious numbers of Chirurgeons, Smiths, and Gremlins. Their ranks are also peppered with Elementals and the occasional member of other Seemings.

It should be noted that many Victorian fraternal organizations allow only men to join. However, the Third Hour welcomes women as equals among their number, perhaps inspired by the works of Ada Lovelace, Maria Christina Bruhn, Catherine Littlefield Greene, and other noted female inventors who have recently made names for themselves.

**Mein:** The Thothites bear their genius on their skin. It begins as a few thin lines, spidery scrawling that might be mistaken for a scribal mishap. Over time, however, the lines grow more and more elaborate, covering more of their skin surface. It is rumored that, by the time of his death, one of the founding members had so much of what the Order called "His Hand" that his original skin color was barely discernable.

To those other than the Knight who bears them, the marks make little sense. They appear to be random symbols, not-quite-letters, or seemingly impossible sketches. To the one who bears the marks of "His Hand," however, they are quite discernable. To an adventuring Thothite, they may seem to be maps or navigational directions to locales long since lost or not yet discovered. To the archivists and researchers, they may take the form of arcane symbols, scientific formulae, or chemical diagrams beyond what mortal minds could imagine. To Knights of the Third Hour who are dedicated to inventing and building, the patterns which appear on their skin seem to be detailed sketches, fantastic blueprints, or intricate plans for wondrous devices.

**Background:** While some claim that The Honorable Order of the Third Hour has roots going back as far as da Vinci himself, its formalization as an entitlement is documented in the organization's bylaws as dating to April 15, 1852 — the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of da Vinci's birth. Its founding members consisted of four Lost: a Fairest Telluric, a Wizeden Smith and a pair of Wizeden Inventors who penned the Order's purpose and dedicated themselves to "learn what has been forgotten, recover what has been lost, and make what has never existed."

The Order is extremely popular throughout the Victorian era and remained so well into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, although the advent of mass-marketed and ubiquitous mundane technology in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century would eventually result in a waning of the Entitlement's membership.

**Concepts:** Lady inventor, bumbling weaponsmith, mad scientist, professor of technological studies, gentleman adventurer, recovery specialist, scientific historian

### Privilege:

Upon joining the Third Hour, every Thothite may take a 3-dot Hedge Automaton for free. This represents their journeyman project, presented to the Order to prove their worth. Many Thothians create this Automaton themselves, while more adventure-minded members may quest through the Hedge to recover a lost artifact and claim it as their own.

Members also gain a +4 bonus on any effort to create, repair or understand the workings of any device which merges technology and magic (even if that magic is not Wyrd-related). This bonus does not apply to items which have no moving parts, or would otherwise be considered "low tech," nor does it apply to the use of said items. Creating a Wyrd-powered airgun would gain the bonus, as would understanding how to disable it, but firing it would not. The Storyteller has final say as to whether an item qualifies or not.

## FREEHOLDS AND SEEMINGS

The population boom of the Victorian era resulted in a similar boom in the Lost population. This, along with the clear demarcation of social classes, has resulted in the creation of many small freeholds — some truly no more populous than a large motley — within the greater London area, rather than a single diverse freehold. Several of these freeholds were created entirely from one Seeming (or denied certain Seemings membership), while others resemble a modern freehold's eclectic dynamic.

For example, a Fairest freehold claims Mayfair as their own. They deny membership to any other Seeming unless the applicant can prove not only noble heritage previous to their Durance, but also that their Fetch has been killed (or otherwise deposed) and the applicant's "rightful place" reclaimed.

A "street-rat" freehold of Darklings and Beasts hold the East End. Specializing in robbery, illegal trafficking, and other criminal activity, they extend membership to everyone, with the caveat that prospective members have to quickly

prove themselves both useful and loyal. Those who fail on either aspect are rarely seen again. They roam the city's streets at night, preying on mortal and "noble Lost" alike as they eke out a life for themselves among the shadows. They are often an extremely useful resource for Lost in the city looking for illicit or difficult-to-obtain materials, but their products and services always come at a price.

A crew of Wized have established a freehold consisting almost entirely of members of The Honorable Order of the Third Hour (above). The group is dedicated to research and experimentation within the technological sciences. They have gone out of their way to maintain amiable relationships with the other freeholds, in part so that they could use those ties to obtain materials, books, and experimental subjects without having to get their own hands dirty. They also actively recruit changelings from other freeholds who showed sufficient potential.

Outside of the city, a freehold pack of Beasts holds dominion. They also welcome members of other Seemings with bestial attributes and feral attitudes, predominantly Ogres and Elementals. The pack requires their members to swear an oath to leave aside "the smoke and filth of city life." Admittance to the freehold reportedly involves the applicant agreeing to being hunted by existing members of the freehold, an ordeal that many do not survive. Other than in the direst circumstances, they do not interact positively with the city freeholds.

## COURTS

Each changeling's story is unique, but throughout history, certain aspects of Lost society have endured long beyond the span of any one individual's life. The Great Courts have existed since before the Dark Ages, perhaps since the dawn of Western civilization, and many Lost think of them as unchanging structures beyond the influence of the tides of time.

This isn't entirely true. Certain core aspects of the Seasonal Courts remain static; the whims of a few generations of Lost will not dampen Summer's Fury, for example, or satiate Spring's Desire. Still, the Courts exist as a Wyrld-recognized pact between the Lost and the supernatural embodiment of each Season, and while a Season's nature may not change, Lost certainly do.

Within the Victorian era, the mores, philosophies, worldviews, and mentalities of Lost have a direct effect on how the Courts saw themselves and each other. This, in turn, guides how the Lost interacted, both on a personal and city-wide basis.

## SUMMER

*Like all angry men, he loved his grievance.*

— ANTHONY TROLLOPE

Summer is the purview of the Crimson court, the court of Wrath, an emotion that seems quite contradictory to the calm, cool, and collected attitude most commonly associated with Victorian society. Much like Desire, however, a hotbed of this all-too-human emotion bubbles just below the frosty

## *Ladylike or Manly*

It should be noted that Victorian standards for men and women on the topic of emotion are often very different. Human reactions to certain situations (as opposed to feminine or masculine ones) are a fairly modern concept; Victorian thought holds that men and women truly experience different emotions. The truth, however, is that no matter how carefully veiled they are, people of both sexes do experience wrath, fear, sorrow, and desire along with the entire gamut of other human emotions. They just aren't always allowed or encouraged to admit or express them in the same ways 21<sup>st</sup> century society allows.

Lost society may be more tolerant of deviations from the Victorian standards than the average human population, but these societal expectations are deeply ingrained, and certainly some bleed-over of the sexual dimorphism in emotional expectations occurs. However, while the Victorian attitudes should be kept in mind, they should not limit what types of characters a player can roleplay. They should not, for example, prevent characters of either sex from joining any of the seasonal courts they feel best fits their character.

Moreover, Storytellers should keep in mind that sexism can be offensive to modern players (even when playing Victorian characters) and make certain that these differences do not negatively impact their players' experiences in the game. The goal isn't a slavish recreation of Victorian history — take the parts of the era that would make your chronicle the most fun, and ditch the rest.

exterior. A writer of the time described the husband of author Charlotte Brontë: "He did not speak when he was annoyed or displeased, but worked off his volcanic wrath by firing pistols out of the back-door in rapid succession." Actions speak when words are deemed inappropriate. And if the actions are (in and of themselves) outside of the constraints of polite society, they are, at least, performed with the same lack of messy emotionality that Victorian society expects of its menfolk.

Not all Victorians have the luxury or inclination to hold themselves to the stoic stereotype the Queen personified. There is a great deal to be up in arms about, from the lack of governmental representation and voting rights for women (and most non-noble men), to the hazardous and sometimes deadly conditions that many factory employees were expected to work within. Abject poverty, corrupt politicians, rampant pollution, skyrocketing mortality rates, and deplorable living conditions provide fuel for the Summer Court's fires.



### Duels

Although officially outlawed in England in 1840, duels are still a means of redressing insults and slights to one's honor among the upper class and nobility. Certainly the Lost still rely heavily on duels as a (usually) non-lethal means of settling disputes and easing tensions that might otherwise sunder freeholds or engage the Lost in inter-Court or inter-Seeming wars. Whether using mundane pistols or swords, dream-magics or Hedge wizardry, duels allow changelings to deal with conflict and get back to the bigger issue at hand: protecting themselves and each other from predation by the Gentry.

On the other hand, just as the Iron Spear rally Lost to arm themselves literally and figuratively against the Others, so do Britain's Victorian heroes have external enemies to rally against. Not only did both Boer Wars take place during Victoria's reign (although the Second officially ended after her death), but many other violent conflicts raged throughout the British colonies — Afghanistan, India, New Zealand, Egypt — anywhere that Her Majesty's banner has reached.

Because of the poverty rampant in London, and the lack of work available, many Lost of a Summer bent enlists for at least a time in the military after his return from Arcadia. It often didn't take long, however, for a recently-returned changeling to realize that army life was all-too-similar to his service on the far side of the Hedge, and returned deserters are fairly common among the freeholds of London.

### AUTUMN

*I've watched thee every hour —  
I know my mighty sway —  
I know my magic power  
To drive thy griefs away —*

— EMILY BRONTE

Despite (or perhaps because of) its stoic repression, Victorian culture holds an obsession with death and the occult, which gives The Ashen Court a great deal of sway. While earlier eras were steadfastly tied to blind adherence to myths and legends, the apex of the industrial revolution has brought with it new insights into science, technology, philosophy, and medicine, which encourage open discussion (and, ultimately, questioning) of the commonly held "truths," including those of religion.

Dream interpretation has become an accepted topic of study, both in scientific and occult communities, and fortune telling (using cards or tea leaves) is a popular entertainment. The Queen herself kept a royal medium in her employ after the loss of her beloved husband, Prince Albert, and séances, mediums, and other mystic consultants are quite the vogue because of it. While there is certainly an element of fear-based titillation to their enthusiasm, many theosophists and students of occultism feel themselves to be scientists, embracing what they feel to be a newly-discovered (or recently recovered, in the case of the Kabala and ancient hermeticism) branch of scientific study.

### *Bedlam*

In a city full of fear, there is none greater than that of Bedlam, for the Lost at least. Half hospital, half prison, the walls of the Bethlehem Royal Hospital are as terrifying as the Thorns in many ways. One of the earliest psychiatric hospitals (or lunatic asylums as they were perhaps more rightly called), Bedlam is an old-school institution, focused on containment and restraint of its patients. Fares are charged for visitors to come and watch the hospital's inhabitants, much in the same way that they might a zoo or circus. In one year, more than 95,000 visitors passed through Bedlam's halls for entertainment purposes, a practice unthinkable abhorrent to the local Lost.

Although the birth of the modern psychiatric movement is happening (a practice some believe began with the Blackbird Bishoprie's involvement in London's asylums), Bedlam and other institutions of its kind will not lose their horror for the Lost for some time.

After all, if mankind, with their singular nature, could fall to insanity so fully and completely as the "guests" of Bedlam did, then what hope do the Lost, fractured and split asunder, have of retaining their own Clarity?

Among the secret societies and fraternal orders of the city are also many which seek to utilize real or pseudo-occult attributes to ensure secrecy amongst their members or legitimize their causes. Like the Leaded Mirror, they understand the power of fear to motivate, to winnow the trivial from that of import, and (perhaps most importantly) to urge caution and care in one's actions and words.

Halloween is a very popular holiday for the Victorian Londoner, and though by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century it would be largely neutered, it still holds a great deal of true fright in

the 1800s. Horror is also popular in entertainment, in novels like *The Picture of Dorian Grey*, *The Turn of the Screw*, and *Dracula*.

Ultimately, however, it is the mundane, rather than the supernatural, which truly terrifies the Victorian Londoner. For the rich, there are riots and usurpation of power, loss of wealth and the end to the old ways, which are becoming more and more inevitable with every passing year. For the poor, there are poverty, unemployment, disease, injury, pollution, starvation, and no hope for timely reform of the horrific conditions that are the entirety of their existence.

Everyone, it seems, has something to be afraid of. After all, who need fear the boogiemán, when the landlord, the employer, the jailor, and the corrupt official are such very real nightmares?

### **WINTER**

*Sorrow alone is the creator of great things.*

— ERNEST RENAN

If any emotion could be said to embody the later years of Queen Victoria's reign, it must be sorrow. Having lost her beloved Albert in 1861, Victoria spent the next four decades mourning his loss, and her devotion and depth of emotion was echoed throughout the entire country. The "art" of sadness has known no greater period of legitimacy than the highly ritualized and deeply-ingrained customs of Victorian mourning.

Those who are in mourning not only wear specific clothing for lengthy periods, but they are also expected to remain in relative seclusion. No one in mourning garb is expected to be seen at weddings, parties, the theater, or the opera.

Funerary traditions also reach to elaborate lengths during this period, in mimicry of Queen Victoria's obsession with them. While the poor and working class are often buried with little pomp and circumstance, noble funerals are grandiose — if somber — affairs for which no expense is spared.

Discretion, etiquette, and restraint are of key import in proper Victorian society at all times, and the epitome of these is their handling of death, grief, and loss. This, along with societal standards of discretion and subtlety, means that the Silent Arrow had quite a following amongst the fae of Victorian London, especially those who style themselves after the reigning mortal monarchy. While the Onyx Court may not rally as many numbers on the censuses of London freeholds, it is entirely possible that this is more an attribute of their stealthy natures than of a lack of presence in the city.

### **SPRING**

*A lover without indiscretion  
is no lover at all.*

— THOMAS HARDY

At first glance, one might assume that Spring was the least populous of Victorian courts. To 21<sup>st</sup>-century minds,

## Widow's Weeds

Women of sufficient social station and resources to be able to do so are expected to undergo full mourning for at least a year after the death of their husband. This requires black clothing, made from plain fabric with no sheen or decoration to it, no jewelry, and heavy black veils. White cuffs and collars are acceptable during full mourning. Seal skin is considered the appropriate fur to accompany mourning dress.

Another nine-month "second mourning" follows, where fabric trimming and mourning jewelry are allowed. Veils are still worn during this time, but are pinned back over the head. After this, a "half mourning" of several more months is observed, where more decoration or the gradual addition of color (generally grey and muted purple) back into the wardrobe are allowed.

The loss of a parent or child is similar, normally observed for a year in full mourning, a half year in second mourning and a quarter in half mourning, although girls under 17 years of age are not expected to wear the full mourning garb.

Those who cannot afford an entirely new wardrobe often have their garments dyed for their mourning period, and then re-dyed when mourning lifted. This constitutes a major blow to the city's tailors, who rely so heavily on the making of mourning and post-mourning garments that they began rumors that wearing the same clothes after a mourning period would bring bad luck to the family.

"Victorian," after all, is practically synonymous with "repressed." However, it must be remembered that while manners and mores may be dictated by the whim of popular society, people are still people. They are born and die, and somewhere between the two they eat and drink and fall in love. They create masterpieces, they yearn for that which they do not have, and — even in Victorian times — they fuck.

Just as the Spring Court has always done, Emerald Courtiers in gaslit London see Desire as chief among the tools available to them in thwarting the Gentry. They revel in the juxtaposition of repression and passion, and in the heightened yearnings that made the forbidden fruit all the

sweeter. If the repressive boundaries of Victorian society seem just another yoke laid around their necks, then Desire is their strongest tool against that as well.

## A LACE FACADE

The polite ideals of Victorian morality are often nothing more than a lace tablecloth laid over the well-used furniture of London's daily life. It might be unthinkable in certain circles for a gentlewoman to show a bare ankle, and mental and physical purity are sometimes valued above all other attributes in women of the noble and working class, but this "ideal" does not change the fact that behind London's closed doors there lives and breathes a vital and very human society.

## SEX AND SIN

There is a great deal of sexual activity happening in the city. The sheer population explosion (as much due to increased birth rates as to immigration) is proof of that. But this is not solely perfunctory, prim and proper, for-the-purposes-of-procreation-only sex. Beneath their bustles and veils, Victorian lovers are quite a sordid lot, and Spring do all they could to push their boundaries even further.

Explicit and exotic pornography is popular, if not spoken of in polite company. *The Pearl*, *My Secret Life*, *Venus In Furs* — classic erotic novels, stories, and collections — are all originally published in the Victorian era. Visual erotica is also abundant. The clichéd, barely-veiled invitation to "come up and see my etchings" certainly did not allude to landscapes or still life renderings of fruit bowls. Sensuality is alive and well in drawings, sketches, and paintings. The art of photography was barely nascent before Victorians were turning their cameras upon shockingly bared flesh (often in the form of French postcards).

Affairs are commonplace in all walks of life. Men are almost expected to have mistresses (although they are also expected to be discreet about them). And for those who preferred short-term indiscretions, as many as eighty thousand prostitutes worked in the city by the middle of Victoria's reign.

Perhaps, most surprisingly, in repudiation of the "lie back and think of England" quote falsely attributed to her, a posthumous examination of Queen Victoria's diary revealed she was not only very fond of sex herself, but also frequently shared nude artwork — both men and women — with her husband, Albert. The seemingly repressive layer of propriety that Queen Victoria inspired in her countrymen barely masks a hotbed of titillation and temptation for which there is often little legitimate outlet, making Victorian London a town of yearning, a passionate population barely held in check by the rigid mores of polite society — in short, a city of Desire: Spring's city, whether London knows it or not.

## THE TEARING SMILE (PART IV)

"How do you take your tea, Detective Inspector?" asked Lady Worthing as she arranged herself on the chaise longue next to the tea tray.

Detective Simmons shuffled nervously in the elegant parlor. He wasn't used to talking to the gentry, and something about Lady Eleanor Worthing made him more nervous than usual. He was feeling rather warm and a little claustrophobic in her presence, despite the size of the room. Taking a step backwards, he nudged the stand behind him that bore a large aspidistra in an oriental vase. The stand swayed, and he quickly clung to it and gently arrested its motion before it crashed to the floor. He'd had better days.

Lady Worthing chose not to notice, although it was taking some time for her to see to the layers of her expensive dress as she settled herself. It offered her no small amusement that this human was so simple to manipulate. She flattered herself that it might have more to do with her darkly attractive features than any glamour. However, she supposed she must concede her husband's wealth and position made a difference. She gave a nod of dismissal to Marianne, the housemaid, who stood attentively by the door. Marianne gave a brief curtsy and slipped away, a little disappointed she'd not learn any new gossip from this intriguing visitor.

"Why don't you sit down?" offered Lady Worthing, eager not to see this buffoon break anything.

"Thank you, milady," Simmons muttered. Unsure of the right etiquette he located the most uncomfortable looking chair he could find and shuffled into it. He grimaced as its elegant frame creaked when he sat down.

"There, that's better. Now, you didn't answer my question, Mr. Simmons."

"Your question?"

"Yes. How do you take your tea?"

"Erm, milk and sugar, if I might, milady."

Taking up the silver teapot, Lady Worthing poured out the tea into two delicate bone china cups. As she put the teapot down, she waved her hand briefly over one of the cups. She whispered something as she did so, as quietly as a song from far away being carried on the breeze. Simmons failed to notice anything, as he was too busy staring at his feet. He could not even bring himself to meet Lady Worthing's gaze as she passed him the cup. He took a slurp of tea, and was surprised at the quality of the

brew. As he made to comment on it, he suddenly froze, his eyes glassing over as the charm laid in the cup took hold.

"Now then, Inspector," said Lady Worthing as she took the cup from his yielding fingers. "Shall I tell you what happened in our little interview?"

Simmons nodded dully.

"Well, you and I had a lovely chat, and you became quite convinced that my husband and I have nothing to do with your this unpleasantness. In fact, your policeman's intuition suggests that perhaps that rather gauche middle-class couple Mr. and Mrs. Henderson might actually form a better focus for your investigation."

Lady Worthing watched her words take hold of Simmons, her polite smile becoming sharper as she leaned closer to the detective.

"As it would be impolite to cut your visit short," she murmured, "we shall spend a little time discussing what you have learnt in your investigation so far."



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# CHAPTER 4

## THE MOST WONDERFUL FAIRYTALE

It is easy enough to run a **Changeling: the Lost** game set in the Victorian era as just a change of setting and wardrobe, with a couple of little odd Victorian cultural relics highlighted occasionally. There's absolutely nothing wrong with running Victorian Changeling in this manner — it's good fun.

In addition to providing guidance in how to do that, however, we've also taken a look at our best guides for what was important to Victorians in the stories they told. After all, telling stories in the Victorian era is best aided by looking at the kinds of stories they told each other. This chapter looks at a variety of elements from Victorian literature, with some suggestions on how to apply these elements to a **Changeling: the Lost** game set in the time of Good Queen Victoria.

### FOG AND GASLIGHT: MOODS

In many ways, it is the mood of Victorian literature that draws those interested in playing in such games. The romantic and sinister allure of Victorian England has much to offer the narrative of **Changeling: the Lost**.

### ALIENATION AND SOLITUDE

A sense of alienation accompanies — or at least informs — a great deal of Victorian literature. In a world that was undergoing sudden and dramatic change in nearly every facet of society, it is unsurprising that the literature of the era should communicate the sense of fear and solitude that accompanies such transformations.

This mood was often expressed through supernatural story elements. These tales were not always about heroes facing down the Other. Sometimes, the protagonist was the Other, although with some narrative device that allowed that otherness to be expressed through the lens of a normal person's world view (as in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*).

This device doesn't necessarily require that the narrator himself be the supernatural entity, however. Far more frequently, such tales featured an individual drawn into the

world of magic or horror. These stories often featured a sense of drawing away from the rest of the world, leaving behind one's normal life as this strange, wondrous, and terrifying new association threatened to consume the whole of one's life.

This aspect is particularly relevant to **Victorian Lost**. Whether by deceit, violence, or siren song, the changeling has been spirited away from the normal life he knew and plunged into a nightmare wonderland that is the attention of the Gentry. Capturing this mood can be difficult, because it requires a deft hand.

Use the same tools that Victorian writers used: other characters. A simple comment on how strange the player character is goes an incredible distance toward achieving a sense of being set apart. This actually accomplishes the same thing twice over, in fact — not only does it now enter the player character's mind that he is strange-seeming, but it also expresses the alienation that the other character is feeling as well.

### THE EERIE AND MYSTERIOUS

The strange, the unusual, the shadowy and sinister. The Victorian mindset expected the world and everyone in it to be a certain way. The modern mind-set views deviation from the status quo as an act of rebellion, of claiming one's individuality. Not so to the average Victorian: such things were suspicious, and usually betokened a villainous (or at least mad) mind at work.

Victorian literature, by and large, took advantage of these expectations to create situations of overt or subtle *wrongness*. This might be as simple as something normally vital to an environment being wholly missing, or it may be some physical or social feature at odds with that person's place in society.

Unfortunately, nuanced use of this device isn't always easy, especially in a story set in Victorian England. After all, not every modern player is aware enough of such conventions to interpret what the absence of any portraits on the wall of a parlor might betoken, or what assumptions can be made about someone who never takes off their gloves.

Don't hesitate to be more overt with the use of such things. There is something unsettling about the perfectly pressed gentleman with a single scarlet drop of blood staining the white of his shirtsleeves, peeking out occasionally from his coat as he moves. Find physical ways to express the secrets of the individual with this technique, even if there isn't a single Holmesian character in the troupe.

The secret is to make the things about the person uncanny — there is seemingly no logical, good reason why the society lady's left glove should always smell faintly of formaldehyde, nor why the parson's walking stick has terrible, deep spiraling grooves etched into it where there were none the previous day.

## DECAY AND DECADENCE

To many writers of the Victorian era, they were in the midst of a terrible downward spiral of morality. While the wonders of the world of science made the world brighter, this progress was accompanied by a decay in the moral fiber of the world (or so many of them believed).

No one was exempt from this criticism: where the poor were once hard-working, moral, and honest, they were now drunken, lazy, and irresponsible. Members of society had betrayed their noble origins with rankest decadence, abandoning their responsibility to be role models of good Christian behavior. The learned no longer exalted God's creation in their studies but were all but atheists, and even the Church itself had become hopelessly secular.

This kind of moral turmoil makes for some fascinating characters in Victorian literature, and is a great inspiration for characters in a **Victorian Lost** game, too. Take a look at the outward appearance of characters — player and Storyteller — and answer the question: "How does this person belie their outward appearances?" The answer to this question is not always obvious — rightly so — but always makes for compelling and interesting characters with secrets they don't want others to know and facets of their personality always waiting to be explored.

## IDEALISM AND SOCIETY: THEMES

One of the noteworthy traits of Victorian literature was the kind of conflicts it focused on. Rather than all conflict being between characters, much of the strife was internal. Though such conflict might seem to be created by outside situations, the true struggle tended to happen within the character — conflicts of morality versus culture, duty versus love, or desire versus propriety.

In many ways, these conflicts reflected the evolving idea of self rearing its head in Western thought of the time. Why should one's own impulses, loves, and dislikes be subsumed beneath others' expectations? What right did society have

to make these demands upon a free person? The outward manifestation of this struggle was usually an upswing in expectations of propriety, while personal desires were secreted away and acted upon in private.

For this reason, **Changeling: the Lost** fits incredibly well into the Victorian milieu of storytelling. The Lost struggle with these kinds of internal conflicts on an ongoing basis: the memories of wonder and horror from their time in Arcadia, the conflict between faerie self and mortal self, and the desire for mortal life versus one's responsibilities to Court and Motley.

## STRUGGLE

The essence of the story is conflict. Victorian literature's conflicts were usually the struggle between self and society, on some level. The rare character who was perfectly happy in this oeuvre served one of two purposes — to be a foil for those who were not, constantly reminding others what they do not have, or to be the "finishing line" of sorts, providing a bright and shining goal to motivate the protagonist through the myriad struggles and tragedies.

As a Storyteller, it's not enough to provide villains for your player characters. Ask yourself — what do they struggle against? This struggle, once defined, is an excellent source of opposition in the chronicle: Storyteller characters and organizations may literally serve this force or dynamic, or simply embody it in some way relevant to the characters.

A chronicle about the struggle between the safety of enslavement and the dangers of freedom might take place in a small Court of the Lost, controlling and domineering for those who choose to remain. Those who do not are banished from the safety of the Court and its defenders, left on their own in a world where the Gentry send their agents and creatures to hunt those left out in the cold.

A motley might be formed because of a common struggle, sealing a Motley Pact to help one another against a foe they all share. Or they may each have different struggles to face, and hope to assist one another in doing so: what insights does the changeling who finds his personal impulses at odds with that of his Court's expectations have to offer one who struggles to balance his fae and human lives?

## MORAL PURPOSE

Although novels were established as a source of entertainment by this time, many Victorian novels were still a source of outrage to some. They often portrayed people — even those who were intended to be villains — as doing things that were considered deeply inappropriate and morally outrageous. But the simple existence of these characters and their perfidious and shocking actions was an important part of Victorian literature. Its authors lived in a world that was filled with people offending these moral standards — not sneering villains, but regular people.

In part, the Victorian novel was a way for a culture to explore the idea that sometimes one's life, circumstances, or passions led even good people to act in questionable ways. Acts of adultery, theft, and even murder weren't necessarily the province of irredeemable monsters — they were things that people sometimes found themselves forced to do.

It was no longer the assumption that you could tell a villain by their actions, leaving only the murkiest of yardsticks by which to measure such things: motivation. The villain of a story could be someone who sticks perfectly to the bounds of law and propriety, but does so for nefarious purposes. Likewise, our heroes may be forced to undertake acts of violence, extortion, and other crimes in order to do good.

As a Storyteller, pick and choose a couple of issues of morality at large in the Victorian era. As inhabitants of the modern day, we have the luxury of hindsight, and can probably point directly to the evils of some of the murky issues of the day: Child labor, women's rights, racial prejudice, extreme classism, and a whole slew of other topics are out front and center, waiting to be put to use.

The trick here is not to preach to anyone. It's not your job to instruct your players on the evils of this world, nor to moralize at them. You're not here as a crusader — you're here as a Storyteller. Look at these topics as Storytelling hooks to enrich your game. Place these elements on-camera in your game, and let stories unfold around them. Rest assured, your players will inject all the meaning and importance you could ask for into those bits of morality storytelling all by themselves.

## IDEALISM

Victorian literature was thick with a sense of idealism. In many ways, that idealism drove the Victorian mindset — here was a world-spanning empire with unprecedented prosperity, growth, and military power. There was an innocence to the Victorian narrative, at least by today's rather jaded standards.

It might be fairly said that the idealism of this age can best be summed up with a single word: *should*. There was a predominant assumption that there was a good and right order of things, one in which everyone and everything has a place, particularly when dealing with issues of society and morality.

While it would seem that this idealism stood in direct opposition to some of the issues of less-defined morality mentioned above, in fact it served to highlight and contrast it. Even though this literature discussed moral failings of even upstanding people (even delighting in the moral failings of those who society said should have none), it did so with a sense that the reader still knows what *should* be going on. An adulterer *should* know better than the practice his perfidious infidelity and the gossiping busybody *should* know better than to go meddling in peoples' lives.

This idealism extends beyond moral concerns, though. With a nearly poetic approach to the subject, much of Vic-

torian literature exalted the high philosophical concepts of Truth, Love, Justice, or Brotherhood. These themes echoed throughout many of these works not as realities, but as ideals.

In some ways, Victorian narratives also had an air of pessimism to them, recognizing the harsh realities of the world while at the same time lamenting the lack of true virtue. They upheld these high-minded principles as the best in mankind, but unlike earlier literature, they did not claim they were something inherent in people. Instead, they were something that everyone *should* strive towards, creating a sense that the grim, despairing state of the world was because people did not choose to strive towards the best possible world they could achieve. (In some ways, this idea backfired, creating a cultural sense that those whose lives were good and genteel were so because they were good and just people, while those whose lives were not suffered from a moral failing.)

As a Storyteller, identify the *shoulds* of your narrative. What are the high ideals that the local Courts set forward as their shining ideals, and what are the ways in which they fail to meet those ideals? The conflict generated from desiring to be seen a certain way when one is not cannot be emphasized enough in terms of creating Victorian-style narratives: The desire to be seen as living up to some ideal, the failure to do so, and the desperation to avoid the resultant scandal of that failure's being discovered drive a great deal of the characters' interactions.

Who is in the middle of a potential scandal? What are the secrets that characters — both player and Storyteller — hide from one another? Consider not only murders and other acts of high villainy, but passionate indiscretions, vices, and tragic mistakes. Identify these traits for even just a few characters, and you're well on your way to creating the kind of layered characters that enliven Victorian literature.

## FOLK AND FAIRY TALES

**Changeling:** the *Lost*, the *World of Darkness* as a whole, and much of post-Victorian media owes an incredible debt to Victorian literature. When it came to fairy tales and folk stories, the Victorian author did not simply retell the well-loved tale. Instead, he mined it for its imagery, characters, and themes, and told new stories using the same sense of wonder and magic.

With the Victorian era came an incredible deluge of well-loved stories of magic and fantasy. The idea of characters that might hie off into a strange world of weird creatures, sorcery, and unexpected settings boiled into the Victorian consciousness, and readers couldn't get enough.

Fairies, in particular, became extremely popular. New fairy tales were written with two audiences in mind, and with very different goals for each. For the young reader, it was a chance to attach wonder and whimsy to ideas of strong moral fiber. For the adult reader, however, it was an opportunity to challenge their assertions and reform their ideas.

In a **Victorian Lost** chronicle, the fairy elements are not only around the protagonists — they are *within* the protagonist. A changeling's Kith isn't merely about what he experienced in his Durance; it should also say something about that character's personality, moral compass, and inspiration.

## MIRROR IMAGES

The use of twins, doppelgangers, and similar reflections of the self played a role in the developing Victorian literature. They were ways of saying something about the reflected character — a sort of *through a glass, darkly* observation on who they were or who they might be.

The use of this trope is clearly present in **Changeling: the Lost's** fetches. In the fetch, a character can see what it is that he might have become had he never been snatched away to serve the Good Neighbors. Many changelings despair at this revelation, as it is almost impossible to be happy with “what might have been.”

If the fetch has lived a hard, miserable life, the knowledge that such an existence was narrowly avoided only by being snatched away is a grim one. A fetch with a fine and wonderful life, conversely, finds itself cast as a lurking creature in the shadows, filled with envy at what should have been theirs.

This theme need not be restricted to outward manifestations, however. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde ably exhibit the other side of this theme: that what one sees in the mirror is oneself. Plenty of Victorian literature looks at the conflict of who the person is for the world versus who they are within their own minds. Shifting identities, cautiously-concealed desires, and similar mask-wearing are all a part of the genre. Who is the character outwardly, and how does this identity contrast — or even conflict — with who they are inwardly?

## SMOKE AND HEDGE: SETTING

Victorian England was a unique blend of cultural and societal influences, and that heady *mélange* is the focus of this book. We use the term “Smoke and Hedge” to describe the world of **Victorian Lost**. This is the world of teeming urban rookeries, workhouses, and desperate people struggling to survive, at contrast with the heavily romanticized ideal of the genteel country life.

Outwardly, the urban setting is a filthy place of poverty, classism, and pollution. Thus, it is no wonder that those fleeing Arcadia find the most safety in the poorest parts of London, at least at first. Most people in the rookeries and slums try to ignore one another, and the streets teem with the insane, the criminal, and the desperate: The strangeness of the Lost blends into the background. The sheer numbers of people in such situations provide an undifferentiated mass of dirty faces for changelings to vanish into.

Conversely, Victorian society adores the idyllic pleasures promised by those places outside the city. Poets write lovingly of the innocent joys of the countryside, and everything to do with rural living — from milking cattle to hunting for food — has been given a veneer of innocence in this era's literature.

While such a countryside fantasy is well and good for those who do not live out short lives of hard labor there, such dreams and flights of fancy have a very real effect for changelings. Such areas resonate quite strongly with the barely-tamed wilds of the Hedge and Arcadia beyond.

Changelings argue over the cause-and-effect relationship of that reality with the fantasies. Does Arcadia touch the countryside more strongly because of the rural romanticism so in vogue, or has that notion been established because Arcadia has found a way to forge such strong connections? The reasons behind it will perhaps never be known, but one thing is clear: the countryside is dangerous for the Lost. The passage between this world and the world of the fae is thinner there, and *things* from the Hedge come through sometimes. Most of the time, they cannot interact with the people they find there, but they will hungrily hound those that can see them.

The dangers here aren't just from the other side of the Hedge, either. The folk who live in the countryside watch strangers carefully. Though rich travelers and tourists are not an uncommon sight in many places, strange faces are enough to raise caution in rural folk — and most changelings have a hard enough time getting on without the overt scrutiny of the locals.

These locals are also the ones who are likeliest to know how to identify those who are fae, carrying on what the educated refer to as “charming folk superstitions.” The effects of iron and many other methods of identifying the Good Neighbors continue to be passed from one generation to the next.

Such a dynamic can work in the changeling's favor, however. Those who know old tricks to prevent fairy trickery may also know the old methods of dealing with the fae. The goodwife who knows enough to warn her son to turn his coat inside out before he goes riding after dark also knows that the Little People may grant a wish in exchange for milk and honey left outside on the back stoop.

## THE VICTORIAN CHRONICLE

We can go on and on about themes, moods, and all the other literary conceits that come attached to any genre of writing, but what is really relevant is what you and your players expect out of the game.

Each player is going to envision something different when you say “a chronicle set in Victorian England.” Talk about that — find out what that is. To some, it might be visions of inner London tenements, with child thieves, rough men, and pros-

titutes with hearts of gold and lungs full of “consumption.” To others, it might mean gleaming places where new science is being performed all the time, the purview of men of creativity, insight, and learning. To another, it may be the very height of society, a world filled with country retreats, the opening of the social season, gentlemen’s clubs, and scandalous assignations in gorgeously manicured gardens.

It might be occult and secret societies, like the Golden Dawn and the Masonic Orders. It might be imperialism at its best and worst, with jaunts to India, Hong Kong, and other colonies, or simply the foreign populations of those areas crammed into London’s East End.

All of these elements provide plenty of wonderful opportunities to tell stories with, particularly within the world of **Victorian Lost**.

## THE SERIAL NOVEL

With an unprecedented level of both literacy and the technology to provide easy and cheap access to the printed word, the Victorian era gave birth to a world of readers — not just of news and academia, but of fiction, stories, and tales. In many ways, the idea of a society that consumes fiction is a modern invention, and today’s huge Hollywood budgets, epic series on television, and vast trilogies (or more!) of printed works are all the children and grandchildren of the Victorian era’s love of the printed word and the escapism of fiction.

Magazines and newspapers hired writers to provide their readers with bite-sized daily, weekly, or monthly installments of a tale, usually ending on a cliffhanger to keep the reader hungry for more.

If this sounds familiar, it’s because it’s an awful lot like the way roleplaying game sessions tend to play out. Most Storytellers strive for a compelling mix of the elements that their players like best, and when the session comes to a close, it is either mid-point in the narrative, or (hopefully) at a spot that will leave players hungry for the next game session. To take further advantage of the medium, here are some ideas:

- **Name Your Serial.** Spruce up the chronicle a bit, and lend a little tantalization to the narrative. A good chronicle name will provide hints as to what the tale is going to be about, but doesn’t give away all the secrets. If you or one of your players is at all interested in such endeavors, make a “book cover” for the story you’re telling.

- **Home Base.** Establish a “home base” for your tale. These are recurring locations associated with the characters in some way: someone’s home, a favorite pub, the neighborhood park. These are nominally safe environments for the player characters to gather in, either in anticipation of the next part of the story, in the middle of a tale as sanctuary, or at the end to reflect on their success and the accompanying rewards. These places should not only have their own characters, but should — on some level — be characters in

their own rights. Don’t try to establish too many places like this, however. It will mean each individual place gets less time, and thus offers less familiarity and opportunity for the Storyteller to cement it as a “home base” locale. Choose two or three locations at the beginning of a chronicle, maximum, and allow the campaign to develop them as time goes on.

- **Recurring Characters.** The idea of the recurring character was born in Victorian serial literature. The author was almost always hunting for a way to surprise the reader and bring him back to the story at the next serial release, and the return of a character thought departed — or better still, dead — was a favorite. But this doesn’t simply apply to antagonists, mind. The simple fact of some characters returning over and over in the story lends continuity and a sense of realism to the story.

Remember: Storyteller characters are the main way that the setting has of interacting with player characters, so make sure your spotlight Storyteller characters in some way embody your theme and/or mood. If you are telling a grungy tale of desperation in the rookeries of London, you’re going to do that best with characters native to the location: prostitutes, pickpockets, do-gooders seeking to help those that dwell here, the drunk on the corner, and the kindly and concerned parish priest.

- **The Cliff-Hanger.** If you have the choice of ending on a low point in the story or on a point in the narrative where the action or drama is rising like the crest of a wave, go for the wave every time. Player investment is important, and this buys it in bulk. The cliffhanger is also an aid in playing: when you start a game session and recount last session’s cliffhanger, there’s very little hemming and hawing trying to figure out what to do next. The action is clear, and a cliffhanger is easy to jump right into after a long span of time without playing, as there are usually only so many reactions to such events.

It’s certainly possible to overplay this, but on some level, it’s part of the stylistic fun. As you work on the game session, whether you are the sort who just jots down a few notes or the sort who exhaustively plans and counter-plans every game, think about your cliffhanger opportunities.

Get creative — build peaks of action into the scenes you know you are going to play through. With players in a roleplaying game, there’s never any real way of knowing exactly how long any given scene will take. Build cliffhangers into major scenes, setting up the story for the following session.

Another approach is to also set up “session cliffhangers,” which can easily be slotted into any scene as needed. If you know that you want to end the session with the terrifying arrival of the Fifth Hound of the Huntsman, a terrible changeling-hunter in service to one of the Gentry, don’t craft a specific scene around that. Instead, prepare to work his terrifying arrival into any scene that you’re in the middle of when the hour grows late and people get restless.

## CLASS CONFLICT

A big part of any Victorian tale — even if it isn't in the foreground — is the conflict between the classes. The gulf between rich and poor, upper class and lower, seemed of greater magnitude than it ever had before. Where some segments of society were able to avail themselves of the best and most expensive things the world had to offer, it made them seem further and further removed from those that were left to dwell in subsistence living or worse.

Many changelings can't help but see parallels in their own existences. Not for nothing are the lords of Arcadia called the Gentry, and those who were stolen away to act as servants to the Others inevitably find very familiar dynamics between the mortal high society and the lower classes.

For some, this means becoming champions of that lower class, helping them to take command of their own lives — even at the expense of the upper class' riches and social niceties. For others, however, it is a goad to never again be the lowest on the social ladder, driving them to seize up all of the wealth, temporal power, and social standing they can muster.

You should examine these dynamics for your **Victorian Lost** game. Who are the “haves,” and who are the “have nots” of the society you're building? How do various characters interact with those dynamics, both in the world of the fae and in the mortal realms? These decisions don't have to

encompass all of the strata of Victorian society to be effective, however. If your chronicle takes place entirely in the underworld, for example, deciding what character have the social status, inherent power, or the moral high ground can add a lot to the dynamics of the characters involved.

## THE INVENTION OF CHILDHOOD

Some critics and historians have said that the Victorians “invented childhood” Conditions for children in homes and factories worsened and a social distinction was necessary to create reforms, while those in the upper classes had sheltered childhoods of frivolity that did not require them to go to work to help feed the family. The growing social distinction of “childhood” is a concept worth looking at from the perspective of a **Victorian Lost** game.

On some level, the idea of a sheltered, innocent existence in which stories and imagination may be fostered is relevant to **Changeling: the Lost**. For some, that time of innocence was their time before being stolen away through the Hedge. For others, it was their time in Arcadia, at least until the wonders tarnished and the beautiful silk and rosy glass were found to be just another form of shackle and prison.

A look at the concept of innocence serves both Storyteller and player characters. “What was the time of inno-



cence?” is a deeply valid and useful question to ask about any given character. The answer will shape how they view the world, what kinds of causes they are likely to lend themselves to, and which they will resist with all their might.

To some, the “return to innocence” is a cherished goal; for others, it is an impossibility. Some may even feel that it has already happened in some form, before they found that it was yet another kind of enslavement — one of wishful thinking and fever dreams.

Those who found their time of wonder to be the days before their Durance might seek to prevent others from being stolen by the Gentry. Someone who remembers her time in Arcadia with wistful longing might secretly desire to renew her service to her old master, or she might insist on facing the cold hard realities of the world, because daydreaming and wishful thinking are just another form of slavery.

## LARP BY GASLIGHT

Victorian-era London is an ideal setting for a **Changeling: The Lost** live-action game. While **Changeling** itself provides nearly infinite opportunities for the costuming, pageantry, atmosphere, and interactive Storytelling that makes LARP so popular, the Victorian setting lends its own exquisite depth and flavor to that experience.

Whether your preference is Sherlock Holmes mystery, Dickensian morality play, high court intrigue, steampunk techno-madness, or all of the above, **Victorian Lost** offers the opportunity to create and explore anything from a one-evening whodunit to an epic chronicle.

## PLAYING BY GASLIGHT

While playing a **Victorian Lost** LARP is, in many ways, similar to playing a **Victorian Lost** tabletop game, there are some things to keep in mind that are specific to the juxtaposition of **Changeling** and the Victorian era. A little preparation and effort can go a long ways towards making full use of the dramatic possibilities of both settings

### VICTORIAN ERA FASHION

Not every LARP player will be able to afford to create a historically-accurate Victorian costume for their character, but avoiding clothing that screams “modern day” will go a long way towards setting the Victorian tone. For players who desire greater authenticity, specific fashions appropriate for a character’s social class, occupation, financial status, marital state, and the specific period within the era can, thankfully be researched easily either online (try keywords like “Victorian costume” or “Victorian upper/middle/lower class”) or in costuming books. In general, however, the tips below can help set the proper stage.

- Long sleeves are common for both men and women, along with floor-length skirts and long (non-denim) trousers. Young girls might wear full skirts to the knee, but with every

### *Suggestion, Not a Conversion*

Just as it is the assumption of **Victorian Lost** that readers are conversant with the **Lost** setting as a whole, it is also our conjecture that they are familiar with the basic concepts of LARP gaming. Because of this, we will not deal extensively with defining and explaining LARP in general, nor **Changeling: The Lost** LARP in specific.

Furthermore, creating a complete LARP conversion for **Changeling** is not our goal, and we proceed under the conceit that Storytellers have determined a conversion for the rules and will be running the mechanical aspects of their games as best suits themselves and their players.

If this has not yet been accomplished, many resources are available that may serve as templates and guidelines for the development of these mechanics. By comparing **Vampire: the Requiem**, for example, with the published LARP product **Mind’s Eye Theater: The Requiem**, Storytellers can see how the conversion was handled for one of the other **World of Darkness** games. A similar conversion for **Mage: the Awakening** can be found in **Mind’s Eye Theater: The Awakening**. The re-publication of the classic **World of Darkness** products, including multiple games with both tabletop and LARP versions, also offers additional opportunities to compare conversion systems.

passing year, the hemline fell towards their ankles. Boys of ten wore knee-length pants until they reached maturity.

- Women’s undergarments included corsets which helped provide an hourglass figure. Although corsetry certainly emphasized the feminine form by providing exaggerated curves, for the most part modesty was the rule in Victorian fashion. However, for formal occasions, women’s ball gowns often were off the shoulder, sometimes sleeveless, and featured low necklines that showed a great deal of décolletage.

- Victorian fashion is less colorful than in the previous century. However, Oriental brocades and other rich fabrics and patterns were worn by those who could afford them, and new, cheaper dyes led to a wide range of colors worn by all echelons of society.

- Hats were common for both men and women, as were gloves, especially those of thin leather, or (for noblewomen) fine lace. For craftsmen and domestics, aprons were common, to protect the more expensive clothing underneath.

- In general, working-class clothing was much simpler and more utilitarian than that of the upper crust. Fabrics

were chosen as much for durability and low cost as for fashion. Women were expected to sew sufficiently well to outfit their families, which meant the quality of garments varied depending on the resources, skill, and available time of the lady of the house. It was unusual for those of the middle or lower classes to have much selection in their wardrobe. A poor man might have a single daily outfit, unsuited for changing seasons (and perhaps a suit of “Sunday best”), while a very poor one might have little more than rags.

- Locketts and cameos were both popular jewelry pieces for ladies who could afford them, as were brooches, hairpins, and hatpins. For noblemen, cufflinks were commonly worn, as were tie or cravat pins. For both sexes, pocket watches on chains were favored.

- For those portraying characters in mourning, black is appropriate.

## SOUNDS ABOUT RIGHT

To foreign ears, the differences between English accents may seem subtle, but they do exist. Not only do Scottish and Irish speakers of English sound distinctly different than British ones, but even within England itself, different regions display dialects and tonal qualities which are distinctive enough to identify the user within a very specific area.

Likewise, recent immigrants (or those who spend the majority of their time amongst native speakers of other languages) are likely to carry vestiges of the accents of their homeland for many years. Nineteenth-century London was home to immigrants from across the world, especially the British colonies and poorer parts of Europe. Chinese, Indian, and Caribbean accents might be overheard in the cobbled streets of the city, along with those from further climes.

Even for native-born Londoners, not all English spoken was the same. A noblewoman’s well-enunciated words and erudite vocabulary might barely be understood by the man who came around to empty her rubbish bins, and vice versa. Working-class Londoners (especially from the East End) spoke in the Cockney dialect, a dialect which incorporated words from sources as diverse as Yiddish and Romanian, and featured rhyming slang that was often incomprehensible to outsiders.

In a game set in Victorian London, non-English players may decide to default to a “we all sound appropriate to one another” rather than attempt to recreate suitable accents. This is perfectly acceptable, and no player should feel pressured to affect a dialect if they don’t want to.

On the other hand, a well-done accent, or at least the hint of an appropriate lilt, can go a long ways towards establishing a character’s persona to others. Listening for examples of the proper tones, cadence, and speech patterns in movies (*My Fair Lady* is particularly recommended) or on the Internet can be very useful for those who want to incorporate this into their characters.

## BEYOND THE MUNDANE

While Victorian England is a setting rich with costuming and prop opportunities, *Lost* itself goes beyond the boundaries of mundane reality and introduces fantasy aspects which can take a LARP character portrayal from fun to unforgettable. Changelings are more than just the Victorian humans they attempt to appear to be. They are fae, and in one way or another, the Wyrd’s touch shows in their mein. Using makeup, props, and costuming to demonstrate the fae attributes of a character’s Seeming, Kith, Court, and Entitlement reinforces the themes of a game, brings additional richness to the LARP atmosphere, and acts as a mnemonic device to remind other players about their characters’ true appearance.

## COSMETICS AND STAGE MAKEUP

Some of the simplest (and least expensive) ways to represent a changeling character’s fae nature is through the use of cosmetics. A selection of lip and eye pencils and some practice in applying them can transform a human player into a feral beast, a withered crone, a zombie, an articulated puppet, or a hellish demon. Scales can be drawn on the skin with the same makeup pencils (or stenciled, air-brushed, or drawn with washable markers) as can feathers, fur patterns, tattoos, occult sigils, or other arcane markings. For the more adventurous, stage makeup can be used to change skin-tone dramatically, provide all-over color, or simply emphasize key facial features. Many makeup tutorials are available through online videos. Experiment with colors, shading, and patterns.

## PROSTHETICS AND PROPS

Some attributes require more dimension to be portrayed fully. Wigs can be a fast-and-easy way to dramatically identify a character’s nature. The player of a Summer courtier (or a Flamesiren, or a Fireheart) might use a flame-colored wig, while that of a Spring changeling (or Woodblooded, or Flowering) might attach strands of leaves or flowers into a bark-brown or leaf-green one.

Many costume shops sell horns, scars, fangs, pointed ear tips, or false noses which can be attached to the skin with spirit gum to drastically change a player’s appearance. Masks can make a similar change, albeit much more quickly. For those trying to represent a particular culture, hats, and jewelry go a long ways towards evoking the same. A fez speaks of Northern Africa, a veiled face or turban of Egypt or the Middle East, and draping necklaces and coin belts of the nomadic Roma — all cultures that were considered exotic by the average Victorian Londoner.

Portraying a character significantly different in size can be a particular challenge. For those trying to represent characters much larger than themselves, tall boots,

bulky jackets with shoulder pads, or even short stilts can be used (although as in all aspects of the game, safety should come as a higher priority than aesthetics). Short characters can be portrayed through body language (slouching) or by using construction kneepads and walking on one's knees, although this can be very tiring and painful over a long period.

Some attributes are simply beyond any reasonable attempt to portray them. Court Mantles, for example, are often perceivable by other characters, but trying to find a way to represent plants withering in one's footsteps or physical heat emanating from a person are greater challenges than most gamers are willing to tackle. In these cases, using 3x5 cards in badge-pin holders or paper stickers displayed on one's person with the effects or description clearly marked can remind other players that what they're seeing as players is different than what their characters are experiencing.

## STORYTELLING VICTORIAN LOST LARP

Much like playing a character, Storytelling a Victorian Lost LARP can provide unique challenges.

### PLOTS AND STORYLINES

While most of the story seeds and plot hooks offered in Chapter Five can be ported seamlessly over to a LARP setting, certain provisions can be made in order to ease that transformation.

Because players are more likely to be scattered around the game site and involved in inter-character interactions, you may want to plan before game how you will deliver clues and story hooks directly to individual players' characters, rather than making overarching narrative announcements to guide the plot as you might at a tabletop game. The exception to this is if something happens at the in-character location, so game can be paused for Storyteller narration of what everyone involved experiences.

You may also want to set several "crumb trails" to lead characters towards the plot, rather than relying on one particular player character bringing the clue back to the group. Few things are more frustrating than having a well-planned plot hook completely ignored by the sole player character that could pull the rest of the game into the storyline.

### NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Just as LARP players are encouraged to use costuming, makeup and props to help others perceive their characters' appearance, so are Storytellers. While it may not be practical to have full costuming for each of the non-player characters you portray, a single, significant item can alert players that they are now dealing with The Pale Dowager rather than one of the Gamesmen whom you were playing earlier in

the game. Masks are perfect for this, as are hats, jackets, or cloaks, because they are simple, easy to identify, and make transformation between characters very easy.

### SETTING MATERIAL

The city of London is portrayed in this book as having several small freeholds. For a tabletop game, this is designed to offer players the opportunity to serve as the core movers-and-shakers of their own freehold, while giving them allies or antagonists in the form of the non-player characters controlling the other freeholds. However, you may find that this conceit encourages your players to separate the game into several different in-character locations, each group choosing their freehold's home territory. This can make it difficult to run cohesive storylines, and doesn't encourage player character interaction.

You may want to customize this to suit your player base. For small games, having a single freehold in the city may serve perfectly well, with player characters forming motleys within that freehold. If the player base is very small, you can use non-player characters to flesh out the city's Lost population. Care should be taken, however, not to lock player characters out of the spotlight. While you may enjoy creating interesting and powerful non-player characters, the game rightly belongs to the players and their characters.

Larger games may warrant setting two or more freeholds within the city. The in-character location of games can trade between the various freeholds' territories, which should encourage characters to spend the majority of their in-game time together, rather than dividing each game into several locales.

### ATMOSPHERE AND DECORATIONS

While most Storytellers won't have the advantage of holding their games in Victorian mansions or tenements, a little effort can go a long ways towards providing a Victorian mood and feel to the game's environs. Low lighting serves the setting well, but while candles, oil lamps, and gas light is very Victorian, they're all dangerous when around flammable sleeves, capes, wigs, and wings. LED faux candles may provide a safer alternative, but be certain that hazardous areas are well-lit for safety. Stairs and other uneven ground can be dangerous in darkness, especially if players are wearing unfamiliar costuming or footwear chosen for appearance rather than stability.

Many modern intrusions to a game site can be hidden with the use of simple cloth draped over them. Tablecloths, sheets, or yardage from a fabric store in plain colors or appropriate prints for the era can cover a multitude of distractions easily and inexpensively. While decorations will depend on the specific location, some items are so iconic to Victoriana that they can be used in a wide variety of in-character game settings. Lace tablecloths, for example,

can transform anything from a folding table to a cardboard box into a piece of Victorian furniture. Framed sepia photographs from thrift stores, delicate tea sets, ornate gilt-framed mirrors, and needlepoint throw pillows can likewise go a long ways towards lending a Victorian feel to an otherwise mundane area.

An even more versatile way to add atmosphere to a game environment is through the use of period music. Al-

though music was often listened to live during the Victorian era, recordings of popular musical styles from the era will evoke atmosphere in a way that few other efforts can do. For a high-class mood, try opera and classical pieces from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. More “working class” gatherings might benefit from music that harkens more closely to the traditional folk songs, music and dance hall stylings, humorous musicals of the time, and other popular period pieces.



## THE TEARING SMILE (PART V)

The screams kept her awake at night; they never seemed to end. They were so ingrained it seemed the stones of the place themselves were screaming night and day, not just the patients held here. Lying in the dank cell, Maggie didn't just hear the screams; she felt them too. They echoed, not only through the rooms and passages, but also inside her skull.

She heaved herself up onto her elbows, feeling as if every movement took a herculean effort. How long had she been here? It seemed like a few hours, but each hour felt like days. It must be night, she reasoned, noting the lack of sunlight coming from the iron grill set high in the wall above her. As she sat up, her head began to clear a little. The door to her cell stood ajar, but as she moved tentatively towards it an odd sense of déjà vu nagged at her. The screams had faded, but somehow she knew they were there, almost as if they had risen beyond the range of her hearing.

The door swung open easily, but the corridor was pitch-black. The bare moonlight that lit her cell found no way to reach there. She reached out a hand and whispered to the shadows of the contract they held together. Sluggishly, the shadow complied with their bargain not to hide secrets from her, and the cold bricks of the corridor faded into view. She took a step into the corridor, which seemed to stretch endlessly to both the left and the right. She turned to go right, but it seemed

something blocked the corridor. As the shadows peeled back from the obstruction, she saw it was a thick wall of thorns. Briars laced to and fro, and wrapped tightly within them was Old Meg, her eyes staring past Maggie to some other horror. She was mouth-ing something Maggie couldn't understand, although she didn't struggle. Blood ran along her hands and face from where the thorns bit into her.

Old Meg suddenly reached out to Maggie, either for help or to claim her, but Maggie turned and fled. The screams returned again, louder, although they seemed to reverberate in her head rather than down the corridor. As she ran she kicked into something lying in the corridor, which sent her sprawling. It was Liam. He sat

curled up in a ball, his handsome features contorted with laughter, and he was staring at her. Maggie reached out to him, and he began to crawl towards her like a spider. He slid on top of her as she lay in the darkness, his mouth opened wide with a knife-like smile. The smile corrupted his whole face until it wasn't Liam any more.

"What's the matter, my dear?" chattered Mr. Smiles. "Cat got your mind?"

Maggie struggled but the panic held her fast.

"Oh, your fears give me such sweet glamour. I think I'll keep you dreaming with me forever."

She tried to open her eyes, but something held them shut, and she realized the screams that had haunted her had been her own.

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# CHAPTER 5

## THE WORST OF TIMES

*The secret of life is to appreciate the pleasure of being terribly, terribly deceived.*

— OSCAR WILDE

The storytelling opportunities afforded by Victorian England to a game of **Changeling: the Lost** are plentiful. In this chapter, you will find chronicles, presented extensively, if not exhaustively. Each chronicle has a *Pitch*, intended to quickly summarize the play style without giving too much away, the *Mood and Theme*, a *Description* of the chronicle's events and play, some *Sample Characters for Players* to either be used directly or simply to provide a good starting point for player creativity, the *Stories* involved in the chronicle's progression, and any *Special Rules* necessitated by the chronicle.

The following two chronicles focus on applying elements of importance to the Victorian mind to the **Changeling** milieu, and giving them a bit of a twist. One story of heroic scandal and another of transgressing class boundaries await.

These chronicles are written with a sense of vagueness in some areas. This is deliberate — the best chronicle is one in which the players' characters are the central role, and discussing these narratives in a general way allows for a great deal of customization to fit the proclivities, personalities, backgrounds, and ambitions of your player characters.

### THE BLACKTHORNE CLUB

*Scandal is gossip made tedious by morality.*

— OSCAR WILDE

Lord Aegocornus sat beside the pretty young lady, newly introduced to society. Idly, he thought about telling her that he wished he might trace that pretty blush with his tongue: he'd start at her flushed cheeks, down her jaw, dropping sensuously down the length of her aristocratic neck, pausing for a moment at her delicate collar before continuing...

The shadow that suddenly blocked the sun brought him to his senses. The pinch-faced matron who glared down at him lifted a single, judgmental eyebrow.

"Dame Ridley," Lord Aegocornus smiled, rising to greet her from the chaise he shared with the sweet girl, who was now deathly pale and trying to hide behind her fan. "You do us a great honor. I'm pleased that you feel recovered enough after your trip to Bath to join us in this little parlor."

"Do you think it is entirely appropriate for the two of you to be sitting so close together?" the old bat whispered indignantly. A searing pain ripped through his temple, down his spine and settled in his groin, and it was all he could do not to groan aloud. The harridan continued. "I can see that this young woman's chaperone is nattering away foolishly with Vicar Mathers at the piano, and is paying her no attention. Most indecorous. Shall I accompany you back to her, my dear?"

The old woman's tone left no room for argument. The young woman practically bolted from the chaise, fleeing across the room. Lord Aegocornus took a deep breath and sighed. He looked upward and found an almost unearthly glee in the old woman's judgmental demeanor.

"So," he said lowly, with a slight gesture sure to get the attention of the rest of his motley gathered here. "I see that rest and relaxation wasn't all that found their way into your dreams in Bath, Dame Ridley."

#### PITCH

When the Mad Ones come into the world, everything is turned topsy-turvy. When the Gentry come and make gossamer palaces of propriety and terrible weapons of manners, there is only one refuge for the Lost: iniquity.

#### MOOD AND THEME

The mood of The Blackthorne Club is *Delightful, Heroic Debauchery*. The chronicle features iniquity, not for its own sake, but in order to fight a stifling sort of morality, used to limit and control others.

The theme of The Blackthorne Club is *Through Transgression, Freedom*. When the Gentry take up residence in the



dreams of highest society, it requires action both immoral and deeply inappropriate to fight them. Thus, those who take up the weaponry of scandal to fight them do so with the highest of intentions.

## DESCRIPTION

When the enemy uses convention, propriety, and the expectations of high society, you have no choice but to fight with scandal, outrage, and licentiousness. The player characters are part of the Blackthorne Motley, a group of changelings who have established themselves as the masters of a social club notorious for its shocking excesses — including admitting *women* into their membership!

The motley is joined with a single purpose: to prevent the Pale Dowager from entering into the world. A True Fae who finds delight and joy in the stifling restrictions that the notable and wealthy place on one another, the Pale Dowager is a consummate dreamscaper, wielding the powers of social mores and fear of scandal as her paintbrush.

In order to combat her, the motley turns to a very specific battle plan: finding those who have been infected by her mores (unfortunates they call “the Decorous”) and corrupting them wholly, unraveling the dream-poison she has infected them with.

It is a two-pronged method, starting first with introducing the Decorous to temptation, but not quite crossing that

line. Then, the motley uses oneiromancy to start to pull at the seams of the Pale Dowager’s dream-poison by introducing salacious vices to the perfect ivory world of their dreams.

Each of the Decorous, of course, has a different focus for this propriety-dream, one rooted in their past and personality, and unraveling it means finding out who they are. The Blackthorne motley encourages dream exploration of the Decorous and those around them to uncover the sources of the anxieties and shame that the Pale Dowager uses as a foothold, and introduce themselves to social situations that allow them to further poke at these traits.

Once one of the Decorous is rescued, he is inducted into the Blackthorne Club, a Hellfire Club-like social fraternity devoted to liberation through excess.

## PLAYER CHARACTERS

Though engaged in the most shocking of behaviors as a weapon against the Pale Dowager, the Blackthorne motley can wear the garments of society and pretty manners as well as any — and better than most. In fact, they are well-desired in social circles, for they tread that wonderful line between scandal and society that makes them wonderful party and outing guests.

At least half of the characters should have some facility with oneiromancy (**Changeling: the Lost**, p. 193). Such a motley would also find a great deal of use in Pledge-crafting,

as well, permitting them to enter the dreams of others quickly and easily. Many of the concepts below fit into any number of Seemings with a little creativity.

The most obvious Court is the Spring Court, with its emphasis on desire and passion. But a Summer Courtier who fights his battles in the salon and bedroom is just as appropriate, as is the Autumn Court changeling who delves into forbidden, lascivious rites. Winter Courtiers' need for deception plays well into the Blackthorne Club's social games, as well.

Some inspirational character concepts for the Blackthorne Club:

- **The Gentleman Satyr.** Rakish, handsome, and probably rich, he is devilish nobleman that all good mothers warn their daughters about. In public, he is a paragon of good manners and breeding, but the simplest kiss on the wrist of a lady while he gazes at her with those smoldering dark eyes is enough to hint at the ravishment he has in store for her.

- **The Handsome Doctor.** Dashing and charming, the Handsome Doctor is not just the lady's physician — he is also her confidante. No one is better at the modern treatments for hysteria, and he's always got a small vial of smelling salts to come to the rescue of the corseted lady short of breath. Such a character might be a master of the secrets these ladies let slip, as well.

- **The Dilettante.** Male or female, the Dilettante is vital at every party. They seem to know everyone, have tried a little of everything and always have the best stories and gossip to share. Everyone knows that once beauty and youth fade, the Dilettante is likely to end up alone, drunk, and tragic, but for the moment, no one cares. They revel in their youth, and invite everyone around them to join the party.

- **The Lady Madame.** When her husband was found at a brothel, she nearly didn't survive the scandal. So, she's taken the reins herself and become a lady of means who owns several brothels. Never again will she have to endure the shame of a husband's philandering at places of poor repute and loose lips. She runs a very tight ship indeed, and discretion is both weapon and armor. She also has at her beck and call a handful of both pretty, nubile young ladies and the big, gruff ruffians who protect them.

- **The Defrocked Vicar.** While everyone knows that scandal led to his removal as a priest, no one actually knows what it was that he *did*. Worse still, he tells everyone different stories. Quintessentially intelligent, convivial, and friendly to a fault, the social set loves having him around for those rare glimpses at the sinner behind the saint.

- **The World Traveler.** The sweltering jungles of south India? The manic, cramped alleys of Hong Kong? The romantic carriages of the Orient Express? The perilous forests of darkest Afrique? He has been to all of them, and has a story of derring-do to tell from each of them. Some suspect that his tales are embellished—it would be rude to say “fictional”—but that doesn't matter, really. He's there for the story, and a rousing sense of adventure!

- **The Merry Widow.** Though of a matronly age, everyone agrees, she's still quite beautiful. Even when she went about in widow's weeds, she made mourning look so... fetching. But whether she is still all clad in black or has transitioned back into proper society, she is charming, fashionable, rich, and absolutely un beholden to any man — and as far as anyone can tell, she intends to stay that way.

- **The Wide-Eyed Innocent.** Oh, what sweet innocence. How worldly others can't help but feel against her charming naiveté. She asks shy questions about everything, and it's hard not to feel like a positive old lecher the way she asks about such things. She's a hot-house rose, waiting to be plucked, and the gentlemen can't help but gather around, practically panting to do just that.

## ALLIES AND ANTAGONISTS

**The Social Set.** *The Beautiful People.* These are the resource that the terrible Keeper known as the Pale Dowager seeks to make her own, and whom the Blackthorne Club seeks to keep out of her grasp. Rich and attractive (or at the very least fashionable and well-mannered), these are the people of society that the Pale Dowager inevitably lays claim to. Certainly, she could find easy pickings among others, but she doesn't want them. They're the rabble. She will come into this world through her chosen few, or not at all.

**The Prick'd.** *Well-Bred Degenerates and Hedonists.* “Prick'd by the Blackthorne, Never the Same” goes the Club's motto, and each member has a different definition of what it means to be “prick'd” for certain. Without exception, though, these are the men and women who began to dream dreams of corset-tight propriety, the breath of freedom bound up by the whalebone of decency and expectation. And if the Blackthorne Club is the roguish gentleman who has carefully, decorously cut them free of that corset with the thin, sharp blade of Dionysian revels? Well, so much the better.

**The Pale Dowager.** *True Fae Dreamscaper.* Though she does not enter into the world — at least not initially — the influence of the Pale Dowager cannot be missed. She is a creature of stunning terror, and the weight of her judgmental gaze is very nearly a physical thing. When she does appear, she is a tall, rail-thin society matron with her powder-white hair piled high atop her head and long-fingered hands which interact with the world around her in a twitchy, spidery way, as though she were overcome with revulsion at the mere necessity. Her face is deeply lined, and her mouth is puckered by a slight sneer of contempt.

- **Traits:** The Pale Dowager is a skilled dreamscaper, using Intimidation as her Skill for such shaping (see “The Lords of Dream,” **Changeling: the Lost**, p. 199). Her Dream-Poisons are always guilt-laden constructs the transform those who bear them into what the changelings of the Blackthorne Club call “the Decorous.”

**The Decorous.** *Dream-Poisoned.* The propriety-dreams of the Pale Dowager hammer the poor unfortunates infected with the expectations of society and the litanies of their failures to live up to them, and are often accompanied by images of humiliated parents or people whispering about the character behind their fans. Such dreams are inevitably deeply personal morality plays with the dreamer as the villain at every turn.

Those who fall victim to these dreams often radically change their behaviors, throwing aside what they view as their vices and more outrageous inclinations. Not only do they stop indulging what they view as their improper inclinations, but they become active and belligerent in their judgment of others. This inclination is explicitly not religious in tone; indeed, many of the Decorous find the trappings of religion distasteful and excessive, inappropriate in someone of high station.

And every so often, the Decorous disappear as well, vanishing into the Hedge, their place taken by a simulacrum crafted of broken pieces of bone china and paper currency, all bound up with yards and yards of fine lace woven into the shape of the person taken away.

- *Traits:* One thing sets the Decorous apart: the inversion of their Virtues and Vices by the Pale Dowager's dreamscaping art, known as *Cold Iron Propriety* (see "Special Rules"). There are multiple varieties of the Decorous, as well, most of them created with the various Dream Warping arts (**Changeling: the Lost**, p. 200).

*Matrons and Patrons* are Contagion-Carriers of the Pale Dowager's dream-poison. They are inevitably upstanding members of society, and usually transfer the dream-poison they carry through small acts of affectionate but socially-acceptable touch: the patting of a lady's hand or a kiss on her cheek, the shaking of a gentleman's hand or a squeeze of his shoulder.

*Chaperones* are the Dowager's Ensorcelled. To the Blackthorne Club's view, they are there to make sure no one has fun — quite literally. The Contracts they carry are a variety of those intended to control and limit those who would introduce impropriety into those around them. These are usually Hearth Contracts that thwart attempts at seduction and carousing, Darkness Contracts that cause fear in those who philanderers might seek to bring into their games, Vainglory Contracts to help keep everyone on the straight and narrow, and the like. As chaperones wield this power, they inevitably become more and more neurotic, taking on derangements that cause them to fear the criticism of society and obsess on propriety.

**Eva.** *The True Innocent.* A relative nobody, Eva seems nothing special. She is humble, modest of demeanor and dress, sweet of nature, and clever of wit. In many ways, she is the ideal of young Victorian womanhood. She isn't even proud of her modesty and propriety; she doesn't even truly think about them at all.

To the changelings of the Blackthorne Club, however, she is revealed to be something truly extraordinary. She is the True Innocent spoken of in the prophecies of the Pale Maiden.

*Traits:* In game terms, she is an unremarkable young woman, with one exception: she has no Vice, and is considered to have every Virtue for the purposes of Willpower recovery.

Should she be transformed into one of the Decorous, however, she will become a force of terror among the Lost. Her judgments, like those of the other Decorous, would inflict agony and pain on changelings, inflicting aggravated damage instead of the normal lethal damage associated with those who are infected with the Cold Iron Propriety.

Her final unremarkable trait is her dreams. She is immune to the dream-shaping that changelings are capable of wielding, and only the most potent of Gentry dream-warping can affect them at all.

## STORYLINE

As with most chronicles, this storyline works best if it is not the only narrative in play. Certainly it is the central theme, but character arcs, subplots, and side stories can round out the play experience, providing context and opportunities for creative characters to draw on experiences outside of this story arc to accomplish their goals within it.

### Act One: Business as Usual

*In which the Blackthorne Club carries on.*

The chronicle begins in the middle of the sorts of events that the Blackthorne Club consider themselves the masters of: perfectly proper social gatherings, like lily-white paper upon which they will write their iniquitous stories in the black ink of sin. Establish this "business as usual" set-up, providing opportunity for the players to feel adept at the Blackthorne Club's *modus operandi*.

The Club's members usually show up in groups, splitting these activities among themselves and providing foils for one another's seductions, affairs, and scandals. In any given social scene, they undertake three goals: seeking out the Dowager's Tokens, checking in on old acquaintances, and meeting the new arrivals.

Each of these functions is an extended roll, with each roll taking fifteen minutes of time. The target numbers and duration of the event are based on the size of the gathering, as noted in the "Social Events" sidebar. If there are multiple changelings doing this in cooperation with one another, standard teamwork rules apply.

**Seeking The Dowager's Tokens (Wits + Persuasion):** The Blackthorne changelings who take on this task make the rounds, admiring the myriad new trinkets, recently-inherited heirlooms, and lovely pieces of jewelry that those in the social set are here to show off. Each roll involves wandering around, coaxing little stories of where new pieces of

## *Social Events*

Event Size	Example	Usual Duration	Target Number
Small Gathering	Tea, Afternoon of Croquet	1-2 hours	3 - 5
Typical Event	Holiday party	2-4 hours	10 - 15
Massive Affairs	Night at the Opera, Season-Opening Ball	4 - 8	20+

jewelry came from, engaging in small talk long enough to study a cloisonné pin or a new cameo.

Generally speaking, each party will have a handful of potential items. If he prefers, the Storyteller can ascertain how many of these are at an event with the roll of a single die. Halve the result for small gatherings, and double it for massive affairs. Once all such items have been identified, the Blackthorne changelings begin to examine them individually, using the rules on *Analyzing Vessels* (**Changeling: the Lost**, p. 198).

Remember that a changeling does not know whether an item is truly a vessel or not until her player succeeds at rolling the target number of the item in question. This means that a player might continue rolling to study the item until he has rolled once for every die in his *Analyzing Vessels* dice pool, or until he simply gives up. A truly powerful vessel may be missed in such a fashion, however.

**Old Faces (Wits + Empathy):** Others, in the meantime, check in on those they've known in the social set. Personalities change, sometimes dramatically, when the poison of the Cold Iron Propriety has begun to take its toll. Making a thorough sweep of the social set, checking in with everyone, asking questions about the well-being of family and friends, and seeing what new sorts of gossip and scandal are to be had can all reveal new and unusual behaviors that might indicate someone's having recently become one of the Decorous.

**Meeting Newcomers (Presence or Manipulation + Socialize):** The Pale Dowager does not rely solely on those who are well-established in the social set. She has been known to introduce her Decorous into society, allowing them to influence others immediately. Changelings who take on this responsibility therefore make the rounds to meet all new faces, introducing themselves and possibly even being the tiniest bit shocking, hoping to arouse the sort of rebuke that only the Decorous can give. It means a little pain in the short term, but is one of the best ways of flushing them out.

**Dream Patrols:** Blackthorne changelings quite often maintain "patrols" of the dreams of members of society. This serves multiple goals: First and foremost, it allows them to keep an eye out for signs of the Dowager's dream-poison. On another level, though, the Blackthorne changelings also gain excellent insight into the essential personalities of those in the circles they travel. Those who are skilled dreamshapers

also often use society members in their crafts, but are careful to do so without unduly affecting them.

### **Act Two: The League of Morality**

*In which villains and scoundrels crawl out of the woodwork.*

Once the framework of life of the Blackthorne Club is well-established, it's time to up the ante. They become aware of other changelings — not of the local Courts — seeking out the social scenes, clearly looking for someone. They won't give any indication of who they are looking for.

Then, at one gala event, a group of Privateer changelings make an appearance. They are notorious for their mercenary capturing of changelings and returning them to the Gentry (it might be wise to establish their reputation early in Act One, or in the background material for your chronicle). It becomes very obvious that they have found the one they are looking for: a young debutante by the name of Eva.

When several of the locals are revealed to be Decorous and attempt to keep the Blackthorne changelings from interfering in the girl's capture, it's practically a challenge from the Pale Dowager herself. Interrogation or divination reveals that the young woman's virtue can be turned to truly wicked ends: if the Pale Dowager can manage to turn her into one of the Decorous, her purity might be warped into something terrible.

The Storyteller should feel free to incorporate the young woman into one of the player characters' lives in order to heighten investment. Perhaps she is a young woman that one of the characters went to school with before their Durance; perhaps she is even a descendant of one of the player characters.

The rest of this act is based around keeping her safe and discovering why the Pale Dowager wants her. She doesn't seem unusual in any way to changeling senses, so the local Courts aren't willing to get involved in directly thwarting something as powerful as the Pale Dowager directly, but they might be convinced to lend aid.

### **Act Three: The True Innocent**

*In which both the True Innocent and the Blackthorne Club must fulfill their destiny, or die trying.*

The third act begins when the player characters go seeking more information about Eva. There are a variety of means of acquiring this information, which should be

sculpted to fit the specific chronicle and setting. It might be Autumn Court savants, a seer or oracle of some kind (including a player character), or an ancient lore-keeper tucked away in the Hedge somewhere. Exploring the young woman's dreamscape is also a means of finding this information, for her subconscious knows far more about who she is than she does.

Eventually, it is revealed that she is the True Innocent, tied to prophecies long ago associated with a Keeper known as the Pale Maiden. The prophecy indicates that the True Innocent would destroy the Pale Maiden. A connection surfaces to a fairly old changeling — a sensuous Fairest called Nimue known for more than a century as a seductress.

Meeting her reveals that she escaped from the Pale Maiden's Bower Most Secret when the Pale Maiden destroyed it and everyone in her realm, remaking it into the Alabaster Sanctum, and herself into the Pale Dowager. She'd heard the prophecy, and sought to thwart it: if Innocence would unmake the lascivious Pale Maiden, then by taking such virtues as her new bulwark, she would be in a position to see when it entered the world.

There is also a key to the Alabaster Sanctum, a specialized dream-vessel closely guarded by the oldest of the Dowager's Matrons: a duchess of high standing in British

society. She is well-guarded and claims to be in ill health to get rid of any visitors. Once the Blackthorne changelings have this Alabaster Key, they may enter into the dreams of the True Innocent and thence gain access to the heart of the Alabaster Sanctum, bypassing the Hedge and all the Dowager's defenses.

There, they are in for the battle of their lives: first a social one, to strip the Dowager of her protective propriety, forcing her to become the Pale Maiden again, and then pulling her into the dreams of the True Innocent, where she will be unmade forever.

The precise nature of this final conflict should be very personal for the player characters, involving their own weaknesses, vices, and the themes important to them.

## SPECIAL RULES

### Blackthorne House (Hollow)

*Amenities* ●●●●, *Size* ●●●●, *Wards* ●●●●

In the respectable heart of London is a small townhouse. Upon the door to this townhouse is a brass plaque, inscribed with a circle of stylized, intertwining thorny vines and the name "Blackthorne House." The interior is lavishly appointed with a handful of servants on hand. This space is for guests of the club, who do not entertain here often.



In truth, this is not the real Blackthorne Club. The back courtyard has a tall hedge of blackthorn vines surrounding a stately walnut tree. When it is circled widdershins, with one's back to the tree, an opening appears in the hedge. This opening leads to a massive labyrinth of blackthorn hedges, with the wildness of the Hedge itself lying beyond it and a sprawling manor house on a hill overlooking it.

This manor is the true gathering-place of the Blackthorne changelings. Its multiple wings are filled with chambers of all sorts. Each full member (that is, each changeling) has a suite of rooms, including multiple bedrooms, entertainment rooms and parlors, and elaborate bathing chambers clearly intended for more than one person. The gardens are lush and otherworldly, with the song of nightingales to be heard at all times, and stately columned structures sit here and there with lavish furnishings for conversations and trysting.

**System:** Twelve points of Hollow must be divided among the various changelings who belong to the Blackthorne Club — quite an investment, certainly, but the place is also worth it. If a changeling takes away a few thorns from the labyrinth and plants them in the ground on a new moon, blackthorn vines sprout, growing into a natural hedge in the span of one month. By the next new moon, this hedge can provide access to the Blackthorne Hollow, if the character's player has also spent enough experience to gain another dot in Hollow to purchase a Door for himself.

### Cold Iron Propriety (Dream-Poison)

The Pale Dowager often sends gifts to those members of society. They usually are sent at times of the year when one extra small item is bound to be unremarkable among the other gifts. As such, she favors weddings, birthdays, and Christmas. These tokens may be just about anything, but they are never scandalous or exotic in any way. Neither, however, are they religious; cloisonné pins, cameos, cufflinks, a tea service, tickets to the opera, and even small articles of clothing are all common.

Once the dream has fulfilled itself in the psyche of the person in question, they are unquestionably changed. Once per scene, when someone infected with this dream rebuffs an improper advance, calls into question someone's moral fiber, or otherwise applies a judgmental, imperious view on the world, the target suffers a single level of lethal damage.

This damage manifests as an ailment that might be associated with that person's most publicly known vice: a terrible cough for a smoker, a nosebleed for those prone to violence, the painful boils of someone suffering from some venereal disease, or a terrible headache for the drunkard.

The one inflicting this damage isn't even aware they are doing it — it simply happens, making clear the signs of that individual's moral failings to those around them.

## HUNT CLUBS AND ROOKERIES

*There is a passion for hunting something deeply implanted in the human breast.*

— CHARLES DICKENS

Breathing raggedly, Poxo Tom sped around the corner, nearly slipping on the fog-wet cobblestones. He paused for a moment — stop breathing so loudly, d-n you, they'll hear! — and simply listened. The streets of the rookery were mostly empty, and the fog made sounds echo strangely.

He slowly crept along the wall, glancing behind him until the entrance to the alley disappeared in the yellowish mist. Then he burst into a run. Down at the other end of the alley was the door to the Great Rookery, if he could only make it in—

And suddenly, they were there. Clad in charcoal wool that looked warm, with gray scarves wrapped around their lower faces. To his eyes, they were shambling things made of old glass and dead branches, lashed together with vine and string and ribbon, and animated with roiling shadow-hearts. He couldn't see it, but he knew it was there in each of them, where a heart should be, under that light-swallowing wool.

Then, one of them stepped up out of the group and unraveled its scarf. The horror wore his face. A slight movement of its hand tore his frightened gaze away from its face to the knife it bore: a seemingly dull blade of gray-black iron that had never known the kiss of fire.

He turned to flee from them, but there were more behind him already, moving stealthily, quickly, and surely, their tread unafraid and strong. He screamed as they closed in on him.

### PITCH

When changelings of the local Courts begin to go missing, stories of privateers, huntsmen from Arcadia, or even the Gentry themselves are whispered in every Hollow across the city.

### MOOD AND THEME

The mood of Hunt Clubs and Rookeries mood is *Paranoia and Distrust*. It quickly becomes evident that the motley can trust few outside the rookery — and they might be wise to cast a jaundiced eye on those within it. Pepper the stories with suggestions that those they speak to might be untrustworthy, and with instances where that person behind them on the street might very well just be following them.

The theme of Hunt Clubs and Rookeries is one of *Oppression and Privilege*. Strongly demarcate the differences between the “haves” and the “have-nots,” both in mortal society and among the changelings. Police don't investigate the strange deaths of changelings too heavily, due to who they are and where they were killed; the masters of the Courts don't, either, for much the same reason.

## DESCRIPTION

As Lost denizens of London's largest rookeries begin to go missing, those who dwell in those rough areas seek help from those outside of them, and find precious little of it. The player characters discover that there are Fetch huntsmen with black clothes, hidden faces, and cold iron weapons.

In short order, the denizens of the rookery must band together to deal with this menace, with the player characters' motley at the center of the effort. In time, they discover sinister connections between these Fetch huntsmen and a group who call themselves the Gamesmen: the highest-placed changelings in the Courts.

### The Rookery

In Victorian London, slum neighborhoods were referred to as rookeries, named for the way rooks — a bird considered a noisy, thieving menace — packed their nests together in raucous, unruly chaos. While most of the denizens of a rookery were simply extremely poor (with all the vices that people at their lowest turned to), these slums were also an excellent place for criminals to dwell in relative anonymity. No one trusts the rich or the police here, and the authorities never enter these areas unless accompanied by a minimum of six police officers.

There are two major rookeries in London: Devil's Acre, near Westminster Abbey, and Jacob's Island in Bermondsey. These are by no means the only rookeries, however: any small piece of lower-class neighborhood with sufficient cheap housing and the presence of dangerous or criminal persons could become a rookery. Police and city officials routinely cleared out rookeries, often without providing other options to those who lived there, but in short order, most of the poor and criminal would find themselves another part of town in which to settle, developing another rookery fairly quickly.

London's rookeries are all interconnected by the paths that lead through the Hedge to the Great Rookery (see Special Rules, p. 62).

## SAMPLE CHARACTERS FOR PLAYERS

The main trait that ties together the player characters is that they are rookery Lost: those changelings who dwell in one of the rookeries. They may do this for any number of reasons.

- The changeling's proclivities may be unusual or difficult to hide in better parts of town. Since rookeries often attracted the unfortunate and insane, most people in the rookery recognize the strangeness of their neighbors but go out of their way to avoid them, for fear of what they might be capable of. This suits many changelings just fine.

- Some of the Lost are drawn to the rookery because they dwelt here in their days pre-Durance. For many changelings, a return to the environs of their lives before being spirited away to Arcadia is a kind of salvation, no matter how poverty-stricken and mean. Many such changelings may have family still in the rookeries; others simply aren't sure how to get along any other way.

- Other changelings may find a kind of pleasing environment to their new senses. They may associate opulence, riches and luxury with the Gentry, and so want no part of it. Others may find the Glamour to be gained from those in desperate struggle for their lives to be as intoxicating as the cheap gin they swill, while some may simply wish to help uplift the lives of those within it.

- Some changelings take advantage of the lack of police attention in these places, using them to forge criminal empires to serve themselves and their motley, providing protection and income.

Some suggested character concepts for player characters of rookery characters follow.

- **The Doxy or Pander.** In the flesh-trade, this character either offers herself up to gentlemen from her preferred street corner, stoop, or alley mouth, or is a "procurer" with several such ladies in his stable.

- **The Master Footpad.** A skilled burglar, the footpad breaks into wealthy homes in the dead of night, or outside of the social season when the well-bred flee the city for the countryside. He may also take up the occasional mugging or pick-pocketing when things are thin.

- **The Bully-Boy.** Knee-breaker, tooth-loosener, and face-puncher. The bully boy makes his way in the rookery through simple, primitive means: he is paid by some people to do violence to the persons of other people. They're usually folks with gambling debts or who've violated any one of the thousand unwritten laws of the rookery, but in the end, he'll find them. And he'll hurt them.

- **The Urchin.** Young and on his own, the urchin need not be a boy, but almost always looks like a boy, because young girls often suffer unwholesome fates on their own in the rookery. He's fast on his feet, for sure. He might even be fast in his wits and fast in his tongue, but at the end of the day, he knows the rookery and its secret ways, and he knows how to get out before the situation gets too bad.

- **The Mother Alone.** She's here because she has no choice. She's neither criminal nor mad; she's simply poor. Oh, she may have her vices — who wouldn't crave a thimbleful of gin now and again in this place? — but she's a good person, trying to do right by her little ones. She doesn't have to be their actual mother. God knows there's plenty of children without mothers in the rookery who'd happily accept her nurturing.

- **The Philanthropist.** Everyone in the rookeries know the type. She might be the doctor who's opened a clinic for the poor out of a desire to help the unfortunates here (and because no one else will let her practice medicine on them). He might be a dutiful minister who has set up an almshouse and soup-kitchen. Either way, this is the person who has skills and connections that could keep them out of the rookery, but they come here to help anyway.

- **The Bedlamite.** They once laid claim to you and brought you around to Bethlehem Royal Hospital. Maybe your family gathered around, hoping for you to get better. Maybe you were there alone and abandoned. Either way, before long, they needed the space for someone else, and you were out, forgotten by the entire world. Now you're one of the rookery barmies. Some torment you, some fear you, but either way you're in it for good.

## ALLIES AND ANTAGONISTS

This chronicle is very much about one's allies and one's enemies — and the uncertainty of which is which.

### The Rookery Lost

The Storyteller should detail the other Lost of the rookeries. For this chronicle, these are both tragic victims of and potential allies against the Huntsmen. Any of the suggested character concepts not employed by the player characters form an excellent starting point for such Storyteller characters.

### The Huntsmen

The huntsmen are all fetches, drawn from not just those changelings who live in the rookeries, but a handful of others, as well. They have been promised one thing: the opportunity to become human. Each of the fetches must assist in a minimum of five hunts before his changeling will be made a target by the huntsmen.

Though not all of the fetches who have been made into huntsmen are warriors, their capacity for violence has been increased through the use of Pledges. They are also armed with billy clubs and knives roughly crafted of cold iron.

### The Gamesmen

The Gamesmen are a small gathering of changelings. Creatures of some measure of age and power, both in terms of their positions in Court society and personal mastery of their Wyrd, the Gamesmen's identities are left for the Storyteller to determine, based on the makeup of her chronicle.

Above all, these should be the ones who are least expected. The thoroughly sinister Darkling master of the Autumn Court is unlikely to surprise anyone; the sweet-natured Spring court darling, on the other hand, will. Whoever they are, make sure they have Contracts and Tokens of stealth and disguise to facilitate their manipulations.

The motivations of the Gamesmen remain to be discovered. Did they do this out of some kind of sick joy-seeking?



Perhaps they are part of a secret compact, administering the twisted sacrifices necessary to keep the Gentry out of London? Perhaps there is some kind of mystic tithe of changeling lives demanded by London itself... and perhaps those who discover it and throw down its previous keepers are the ones who must take up the necessary burden.

## STORY

These stories do not presuppose a number of traits about London: the location and identity of the Courts, which rookery or rookeries these events occur at, and the like. They should be fit into the Storyteller's vision of who the Lost of London are.

### Act One: Path of the Huntsmen

The Storyteller is encouraged to begin this chronicle establishing what life is like in the rookeries for the Lost. Establish how the player characters interact with the desperate, dangerous, criminal, or insane elements (and sometimes combinations of all four) of the rookery. What sources of glamour are there? How does the Hedge manifest there, and what hobgoblins haunt them?

Who are the other denizens of the rookeries, and how are the changelings treated by those Lost who do not dwell in such environs? When the Lost, with their unique gifts, are capable of rising so high in mortal society so quickly, it seems almost perverse to hide in such a place — what assumptions do others in the Courts make about those who choose to dwell there?

This point in the chronicle is a good place to introduce other, smaller, easily resolvable subplots. This gives the player characters a chance to establish their characters' personalities and motley dynamics, as well as their relationships with Storyteller characters. Then, those characters begin to go missing.

This should be subtle at first. The characters are simply not around when player characters go to pay them a visit. Other rookery Lost mention that they haven't seen someone in a while. Nearly no one outside the rookeries seems to notice, however. Perhaps one of the now-disappeared rookery characters is beholden to someone outside of the rookery, who comes looking to collect the debt or insist on their service.

Soon, it becomes very apparent that others are disappearing. The player characters may go investigating of their own accord at this point. Perhaps there are signs of violence in the home of one of them. Mortal rookery denizens saw someone tearing through the streets a few nights ago, clearly being chased (but they got off the street in case it was the police, naturally).

Then, one night, another of the rookery Lost — perhaps even someone who agreed to help them investigate — comes to a player character's door, breathing heavily. He's only just

escaped from some men who were hunting him in the fog. They wore charcoal coats and gray scarves over their faces. He couldn't make them out properly, but they were armed with knives.

Afterwards, that friend also disappears. With further investigation by the player characters, they hear of an urchin who saw him and the men who were after him. When the motley investigates, however, the boy runs off in terror. Once he's caught, he begs them not to hurt him, assuring them he won't tell anybody. After the confusion is sorted, he reveals that he saw the people who killed their ally. In the fight, one of their scarves came loose, only to reveal the face of one of the player characters.

The end of the Act comes about as the player characters themselves are hunted. They are attacked when alone, and often while emerging from the doorways that are known to lead to the Great Rookery. The Huntsmen come bearing blades of cold iron, allowing them to bite through glamour-based defenses.

### Act Two: In Defense of Rookery

Act Two begins with a large social gathering of some sort, such as a ball to celebrate the descent of one Seasonal Court and the ascent of another. Though most people make jokes about the "rook hunters" and the like, no one seems to take the phenomenon very seriously. Even those who believe it is happening react either with humor or with concern, suggesting that this is the sort of thing that can happen in rookeries.

One person, however, is different. A seer of the Autumn Court asks them to come visit her after the gala event. When they do, she warns them that she has seen them in her cards, and that those who harry them are not the huntsmen... they are the hounds. She asks if any of them have ever been fox hunting (unlikely, if they grew up in the rookery), suggesting to them that a skillful fox may throw the whole pack into disarray by leading a hound into a thorny trap or quagmire, then following the rest of the pack back to the true hunters.

This part of Act Two then becomes very proactive for the player characters. Some player groups might want to follow the huntsmen to their gathering place and attack them outright, while others may wish to plan an ambush. Victory against the huntsmen — however temporary — results in one thing, however: proof that there are Lost behind this.

This may take the form of a letter, a Token, or some other physical (or otherwise incontrovertible) evidence. The Storyteller is encouraged to use something specific from his own chronicle to make these connections, but nothing so specific as to reveal precisely who is aiding them.

But before they can use this information, an ally flags down the player characters to warn them that they are being sought for the murder of the Autumn Court seer. She

was found poisoned shortly after the player characters were known to have visited her, and a Summer courtier has been charged with finding them and returning them to justice. Contacts in the Courts refuse to speak with the player characters for fear of being associated with them, and may even actively betray them in hopes of gaining favor.

### Act Three: On the Lam

Act Three begins with an inevitable confrontation: the Summer courtier sent to hunt them down finds them. He is a member of the Sacred Band of the Golden Standard and when he finds the player characters, he maneuvers them into a place where they can talk. He tells them that though he's been sent to simply retrieve them for questioning, he suspects that they wouldn't survive the imprisonment between capture and questioning. A member of the Tolltaker Knight-hood has been assigned as their gaoler, and he's the sort one employs for purposes of murder, not security.

When he hears their story, he suggests that if the huntsmen are indeed fetches, they may be working for a specific goal: to destroy their changelings and become human. Perhaps they might gain some benefit by seeking out one of the now-human fetches and asking him some questions. If he doesn't remember anything of his days as a fetch (some do forget), he might retain some of this knowledge in his dreams.

With some investigation, the player characters can find just such an individual, the fetch of the friend who was killed in Act One. The now-human fetch doesn't remember any of his time as a huntsman, necessitating that his dreams be examined. Of course, there are oneiromantic threats waiting in his dreams, put there by the Gamesmen, but in the end, they can find the meeting place where the huntsmen leaders met with the Gamesmen.

This leads the story to a conclusion of the player characters' making. They may wait for a large gathering of the Courts to present their evidence, during which the accused Gamesmen of course seek to discredit the player characters and then flee when that doesn't succeed.

Other troupes may prefer to find the meeting place and spy on it, either attacking the Gamesmen outright there, or bringing credible witnesses along to corroborate their story. Such a finale should be, of course, structured for the sort of play that the troupe prefers, and that they have built their characters around.

## SPECIAL RULES

The following are some specific mechanical traits and qualities used in telling this story.

### The Great Rookery (Hollow)

*Amenities* •, *Doors* ••••, *Size* •••, *Wards* •••••

The Lost of the rookeries have created long-lasting friendships. There are Hedge-paths between the rookeries: secret trods that are only accessible from within one rookery, leading only to one other. The existence of these secret ways allows the Lost in completely disparate parts of town to forge relatively strong relationships.

At the center of this great twisting path is a clearing in the Hedge: a Hollow known as the Great Rookery. In this perpetually twilit clearing there rises a massive, dead oak tree, its clawlike branches reaching into the lead-grey sky. In its branches are thousands of rooks: small, unpleasant cousins to crows who watch with shining black eyes for the opportunity to steal small bits of food or shining things.

Though the Great Rookery has very little in the way of creature comforts — seating is on the gnarled roots that stick up from the stony ground, and it's always a little too chill and damp here — it is extremely safe, thanks to its Wards, and its many Doors provide access to and from the rookeries of London.

Those who would learn the secrets of the Great Rookery must be sponsored by another rookery-dwelling Lost, and must expend at least one point in the Hollow Merit towards the Great Rookery (whose Doors and Wards can vary, but Amenities and Size never do).

### *The Rook Cacher*

Those who come to the Great Rookery are known to occasionally sport strange contraptions. Most who see them just take them for the accoutrements of the gin-addled and bedlamites who inhabit the rookeries, but the Lost can see them for what they are: Crafted of bits of brass and copper, crystal and glass, leather and rubber, these are mechanistic, clockwork, and steam-driven Tokens of a variety of functions. These are occasionally discovered in the Hedge surrounding the Great Rookery, and always surrounded by a great body of rooks.

The folklore of the Great Rookery claims that the rooks who roost here were once the favored servants of a True Fae called the Maker In Brass, whose far-off Arcadian domicile was a strange wonderland of whirling gears, chugging steam engines and driving pistons. Then came the Clockwork Rebellion, when his changelings rose up and overthrew him, leaving his kingdom in ruins — an abandoned wonderland filled with marvels.

It is said that the only way to find the passage back to the Maker In Brass' demesne is to be guided there by his pet rooks...



## THE TEARING SMILE (PART VI)

It had been something of a tiresome day for Lord Worthing. Circumstances had conspired to insist he visit the asylum, which he always found an annoyance. Usually, he found his patronage of the institution something of a benefit. The government paid him a stipend to run the place, and any fortunes of its inmates or their families usually found a way into his pocket. Most importantly, this state of affairs managed to roll along quite well without his involvement. However, police inquiries about Hearthstone required him to take an active hand before further mistakes were made. Truly, it was a burden to be part of the upper class.

"I want to see all the files for new admissions," he announced, sending the three clerks working in the office into a startled frenzy as he stormed in. "Now!" he added. Then he stalked off into the corridors. One of the clerks scuttled after him, shedding papers in his wake. At each cell, Lord Worthing held out a hand for the file, stared at it and then threw it back to the clerk. He ignored the shouts and screams from the inmates that echoed down the corridors, pausing only to point out areas of wear or disorder amid the fabric and staff of the building.

"So this is the most recent one, is it?" he said, in a tone he used only for his social inferiors as he peered into the last cell. Maggie sat there, nameless to him, curled on the ground, her mouth open in a silent scream. Lord Worthing was disgusted, but not with her treatment.

"These files are a joke!" he bellowed at the clerk, "I see the worst are all under the care of this Doctor Samuel Miles. Send him to my club tonight and we shall have words."

With that, Lord Worthing strode out of the asylum, having spent too much of his valuable time there already. The clerk knelt on the floor, muttering as he gathered the strewn papers and files. As he groped along the floor he found himself staring at the feet of a well

dressed man. With a start, he sat back, scattering a few papers as he looked up into the face of the new visitor.

"Oh, Doctor Miles, it's you," he said with relief. "His lordship wants to see you at his club. He's not happy, sir."

Doctor Miles replied with a wide smile.

Lord Worthing's club was one of the better gentlemen's sanctums in Mayfair. The air was heavy with expensive cigar smoke and the scent of Indian spices. Well-dressed servants stood silently on hand amidst the oak-paneled rooms. There was little noise here, except for the occasional cough or rustle of newspaper.

Like most of the gentlemen here, Lord Worthing had a favorite chair. It rested in a nook a little way from the fire by one of the small latticed windows. He often liked to take a break from reading the paper to watch the people passing by outside, especially if it was raining. This evening was clear, although the fog was settling in a little earlier than usual. Even among the crowds, he noticed Doctor Miles' approach. The man had a singular way about him, an assurance usually reserved for the upper classes. He had the aspect of a predator, which made the crowds part unconsciously as he slid past.

Lord Worthing checked the time on his pocket watch, noting with satisfaction that the large grandfather clock nearby agreed with his timepiece. The Doctor was keeping good time, at least. However, he decided to finish the article he was reading before he acknowledged the black-draped presence of his guest when it arrived in the armchair opposite him. His guest sat quietly, grinning broadly at Lord Worthing, until he finally dropped his paper to meet his gaze.

"I'm not impressed, Mr. Smiles," he scolded.

"Really, my Lord?" Smiles replied as if they were equals. "I thought I had maintained the terms of our agreement quite adequately."

"The terms of our agreement do not involve dead bodies and the police."

"I have been circumspect with the remains of those I am done with. Your wife..."

"My wife has abilities that have proved useful in expanding my fortune, unlike your own talents. While she may share your proclivities, you do not share her usefulness. Your only purpose is to see she is provided for without damaging my reputation."

"Am I to assume you object to us killing the ones we are done with?"

"As far as I am concerned, you are only reducing the surplus population. You can both do what you like to the wretches you steal and feed on. I simply do not want to see the police involved again should one of the bodies turn up, and for God's sake keep decent records at the asylum. Any bungling detective could see something is amiss with a simple glance at them."

"Very well, sir," whispered Smiles, a hand unconsciously settling on the elegant knife he carried. He stood and doffed his hat. With the interview at an end, Lord Worthing returned to his paper.

As he left the club, Smiles sniffed at the air, feeling for the scent of glamour and fear that had drawn him to this city with his Eleanor. Soon they would not need her husband, and he looked forward to the look on the Lord's face when he tore what glamour remained from his soul. He spied Eleanor across the street, and he felt her hunger, savored it. With a wide smile he walked with her into the night, eager to enjoy the delights of the lost and the forgotten.

## RHEUMATISM

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# CHAPTER 6

## MASTER OF MEN ALL

SCENES: 5 MENTAL: ... PHYSICAL: ... SOCIAL: ....

### INTRODUCTION

Churning iron wheels, belching smokestacks producing poisonous fumes like an angry dragon, overwhelming speed that makes the whole country seem a small and insignificant place... can there be any greater symbol of modern industry, of man's triumph over nature, than the steam locomotive? To some of the Lost, however, it's a symbol of something altogether different. Tumbledown Royce and his bridge-burners (**Change-ling: The Lost**, pp. 265-267) see it as a vast iron spear, lacking only the will and daring to aim it at the heart of Faerie itself.

"Master of Men All" is a collection of scenes in the style of the popular serialized fiction of the Victorian age. The story should roll along at a brisk pace, with twists and turns at every break to keep the players wondering where it's all going. Each scene is designed as a single vignette which, when taken together with the rest, tells the story of Tumbledown Royce's plot. You can run this SAS as a traditional story, with each scene immediately following its predecessor, but you could also scatter it throughout your own chronicle, using the delay to build tension and increase the air of mystery.

### TREATMENT

As strange dreams and visions of trains full of screaming, terrified people dance through their heads, the members of the Back Stairs Mob motley find themselves pursuing a bridge-burning anarchist and his band of followers. Tumbledown Royce has done the unthinkable: he's sent a London commuter train hurtling into the Hedge and onward toward Faerie.

"The Adventure of the Iron Road": Hobs steal several of the children under the Sweep's protection, who carry them off into the Hedge to force them to build a railroad aimed right at Faerie. The motley must brave the Hedge and rescue them. They learn some vague details of Tumbledown Royce's plans, but at this point it's still a nebulous "something strange is going on" setup.

"The Adventure of the Vanishing Train": The town is all abuzz that the Number 13 train has apparently vanished into thin air. Investigating its last known position leads to a tunnel that has recently been used as a Hedge gateway, and to an encounter with Tumbledown Royce's lackeys. This scene highlights Maggie Maudlin's occult knowledge and bridge-burner leanings.

"The Adventure of the Secret Road": With no way to catch a runaway train, the motley must seek aid from an unlikely source: Sir Alistair's fetch, whose knowledge of the Hedge pathways in and around London is matchless.

"The Adventure of the Particular Appetite": On the way to rendezvous with the train, the motley's path takes them near the lair of a hungry hob beastie. Poor Wretch must engage the monster in a duel of wits, using shapeshifting magic to forestall the creature's eating them and convincing it to let them pass.

"All Fall Down": The motley confronts Tumbledown Royce in the engine car, and at last the plan is laid bare. Will they thwart the anarchist's plot, or is the destruction of one of the hated Keepers worth any price?

#### *About the Storytelling Adventure System*

If this is your first Storytelling Adventure System (SAS) product, you've chosen a fine place to start. To keep this story kit lean and focused, though, we haven't included a lot of the core premises and Storyteller suggestions that are at the heart of the SAS. Whether you're a new Storyteller or an old hand, be sure to read the free SAS Guide, found at the SAS website: [www.white-wolf.com/sas](http://www.white-wolf.com/sas)

## THEME: AT WHAT COST VICTORY?

Royce's plan will work; sending a London steam locomotive screaming into the heart of a True Fae dominion will destroy not only the Fae itself, but most of the domain as well. The fact that it will cost many mortal lives doesn't factor into Royce's concerns, but how far is the Back Stairs Mob willing to go to strike a blow against their enemies?

## MOOD: RELENTLESS PROGRESS

The motley is racing the clock, and if they slow down, they'll lose their chance to catch the train and stop Royce's plans. The characters should always feel as though they have less information than they want, but that they have no choice but to press on desperately toward the finish line.

## A CHAPTER IN YOUR CHRONICLE

Even if the motley stops Royce's plan, the long-term ramifications of the attempt could have significant repercussions on your chronicle. Where the train passed, the Hedge is a dead, desiccated thing; gates no longer open onto it, and hobs that pass through sicken and eventually die. Many flee to the mortal world; others become fiercely territorial and protective of the unspoiled reaches. Once-valuable Hollows become cut off and useless, which sparks territorial conflicts amongst the changelings of London, and the sheer audacity of Tumbledown Royce's plan stirs the pot of anarchists, bridge-burners, and radical Summer Court members.

## A STORY BY ITSELF

"Master of Men All" works just as well as a standalone story for a one-off or a convention game. If you go this route, you may want to spend some time coming up with an epilogue to wrap up the tale and drive home the decisions the players made during the game.

## BACKSTORY AND SETUP

Tumbledown Royce has always had two things to his name: an understanding of how best to break things, and a fierce hatred for those who lorded their power over others. Left to his own, mortal devices, he might have fallen in with one of the radical anarchist or communist political movements that sprung up in Victorian England, but as fate would have it, he was taken by the Fae one cold winter's night in 1875, and when he returned, he knew what he had to do. The Gentry were the worst kind of aristocratic pigs; every one of them needed to be destroyed and the connection between earth and Arcadia severed forever. The cost of this

goal didn't matter; humanity (and the Lost) could recover with time.

Royce bent himself to the task of discovering a way to achieve his ends, gradually isolating himself from the freehold of London and the society of all but a few like-minded peers. At length, he set upon the idea that a huge quantity of iron, delivered rapidly to the heart of Faerie, would certainly kill any True Fae whose dominion it pierced, and would very likely create a sort of infectious rot at the heart of Arcadia that would cause the whole damnable realm to wither and die. A train was just the thing.

Royce has spent decades preparing his plan, mapping Trods that would lead to Arcadia (specifically, the realm of his Keeper), ensnaring hobs to build "tracks" along said Trods, and shaping the Hedge along his chosen route to minimize the possibility of interference. Now, at last, the plan is nearly ready: all that remains is to finish the last of the track and open a gateway at the mouth of the Thames Tunnel as the commuter from [Wapping](#) to [Rotherhithe](#) passes through. The fact that at least a hundred mortals will be driven mad, killed, or ensnared by the Gentry in the process is an "acceptable loss" in his eyes.

## SETUP

"Master of Men All," like most of the content of Victorian Lost, aims to capture the feel of London, particularly in the last ten years or so of the 19th century. It's not tied to any particular date, and with a couple of exceptions it's not tied to any particular place within the city. Many of the set-piece descriptions assume that the story takes place during a particularly cold winter, but if you're willing to adjust the flavor text, the story can easily take place any time during the year.

If you're using the Back Stairs Mob sample motley presented after this adventure, the story should kick off with the Sweep checking in on his youthful charges and discovering that some of them have been taken. If you're using different characters, you can start things off wherever the characters might learn of stolen children taken from locked rooms by night. Each scene is designed to highlight a particular character's talents; if you're using different characters, though, or you aren't using the full complement of characters from the sample motley, never fear. All of the key pieces of information needed to advance the story can be obtained in a variety of ways, so if, for example, you don't have a shapechanging character in "The Adventure of the Particular Appetite," the story won't immediately grind to a screeching halt.

## THE CAST TUMBLEDOWN ROYCE

**Quotes:** "Don't you see? We can all be free! All of us! What are a few lives in exchange for the end of slavery?"

"These nobs are no better than the Cousins. Parasites bleed the lot of us dry."



*“Change is coming, friends. Best be on the right side of it.”*

**Virtue:** Justice. Tumbledown Royce believes wholeheartedly that what he’s doing is right — for himself, for the Lost as a whole, and for the world.

**Vice:** Pride. Tumbledown Royce has gone so far down the rabbit hole of extremism that he’s no longer capable of recognizing any viewpoint but his own as the correct one.

**Background:** An eccentric recluse, Tumbledown Royce has spent over a decade preparing for his masterstroke against Faerie. His durance gifted him with an uncanny ability to break things, to see the precise stress points in an object, a person, or even an idea, and how best to put pressure on them to his own ends. His life before he was taken imbued him with a healthy disdain for those in a position of power. He wants nothing more than to topple the system from the top down, rebuilding society in a mode he finds more suitable.

**Description:** Short, fat, and crooked, with long, skillful fingers and sharp, sharp teeth. His eyes gleam with a fanatic’s light, but he manages to make his arguments seem calm and rational — at least until someone calls him on the cost of his plan. He dresses in the shabby attire of a lower-class worker, carefully mended and re-mended over the decades.

**Storytelling Hints:** You’ve been obsessed with your plan for so long it’s hard to talk about — or even think about — anything else. On some level, you know that what you’re about to do is monstrous and will probably tear away the last tiny vestiges of your sanity, but you really do believe your plan will work and that the lives of the people on the train are an acceptable price to pay.

**Concept:** Mad Idealist

**Seeming:** Wizenod

**Kith:** Oracle

**Court:** Summer

**Entitlements:** None

**Virtue:** Justice

**Vice:** Pride

**Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 5, Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

**Skills:** Academics 2, Crafts 3, Drive (Trains) 2, Expression 3, Firearms 3, Intimidation 2, Investigation 2, Larceny 3, Occult (Faerie) 4, Survival (Hedge) 3

**Merits:** Allies (Bridge-Burners) 3, Fast Reflexes 2, Summer Mantle 3

**Health:** 8

**Willpower:** 9

**Clarity:** 3

**Wyrd:** 5

**Contracts:** Artifice ••••, Dream •••, Eternal Summer •••, Fleeting Summer ••

**Pledges:** None

**Glamour/per Turn:** 14/5

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 9

**Defense:** 2

**Initiative:** 6

**Armor:** 0

**Notes:** Derangement – Manic Obsession, Equipment – Heavy Revolver (3L)

## MAD AL

**Quotes:** *“Well, now, this is a fine pickle. My dear brother and all his friends come crawling to the hollow man for aid. Charming.”*

*“Here’s a lovely little one. Care for a tumble, love?”*

*“Stay close. The path is treacherous, and I’d hate to see anyone fall behind.”*

**Virtue:** Charity. In a perverse sort of way, the fetch actually does enjoy doing things for others and making them happy — at least temporarily.

**Vice:** Lust. Where Sir Alistair is possessed of proclivities deemed scandalous and immoral by Victorian society, his fetch is a decadent libertine who seeks only the pleasure of the next hedonistic debauch.

**Background:** Born of twine and wax and opium-smoke, cast into the shrieking madness of Bedlam to rot, only to escape along with his double, “Mad Al” is, as his name suggests, completely out of his head. His is not the gibbering, shrieking insanity of the common lunatic, though, but the refined madness of the aristocracy, as befits one of his breeding. Through a web of carefully-arranged blackmail he has managed to retain the lifestyle Sir Alistair once lived, and



**Wyrd:** 1  
**Echoes:** Attuned to the Wyrd, Enter Hedge  
**Pledges:** None  
**Glamour/per Turn:** 10/1  
**Size:** 5  
**Speed:** 10  
**Defense:** 4  
**Initiative:** 6  
**Armor:** 0  
**Notes:** Equipment – Walking Stick (1B)

## THE FOREMAN

**Quotes:** “Come on, you slugs! Put your backs to it!”  
“Wozzis? New recruits? A bit old, but I reckon you’ll do.”  
“Back in line, you lot!”

**Background:** Throughout the Hedge, the goblins are busy. Some of them work to some seeming purpose: crafting Tokens, harvesting goblin fruits and oddments, or constructing their own rude dwellings among the Thorns. Other times, they undertake vast projects with no discernible purpose: excavating a vast pit only to fill it in again, or building towers only to tear them down and start from scratch three feet to the left. Wherever hobs toil, the Foremen will be there. This particular foreman has been coopted by Tumbledown Royce; tricked into swearing an oath to help the bridge-burner construct his rails, the Foreman now seeks to cut corners and speed the work along by snatching mortal children and putting them to work alongside his goblin crews.

**Description:** Goblin foremen usually appear as larger, more brutish versions of whatever sort of hob they command. This particular one is a bulbous, crook-limbed brute of some five feet in height, with a mouth that stretches from his neckless head all the way to the middle of his hairy chest. He wears shiny shoes with spats, pinstriped trousers, and a purple waistcoat with a golden watch chain. Despite his comical appearance and professed fondness cost-cutting measures, he’s a tough and dangerous beast.

**Storytelling Hints:** The sooner you get this bloody job done, the sooner you’re free of your oath and you can get your boys back to doing real work. If some band of bleeding hearts starts poking around your site, you’ll set the lads on them first and, once they’re right and proper softened up, you’ll clap them in thorns with the rest of the nippers and get an honest day’s work out of them, too. Still, nothing in your pledge says you have to die for that ponce Royce, so if it looks like the fight’s going against you, roll over and do what they want. Then get right back to work when they aren’t looking.

**Concept:** Hob Boss

**Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 2, Resolve 2, Strength 4,  
Dexterity 2, Stamina 4, Presence 2, Manipulation 2,  
Composure 2

his intimate knowledge of the Hedge and its pathways has kept him from being caught and returned to Bedlam.

**Description:** Tall and proud, with refined, aristocratic features growing haggard after years of abuse. There is something hypnotic in the eyes, like a cobra’s as it mesmerizes a small, quivering animal. Upon seeing Mad Al and the original Sir Alistair side by side, one might be forgiven for drawing comparisons to The Picture of Dorian Gray, and for assuming that Sir Alistair was the aforementioned portrait.

**Storytelling Hints:** It’s all about your own pleasure, and sometimes about introducing others to your singular definition of the word. While you hide it behind a mask of urbanity, you despise your “dear brother” for having (as you see it) created you so imperfectly and abandoned you to the madhouse without even an explanation of what you were. Still, you’re not going to just kill him. That would be too easy. You’re going to play with him first.

**Concept:** The Dark Mirror

**Virtue:** Charity

**Vice:** Lust

**Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 2, Strength 1,  
Dexterity 4, Stamina 2, Presence 3, Manipulation 4,  
Composure 2

**Skills:** Academics 2 (Literature), Animal Ken 2, Brawl 1,  
Intimidation 2, Occult (the Hedge) 4, Politics 2,  
Socialize (Seduction) 3, Stealth (Hiding From Jealous  
Spouses) 3, Survival (the Hedge) 5, Subterfuge 3,  
Weaponry (Cane) 2

**Merits:** Fame 2, Resources 4, Status (Aristocracy) 1

**Health:** 7

**Willpower:** 4

**Morality:** 4



**Skills:** Brawl (Beatings) 3, Crafts 2, Intimidation (Browbeat) 2, Streetwise (Goblin Market) 2, Survival 2, Weaponry (Whips) 4

**Merits:** Iron Stamina 2

**Health:** 9

**Willpower:** 4

**Wyrd:** 3

**Contracts:** Artifice •••••, Stone •••

**Pledges:** None

**Glamour/per Turn:** 12/3

**Size:** 5

**Speed:** 11

**Defense:** 1

**Initiative:** 4

**Armor:** 3B/1L

**Notes:** Equipment – Whip (2L)

## THE ADVENTURE OF THE IRON ROAD

MENTAL • PHYSICAL • SOCIAL ••  
OVERVIEW

A missing boy and a still-open portal to the Hedge prompt the Sweep (p. 80) to gather the Back Stairs Mob and set off in pursuit of a child-stealing hob. In the Hedge, they discover a slave camp where a band of hob overseers has enslaved numerous children, putting them to work building, of all things, a railroad. This scene is designed to spotlight the Sweep and his protectiveness toward children, and also to give him an opportunity to do the skulking about he does so well. Other options for dealing with the scenario include fighting (difficult, as the

hobs are fairly numerous and sudden battle risks startling the captives into running off into the Hedge), bullying and intimidation (the Foreman isn't particularly loyal to Tumbledown Royce and is willing to talk, but isn't likely to be impressed by idle threats), or even letting the process continue unabated (an obvious Clarity hit, unless the motley plans to regroup and come back later with some greater plan).

## DESCRIPTION

(Discovering the missing child)

*It's quiet in the Abernathy house, nestled on a well-to-do street in a well-to-do part of London. It's not the sort of place someone like the Sweep would normally be welcome, but then, the Sweep doesn't exactly knock politely on the front door and wait for the maid to answer. No, it's chimneys and fireplaces for him — all the better to discreetly drop in and check on his youthful charges. It's a routine that's become almost rote by now; slip in, collect the token offerings of cream and shiny brass buttons, maybe mend a dream or two if the little ones are stirring fitfully, and then on to the next. Tonight, though, something is very different, and very wrong: Young Ephraim Abernathy, all of ten years old, is missing from his bed. The window has been thrown open, and where it should look over the snow-clad rooftops of the city, the vista is instead one of tangled, overgrown thorns and a choking yellow fog. The Hedge, and a gateway recently opened! Whatever took the child can't have been gone long.*

(Finding the work camp)

*The Trod drops suddenly in a near-vertical slope, widening as it goes from a narrow footpath to a broad avenue, feebly lit by a few lanterns hung from particularly sturdy thorns. The sounds of metal on metal ring through the air, weirdly muted by the omnipresent fog. Below you, tiny figures toil on what appears to be a railroad track, hammering crossbeams and trestles into place one by one. The workers appear to all be human children; scattered about the worksite are several squat, grotesque hobs armed with whips, which they are not shy in using to motivate the laggardly.*

(Confronting the Foreman)

*The hob snarls and spits indignant threats, but keeps well clear of you. He fingers his whip, then apparently thinks better of it. "Fine," he snarls. "Wozzit you wants to know?"*

## STORYTELLER GOALS

Your goal here is to present the fact that something downright strange is going on in the Hedge. However the characters resolve this scene, impress upon them the sense that this is part of a larger scheme, not just an isolated bout of the madness of the Hedge. Assuming the characters don't simply slaughter all the hobs en masse, the Foreman (or any hob they care to interrogate) can tell them about the raggedy, tumbledown changeling who snared them into this job. If all the hobs end up dead, one of the children can recount having seen a funny-looking little fat man ordering the monsters about and provide a decent enough description of Tumbledown Royce.

Also, don't forget to underscore the horrific conditions these children are forced to labor under. Child labor was an epidemic in Victorian society, and hitting that thematic note here calls attention to it in a subtle way, which could easily be spun out into a larger theme for your chronicle.

## CHARACTER GOALS

Liberating these unfortunate wretches from their bondage is the immediate goal of the scene. The motley has a few options: they might try a frontal assault, but that's a risky prospect, especially if you're using the Back Stairs Mob, who aren't particularly combat-oriented. In addition to the Foreman (see p. 68), six other hobs oversee the labor. You can use the Foreman's stats for these hobs, with the following adjustments: reduce all combat dice pools and Health levels by 2, drop Defense by 1, and assume the only Contract they have is Stone •.

The hobs, while wary, aren't immediately hostile; it may be possible to bluff or bully them into releasing the children. The Foreman is bound by a pledge to complete the job, but he's not bound to do it in any particular way or on any particular timetable. If he thinks it's more beneficial to his long-term survival to let this batch of kids go, then abduct a new batch in a few days after the characters have moved on, he will.

Finally, it's possible that a sneaky character (e.g. the Sweep) could sneak through the thick fog, avoiding the pools of lamplight, and free the children without the hobs noticing. From that point, it would be a fairly simple matter for the rest of the motley to stage a distraction while the Sweep leads the children back to the gate.

## ACTIONS

### FREE THE CHILDREN

A straight-up fight is one thing, and bluffing a bunch of hobs into thinking you can call down the wrath of the entire freehold on their heads is another, but the Sweep is really built for skulking through the fog and shadows, accomplishing his goals by stealth and guile. The lights here are dim and unreliable, and the hobs are lazy by nature; a quiet, clever changeling could use all of those things to his advantage and creep from hostage to hostage, loosening their bonds (which are comprised of magic ropes of fine gray spider silk which cannot be undone by the person bound by them) without alerting their watchers.

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Stealth vs. 5 (calculated based on the Foreman's Wits + Composure with a +2 bonus for the other hobs that are watching as well).

**Action:** Extended and contested, with each roll representing one minute of skulking and untying. The player needs three successes per child (15 to free all 5), while if at any time the Storyteller has more successes than the player, the hobs spot the Sweep and raise the alarm.

**Hindrances:** The Sweep does something to frighten the children (e.g. killing a hob right in front of them, brandishing a weapon, etc.) (-1 per child so traumatized), something

occurs to make the hobs more alert and suspicious (-2)

**Help:** The rest of the motley engages the hobs in conversation, plies them with drink, or otherwise distracts them (+2), the Sneak manages to murder a hob guard without being spotted (+5 to the player's next roll only), someone snuffs out the lanterns (+1 per lantern snuffed, but unless supernatural means are employed, assume that the hobs relight one lantern per roll).

### Results

**Dramatic Failure:** For the player, a dramatic failure means the Sweep is spotted. The hobs immediately attack, and if the rest of the motley has already revealed itself, the hobs figure out that they're with the Sweep and attack them as well. For the hobs, a dramatic failure means they forfeit all successes accumulated thus far.

**Failure:** The Sweep makes no progress toward freeing the children, or else the hobs come no closer to spotting him.

**Success:** The Sweep makes progress toward freeing the children (remember, every three successes represents one child freed; that might be significant if the Sweep is interrupted partway through the process), or else the hobs come a little bit closer to spotting the Sweep.

**Exceptional Success:** The Sweep's stealth is unmatched; the player makes his next roll for this action unopposed. An exceptional success for the hobs means they've noticed that one of the children is untied; not only do they re-bind her (adding another three successes to the Sweep's required total to rescue all the children), but they're treated as "more alert and suspicious" as described above.

### Consequences

Depending on how the motley deals with this scene, they will have one or more pieces of information about the goings-on in the Hedge: at a minimum, they'll know that these hobs were acting under the orders of a squat, fat little changeling, either from the Foreman or from the children they rescued. They might have received the name of Tumbledown Royce from the Foreman if they interrogated him, or even some small hint of his plans if they were exceptionally thorough. Depending on the pacing you have in mind for this story, they might have time to follow up on this information. It's perfectly fine to allow them to discover who Tumbledown Royce is; he has something of a reputation among London's changelings, and a few nights of chatting up the right people at the right clubs should give at least his basic biography. It's probably best at this point if the motley is always one step behind Royce, however; this early in the plan, it's far too easy for determined players to completely derail the story by killing Royce or otherwise incapacitating him. Assume that he's deep in the Hedge, overseeing the last stages of preparation (especially appropriate if the motley disrupted his plans by killing or otherwise thwarting the hob work crew).

Finally, it's possible the motley will want to keep the magic ropes that bound the captive children. That's perfectly fine; the total length of the rope comes to about 50 feet, but it can be

easily cut down to any length the characters desire. When a length of the rope is tied around someone (or one of their limbs), that person cannot untie or loosen the knots in any way. This imposes a -2 penalty on any attempts to wriggle out of the bindings. The ropes may, however, be snapped as normal with no penalty. The entire length of the rope counts as a Token ●●●, half the length counts as a Token ●●, and any length less than that (down to two feet) counts as a Token ●. Lengths smaller than two feet retain their magical properties, but are generally too short to be useful enough to count as a Token.

## THE ADVENTURE OF THE VANISHING TRAIN

MENTAL ●●●, PHYSICAL ●●, SOCIAL ●●  
OVERVIEW

Sometime after the motley completes the Adventure of the Iron Road, the town (both mortal and changeling alike) is all abuzz with a most peculiar rumor: a certain passenger train from *Wapping* to *Rotherhithe* seems to have vanished into thin air. The particularly odd thing is that there's really no particular place the train could have gone: that line runs through the Thames Tunnel. Nevertheless, the train is a whole day past due, and no one seems to be able to find it. It's impossible to miss the news of this development; newsboys are crying the story on every corner, it's being talked about in pubs and drawing rooms across the city, and even the Lost are intrigued by what could have happened here.

Investigating the disappearance is a lengthy, if not exactly difficult, process; after all, the train runs on tracks. It's probably not worth an Investigation roll to figure out what happened to the train, since it's mostly just a matter of following the tracks until you get to the tunnel and realize it's been recently used as a Hedge gateway. However, if you're running this as part of a larger chronicle and the motley wandering blithely down the tracks might be a dangerous thing (perhaps this is the territory of some influential rival, or you've already established that dangerous Hedge-beasts often lurk along the banks of the Thames), you might want to make tracking down the point of disappearance an extended Wits + Investigation roll requiring 10 successes, with each roll representing about an hour of wandering along the train tracks looking for clues. Every two hours or so, you might add a small scene dealing with some sort of threat or the like.

Once they figure out that the tunnel has been turned into a Hedge gateway, the motley will likely want to investigate, at which point they run into a few of Royce's cronies, who have stayed behind to act as a rear-guard should anyone investigate the disappearance. These changelings are hostile and belligerent, but will not attack on sight.

## DESCRIPTION

(On reaching the Thames Tunnel)

*The Thames Tunnel gapes before you: two vast arches of smoky gloom like the eyes of a slumbering dragon. To all outward appearances, all is as it should be. No smoldering wreckage lies strewn about, nor does there seem to be any sign of a force that could have carried an entire train away with no trace. And yet, just there, at the edge of your senses, you feel that faint, tingling buzz that tells you someone has opened a Hedge gateway nearby.*

(On opening the gateway themselves)

*One moment, the tunnel stretches before you, sooty and empty. The next, as though it had always been there, a broad, straight path through the Thorns replaces it. Trees loom ominously above the path, though their thorns appear to have been meticulously pruned back to the height of the tunnel mouth itself. Just as you saw before, the train tracks continue without interruption, passing from the mortal world to the Hedge without an interruption. Something seems off, though: the Thorns actually appear to be withering, recoiling from the tracks as though they were toxic. A gentle fall of dead, razor-edged leaves drifts on an unfelt breeze, and faintly, as from a great distance, you can hear the sound of a locomotive chugging away.*

*Of more pressing concern, though, are the three roustabouts standing athwart the tracks, billy clubs clutched in their claw-like hands, with eager smiles plastered across their faces.*

## STORYTELLER GOALS

Your goal here is to make the players aware of the particulars of Tumbledown Royce's plans: namely, that he's hijacked the train and put it on a Trod headed straight back to Arcadia. The motley needs to know what's going on, and that time is a factor. Make sure you play up the knowledge that the train was at full capacity when Royce stole it; if the players assume Royce stole an empty train, they may be inclined to let him try his plan out and see if it works. If they still balk at trying to stop him, remind them that they are effectively allowing a hundred or more mortals to be killed, or even worse, taken captive by the Fair Folk should they survive. Even in a best-case scenario, if the iron spear cripples the Gentry for true, any survivors of the wreck would wander, lost and mad, in the Hedge until exposure or deprivation claimed them. Any and all of those are major Clarity hits.

The three bridge-burners waiting at the gateway aren't in an immediately aggressive mood. They'll bully and bluster and even boast a little about how much smarter Royce is than the motley — which naturally means there's a good chance a clever character can trick them into spilling the whole plan. If you need stats for them, the *Burgeoning Terrorist* on pp. 266-267 of *Changeling: The Dreaming* should serve.

"Yeah, I'm Cool With That..."



So, you've made it crystal clear to your players that letting Royce's plan go off without a hitch would be a bad thing for all those mortals on the train, and they're still inclined to let him try it? Maybe they're playing a motley of callous bastards, or they agree with Royce that these few mortal lives are worth the possibility of ending Faerie depredations forever? That's fine. Don't railroad them into following this plot. Although presenting a full, optional path for letting Royce get away with it is outside the scope of this chapter, here are a few ideas you might run with.

- The train's passage has a poisonous effect on the Hedge, like quicksilver leeching into groundwater. Hedge fruits start to become toxic, the thorny walls that define the pathways versus the untamed Thorns begin to break down, and Hollows start to wither and die. That's going to make a lot of people very angry when they find out who was responsible.

- Hobgoblins of all sorts, from feral briar wolves to cunning goblin merchants, begin to flee the Hedge en masse, seeking lairs throughout London and generally menacing the townsfolk.

- At the stroke of midnight, every changeling within a dreamscape receives a sudden, blinding vision of pain, terror, and anguish. Most are driven mad by the experience, but those who aren't insist that the iron spear didn't just kill the realm of Tumbledown Royce's Keeper, it woke something up — something even the Gentry think twice about awakening.

## CHARACTER GOALS

In this instance, the characters' goals are very much the same as the Storyteller's: find out just what the hell is going on with these train tracks and why some lunatic just drove a train into the Hedge. Of course, it's always possible that the motley will rush to the attack against Royce's rearguard, which may preclude their acquiring that information. If that happens, you might try having the bridge-burners fight back with battle cries like "we can't let them stop the train!" or the like. That, coupled with the sound of the train in the faint distance, should entice them to continue the investigation, even without the larger picture.

## ACTIONS

### TRICK THE BRIDGE-BURNERS

In true fairy-tale fashion, quick-witted and silver-tongued characters have an opportunity to trick the bridge-burners into revealing more about the nature of Tumbledown Royce's schemes. They might accomplish this through outright bluffs ("of course I was sent here, now give me the situation!"), false flattery ("I'm sure we never could have come up with such a clever plan!"), or just straight up intimidation ("tell me what's going on before I pop your eyeballs like overripe figs"), but it's certainly a way to get more information about the proceedings.

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Subterfuge, Manipulation + Socialize, or Presence + Intimidate (depending on approach) vs. Resolve + Composure (5 for the bridge-burners)

**Action:** Contested

**Hindrances:** The character insults the bridge-burners' intelligence or efficacy (-1), anyone in the motley brandishes a weapon (-1 per character who does so), each successive attempt using the same dice pool (-1), the character openly professes ignorance of what's going on (-2).

**Help:** The character insinuates that she's smarter than Tumbledown Royce (+1), the characters got any information about Royce or his plans from the Foreman in the previous scene (+2).

**Dramatic Failure:** For the character, dramatic failure means the bridge-burners are insulted to the point of initiating hostilities. For the bridge-burners, dramatic failure means one of them is so eager to prove the brilliance of their plan that they spill the whole thing, including where the train is headed and what shortcuts through the Hedge might allow the Motley to intercept the train before it reaches its goal.

**Failure:** The bridge-burners gloat and taunt, but reveal no useful information.

**Success:** The bridge-burners let slip that Tumbledown Royce has hijacked a train, with plans to drive it to Faerie and kill his Keeper, and possibly the rest of the Gentry as well. They give an indication of the Trods it's traveling, but no clear information on how to catch it.

**Exceptional Success:** One of the bridge-burners suffers a crisis of conscience and offers to tell the motley how to catch the train before it reaches Arcadia. The other two aren't terribly fond of this moment of doubt, however, and have to be dealt with before the turncoat can guide the motley anywhere.

## CONSEQUENCES

If the motley gets no new information out of this scene, they're in a bit of a tough spot, but they still know a train full of people is hurtling down a Trod toward Arcadia, which should be enough information to link to the Adventure of the Secret Road. A success arms them with more information that will be useful once they finally catch up with Tumbledown Royce, while an exceptional success (or a dramatic failure from the bridge-burners) actually gives the motley enough information to skip straight to The Adventure of the Particular Appetite.

If you're using the Back Stairs Mob, it's unlikely any of them has the Hedge-navigation chops to find their own shortcut to catch the train. If they want to try it anyways, or if you're using characters of your own devising who are more Hedge-savvy, use the rules for finding an exit from the Hedge (p. 218 of *Changeling: The Lost*), assuming that the location where they can intercept the train is an unfamiliar area (so each roll takes three hours). This allows the motley to skip The Adventure of the Secret Road, but you may want to include The Adventure of the Particular Appetite as an encounter on the journey.

# THE ADVENTURE OF THE SECRET ROAD

MENTAL \*\*, PHYSICAL \*\*\*, SOCIAL \*\*  
**OVERVIEW**

Assuming the motley didn't get an exceptional success when bluffing the bridge-burners in The Adventure of the Vanishing Train, they'll likely need to find a guide if they hope to find a path through the Hedge that will let them catch and jump aboard the stolen train. (That's not as farfetched as it sounds; time and distance are mutable in the Hedge, and a twisting, winding footpath that takes the better part of a day to traverse can still put you ahead of a train traveling down a perfectly-straight Trod at full steam with a several-hour head start.) Since the Back Door Mob isn't especially skilled at Hedge navigation, that means finding someone who might know a path and be willing to guide them. The most likely candidate, unfortunately, is Sir Alistair's fetch, who haunts the local Hedge pathways when not slipping into London's high society to incite debauchery.

Sir Alistair is well aware of his fetch's talents, and since changelings can freely enter their fetches' dreams, he's probably the best suited to tracking the fetch down and enlisting his help. That may be easier said than done, though, as "Mad Al's" dreams are a warped, twisted nightmare of Bedlam, and finding him within its confines isn't exactly easy.

## DESCRIPTION

(On entering the fetch's dreams)

*Sleep comes swiftly, as it always does when you prepare to enter another's dreams. As your mind drifts away, the Morphean fog shifts and gives way, revealing a nightmare from your own memories. You cannot mistake those dank, low-ceilinged corridors, the barred doors at regular intervals, or the howls and shrieks of the damned wretches who were once your cellmates.*

*Bedlam. The thing that took your life dreams of Bedlam.*

*"No!" an all-too-familiar voice hisses, echoing from God knows where. "You can't be here! Can't find me! If you can find me, they can find me!" A shadowy figure dashes across an intersection some ways ahead, panicked whimpering following in its wake.*

(On cornering the fetch)

*The corridor rounds one last bend, then abruptly dead-ends into a vast, cathedral-like chamber. Stained glass windows depict the torments inflicted on the inmates of Bedlam in ornate detail. A familiar figure lounges on something that resembles a cross between a royal throne and a surgical table, the straps of a tattered, filthy straightjacket dangling from his wrists. "My, my... persistent, aren't we? Well, then, I suppose the least I can do is hear you out."*

## STORYTELLER GOALS

Your goal in this scene is to push the bizarre, horrific nature of Sir Alistair's pursuit of his fetch. Victorian asylums

are creepy enough on their own; a twisting, Escher-esque nightmare version of one drawn from the mind of an insane fetch is even more so. Play up the disturbing imagery, possibly by introducing phantasmal patients or monstrous “doctors” to impede Sir Alistair’s progress. Ultimately, the fetch takes a perverse delight in his double owing him something, so convincing him to help isn’t going to be too difficult. He just wants to play with Sir Alistair a bit first.

## CHARACTER GOALS

Catching the fetch and extracting a promise of guidance is the primary goal in this scenario. Given the treacherous nature of fetches, it’s probably a good idea to extract a Pledge to that effect. Of course, the fetch is going to want something in return....

## ACTIONS

### SHADOWING THE FETCH

Sir Alistair’s fetch roams the halls of this Bedlam of the mind, ready to bolt at the first sign of Sir Alistair himself. Sir Alistair will have to shadow the fetch without being detected, until it reaches its sanctum at the heart of the dream.

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Stealth vs. Wits + Composure

**Action:** Extended and contested. Sir Alistair needs to accumulate ten successes to catch the fetch, with each roll representing 15 minutes of stalking. Because of the construction of the dreamscape, the fetch can never directly lose Sir Alistair, but its successes contribute to penalties on Sir Alistair’s roll (q.v.)

**Hindrances:** For every three successes accumulated by the fetch (–1 to Sir Alistair), carrying a light or making a loud noise (–2)

**Help:** Stopping to provide succor to a tormented phantasmal patient (+3 on the next roll, Storyteller’s discretion what “succor” entails), tapping into memories of Bedlam to predict the fetch’s path (+2, but gain a minor derangement till the end of the scene), dream riding the dream to alter its nature (+2, the dream is Intensity 3)

**Dramatic Failure:** Not only do you fail to make any progress, you lose all your accumulated successes and must pick up the trail again from scratch.

**Failure:** You come no closer to your goal. Perhaps the fetch suspects your presence and leads you on a wild goose chase for a while.

**Success:** You evade notice and follow the fetch closer to its sanctum.

**Exceptional Success:** No additional effect beyond the extraordinary progress made.

## CONSEQUENCES

Once you’ve cornered the fetch, getting it to agree to lead you where you want to go is as easy as accepting its terms. Exactly what those terms are is left up to you to seed future plot hooks on, but some suggestions include wanting specific

people killed, wanting Sir Alistair to return to Bedlam and stay there for some time, or just asking for the collection of a rare, narcotic goblin fruit from some dangerous place in the Hedge. Negotiating better terms requires exceptional role-playing or some contested Social rolls.

## THE ADVENTURE OF THE PARTICULAR APPETITE

MENTAL ... PHYSICAL • SOCIAL ..  
**OVERVIEW**

While traveling along the path to catch the stolen train (whether led by Sir Alistair’s fetch, information gleaned from the bridge-burners, or the characters’ own navigation), the motley stumbles across the lair of the Grim Grinning Gaunt, a horrid troll-like hob who threatens to devour one person out of any party that ventures through its territory, unless the travelers can show it true beauty. The Gaunt’s definition of beauty, however, is far from the mortal definition, and the motley has to stall for time while Poor Wretch tries on a variety of shapes, hoping to guess the creature’s predilections.

Attacking the Grim Grinning Gaunt is always an option, of course, but it’s a tough old monster, and unless the motley geared up with cold iron weaponry it’s likely to be a brutal fight. Still, if Loathly Liz wants to show off her fighting prowess, this scene can do that. Use the stats for the Hidden Killer on pp. 273-274 of *Changeling: The Lost*, but replace Vainglory ●●●● with Stone ●●●●.

## DESCRIPTION

*The path kinks into a sharp elbow bend ahead, crossing a rickety foot bridge across a brackish stream. Sitting cross-legged on the path on the far side of the bridge is an enormously tall, spectrally-thin figure with horned gray skin, huge lamp-like eyes, and a mouth full of crooked, needle-like teeth. These it bares at you in a hideous rictus as it rises to its feet — towering nearly ten feet high.*

*“Here is the Bridge Which is Mine. The toll must be paid in accord with the ancient laws. Will you offer one of your own as my mid-day meal, or will you show me the face of true beauty?”*

## STORYTELLER GOALS

The goal here is to play up the fairy-tale nature of this encounter. The Grim Grinning Gaunt’s motives are fundamentally rooted in illogic, but the monstrous bridge-keeper is squarely rooted in folklore and thus has a place in the Hedge. The beast is willing to play “twenty questions” as regards its conception of beauty, at least to a point, but it gets bored easily and may well demand a victim if the process drags on too long. Apart from its desire



to eat one of the travelers, the Gaunt is quite reasonable and even cordial, but nothing short of magic (equivalent to Vainglory •••• or higher) will convince him to step aside without taking his toll.

## CHARACTER GOALS

Getting past the giant cannibalistic monster is the clear objective here. Whether that's accomplished by playing along and deducing the creature's definition of true beauty, braving the Thorns by leaving the path, trying to slay the beast, or even sacrificing one of their own, is up to them.

## ACTIONS

### DEDUCING THE GAUNT'S DEFINITION OF BEAUTY

What the Grim Grinning Gaunt actually considers beautiful is left vague; depending on how you want to play the scene, it might be a particularly specific form of the human ideal, or it might be a grotesquerie that would send polite London society shrieking through the streets. Either way, figuring it out requires a fair bit of role-playing and this extended action.

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Subterfuge or Wits + Subterfuge (depending on whether you try to trick the Gaunt into telling you what it wants or infer it from the creature's statements).

**Action:** Extended, with each roll representing 5 minutes of conversation. The player requires 12 successes to figure out the Gaunt's idea of true beauty. However, after 5 rolls, the Gaunt becomes bored with the game and demands that the motley provide him a meal from among their own, instead.

**Hindrances:** The character does not (or cannot) alter their shape to reflect their guesses about the Gaunt's ideals (-1), any character expresses disgust or disbelief at what the Gaunt considers beautiful (-2).

**Help:** Other characters engage the Gaunt in a discussion of beauty (requires a Presence + Expression roll; no direct bonus, but every success adds one more roll before the Gaunt grows bored).

**Dramatic Failure:** The Gaunt grows bored of the guessing game and demands a meal instead.

**Failure:** You come no closer to divining the Gaunt's particular standards of beauty.

**Success:** You decipher more clues as to what the Gaunt likes.

**Exceptional Success:** Your cogent discussion of the nature of beauty so enraptures the Gaunt that you gain an extra roll before it gets bored.

## CONSEQUENCES

Getting past the Grim Grinning Gaunt one way or another means the motley can press on to their rendezvous

## Utter Bastardry

You've probably already asked the question: If the motley is traveling with Sir Alistair's fetch, what's to stop them from simply saying "Here, eat this guy" and being done with it?

The honest answer: not a damn thing. The Gaunt doesn't require a democratic vote or anything like that; all it takes is one person saying "That one" and the toll is paid. If that happens, the Grim Grinning Gaunt snatches up the fetch in one massive hand and tears into it with a sickening crunch. The fetch's screams are hideous, but mercifully brief — shortly after the third bite, it disintegrates into charcoal dust, mouse bones and opium smoke. This isn't as neatly-wrapped a package as you might think, though.

First and foremost, this is a level 5 Clarity sin, which, if you're using the Back Stairs Mob, means anyone who agreed to the idea is risking degeneration. Secondly, the fetch almost certainly insisted on a clause of safe passage in any Pledge binding it to the task of guiding the motley, which this certainly violates. Third, the Grim Grinning Gaunt will not be pleased by having been tricked into eating a mere fetch. While its nature prevents it from reneging on the bargain now, the motley will have made a powerful enemy for later in the chronicle.

Regardless, if the motley tries this approach, they'll have to find their own path the rest of the way. Use the same guidelines presented on p. 73, but at this point the motley is close enough to its destination that it counts as an "area only visited once or described in some detail."

with Tumbledown Royce's stolen train. If they actually sacrificed one of their group (not a self-sacrifice) to the Gaunt, you can bet that word of that will get out somehow (even if no one but the motley witnessed it, the Hedge has ways of letting secrets get out), which may well create some major complications for the motley later.

## ALL FALL DOWN MENTAL ... PHYSICAL ... SOCIAL ... OVERVIEW

It all comes down to this. Having successfully navigated to a point on the trod ahead of the train's course, the motley jumps aboard the engine car to confront Tumbledown Royce and stop the train before it hurtles headlong into Arcadia and dooms everyone aboard.

## How'd We Get Aboard?

You might be expecting a scene in which the characters race to get aboard the train, perhaps using the footrace rules in the World of Darkness Rulebook or some other sort of extended Athletics roll. The problem with that is that, if the dice go against a particular player, they're essentially out of the game for the climax. That's not terribly fun for anyone involved, so this adventure just assumes that the characters are able to get aboard the train without a roll.

## DESCRIPTION

*The train comes steaming down the track like an iron dragon, belching smoke from its stacks and poisoning the Hedge in its wake. It's a simple enough matter to leap just behind the engine car as the train passes. The question now becomes: what do you do now that you're aboard? Through the windows of the engine car, you can see a rotund little changeling, (Tumbledown Royce, presumably) frantically manning the controls, keeping the train hurtling along toward its destiny.*

## STORYTELLER GOALS

This is the climax of the whole story, and by getting here, the motley has directly intertwined their fates with those of the passengers on the train. Really push the sense of urgency here: will it be an hour yet before the train reaches Faerie, or mere minutes? The characters certainly can't say. They need to deal with Royce quickly and decisively, lest they be returned to the bondage they all-too-recently escaped. If they dither too long on a course of action, start dropping hints of half-remembered memories from their bondage — perhaps Sir Alistair starts to faintly hear the sounds of shattering mirrors, or Poor Wretch smells willow bark.

## CHARACTER GOALS

Stop that train! The motley has a fair few options to deal with Royce and his scheme. Doubtless clever players will come up with more, but here are a few possibilities.

- Beat Royce to a pulp. Blunt, yes. Obvious, yes. Effective? Very likely.
- Convince Royce his plan is insane. This one is extremely difficult. Tumbledown Royce is a fanatic, and appeals to reason certainly won't work. Better luck would come from reminding him that by doing this, he's little better than the Keeper who snatched him up and subjected him to countless mad horrors and beautiful nightmares. Still, it's a tricky prospect.
- Sneak into the car and murder him. Less honorable than a straight-up fight, to be sure, but Sir Alistair is a more than passable assassin, and he might very well be able to land a decisive blow before Royce even knows he's there.

• Disconnect the engine from the rest of the train. Less climactic than the previous options, to be sure, but perhaps the most poetic ending, as the train full of innocents coasts to a halt and Royce, all alone in the engine car, hurtles off into the waiting arms of his Keeper. Royce is no fool, though, and has welded the catch between the engine and the previous cars shut. Breaking the catch requires either an application of Artifice •• or •••• or a Strength + Stamina roll with a number of successes equal to the catch's Durability (3). Other means of breaking the catch are certainly available; the contraption has a Durability of 3 and 6 Structure.

Whatever approach the characters take, consider giving them a time limit: if they don't stop Royce in ten turns, the train hurtles straight into Faerie. The characters are strongly advised to jump off the train before that happens. Use the rules for jumping from a moving vehicle on p. 143 of the *World of Darkness* Rulebook, and assume the train is traveling 20 miles per hour.

## ACTIONS

### TALK TUMBLEDOWN ROYCE INTO STOPPING THE TRAIN

Convincing Royce to give up his lifelong obsession is no easy task, but it's possible for particularly persuasive characters. Unless the motley secures a Pledge from the bridge-burner or keeps a particularly close watch on him in the aftermath, though, he'll slip away into the Hedge rather than return to London to face the freehold's justice. Whether he tries his scheme again at a later date is up to the Storyteller.

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Expression vs. Resolve + Composure

**Action:** Extended and contested, each roll represents 30 seconds of talking, with a target of 10 successes. Remember the time limit suggested above.

**Hindrances:** The motley tries to appeal to Royce's reason, with logical arguments about why this is a bad idea (-1), a character suggests that Faerie and/or the Hedge are necessary (-3).

**Help:** The motley open up and share painful memories of their own Durances (+1 per character), any character makes the argument that Royce is acting a lot like a Keeper (+3).

**Dramatic Failure:** Royce becomes intensely agitated. Not only does the player lose all accumulated successes, the number of rolls before the train hits Faerie decreases by two (minimum of one more turn) as Royce stokes the burner and speeds up. If Royce rolled the dramatic failure, he wavers and lets the train slow, adding two rolls to the time limit.

**Failure:** Either the motley makes no progress toward swaying Royce, or Royce begins to lose his resolve.

**Success:** The motley makes progress toward convincing Royce, or else Royce finds himself holding true to his course.

**Exceptional Success:** Whichever party rolled the exceptional success makes an especially cogent point; the opposing character loses a point of Willpower.

## CONSEQUENCES

One way or another, Royce is dealt with and the train is stopped. If you really want to, you can call for a Wits + Drive roll to figure out how to stop the train in time, but after the motley's dealt with Tumbledown Royce, that's somewhat anticlimactic.

Now, of course, the problem is that the motley is stuck deep in the Hedge with a train full of terrified mortals and now apparent way to get them back to the mortal world....



# APPENDIX

## *The Back Stairs Mob*

Nobody wants the Back Stairs Mob (hence the name; when they're allowed in at all they're expected to use the servant's entrance), and that's just the way they like it. See, there's levels of social invisibility in Victorian London, and while most people think servants are right at the bottom, that's not strictly true. No, the ones who are really invisible are the scandalous, the destitute, and the absolute bottom of society. It's a different kind of invisibility, sure, but the willful ignorance of your betters is still better than parading about the Court in your gossamers and your enchanted waistcoats and all but screaming "Here I am!" to those that call themselves high society.

Besides, when you're this kind of invisible, they can't see you either. At least, that's what Maggie says, and she's nine-times wise. Everybody knows that.

Every single member of the Back Stairs Mob has been rejected by society in some form, on this side of the Mask or the other. That's made all of them both highly self-reliant and fiercely devoted to each other. This fragile, broken little motley is the closest thing any of the members has to family, and not a single one of them would dare give that up. Not even when Loathly Liz puts another hole in the wall during one of her night terrors or Sir Alistair gets into one of his high dudgeons about reclaiming the family name and honor or the Sweep brings home another stray.

Most of the year, the motley lives on the streets or, on the rare occasion they manage to scrape together some dosh, in the sort of seedy flophouse where the dregs of society destroy themselves with opium or get themselves killed by saucy men with knives. When it comes around to winter, though, and the street folk of London freeze by the scores, they huddle in the one place they can call theirs: a tiny, pathetic Hollow accessed through a door in the Underground station at Aldgate. At Maggie Maudlin's insistence, they don't use the Hollow often, lest they draw the eye of the Gentry. The Hollow itself resembles a Tube station with thorny roots digging down through the ceiling and gleaming white tile made from what appear to be giant teeth. The only path from the Hollow is the train tunnel itself, which has no actual tracks and, so far at least, has never seen any traffic.

The Back Stairs Mob support themselves however they can, usually through some combination of begging, petty crime,

and mystical peddling. The Sweep in particular has a healthy web of Pledges scattered throughout the city (although, since they're mostly with children, they're more useful for Glamour and bits of dream-stuff than for cash), and Loathly Liz is quick enough to nick the odd bit from a street vendor's cart. Poor Wretch and Sir Alistair (when he deigns to lower himself to such things) are both well-suited to street begging and the occasional grift, while Maggie Maudlin spins the oddments the rest of the motley brings home into Tokens, dream phials, and the like. While the Mob lacks the resources to sell these trinkets at London's Goblin Market, Maggie trades them directly to discerning clients for a variety of favors and services. Sir Alistair's intermittent contact with the city's vampire population gives an additional venue for these sales.

### STORYTELLING FOR THE BACK STAIRS MOB

At least to start with, any story about the Mob is going to focus heavily on the crushing despair of poverty in Victorian London, and on the fact that even among outcasts like the Lost, those on the fringes tend to get pushed aside and brushed away to nothing. The players might very well change that (indeed, if you run this motley through "Master of Men All" on p. 65, that's an excellent way to kickstart a "rise to power" type of storyline), but that desperation is going to form the bedrock of the chronicle and of the motley dynamic. As far as how you spin that, though, you've got options.

You might make survival the emphasis of the story: how are you going to feed yourself this week? When that unexpected early Autumn chill hits, will you risk the Hollow or try to find another way to put a roof over your head? Change-lings are just as vulnerable to disease as humans; what happens when the motley gets sick?

You might also consider focusing on the "falling through the cracks" theme. The Back Stairs Mob are by no means the only strange things swept under the beds and into the shadowy corners of Victorian London, and the motley might often find themselves in the position of noticing — and dealing with — these kinds of problems. From child-stealing hobgoblins to murderers of prostitutes, the forgotten parts of the

city can provide a great “monster-of-the-week” chronicle.

Then again, you could always dive right into Court politics with both feet and tell the story of the ambitious motley that rose from nothing to become one of the most powerful forces on the gaslit streets. It’s up to you.

## FETCHES, FETCHES, EVERYWHERE

For your reference, here’s the skinny on the fetches of the Back Stairs Mob, where they are, and what they’re up to. You are free to change these to whatever suits your fancy.

- Loathly Liz’s fetch is Liza Bainbridge, the daughter of a poor but reasonably comfortable crofter and his wife. Where Loathly Liz is as tough as old tree roots, though, young Mistress Bainbridge seems made of tree bark and glass. Despite her frail health, however, the fetch is exactly what she appears to be: a frightened child, struggling with the all-too-recent revelation that she isn’t real and never was.

- The Sweep’s fetch is Clarence Bowles, a butcher in Newgate. Grossly fat where the Sweep is thin as a rail, Bowles is quite intent on maintaining his present existence and has no qualms about killing what he perceives as “heathen monsters” to ensure its continuance. If you’re running the events of “Master of Men All” using these characters, Bowles makes a likely accomplice for Tumbledown Royce.

- Poor Wretch’s fetch is... well, everyone, if you believe the Wretch. The poor dear’s a bit confused, and just about every time the Darkling claps eyes on a mortal, said mortal is identified as being the Wretch’s true face. As to whether the fetch is even out there, or what face it might wear, that’s anybody’s guess.

- Sir Alistair’s fetch still bears the name Alistair refuses, in his pride, to abandon. During the return of its counterpart, the hedonistic construct managed to slip out of the asylum with none the wiser. It’s quite keen to get Alistair back in the madhouse; after all, if they’re looking for him, they’re looking for it too.

- Maggie Maudlin strangled her fetch years ago on the bank of the Thames beneath London Bridge. She carries the ashes and bones and bits of waxy twine it left behind in a bag beside her heart. She says it brings her good luck.

## LOATHLY LIZ

**Quotes:** “Buy some matches, sir?”

“Maggie says you’re bad. Are you bad?”

“No! I won’t go back! I won’t I won’t I won’t!”

**Virtue:** Faith. Maggie and the rest of the Mob have been more of a family to Liz than anyone ever was before. She has absolute trust in them, and would do anything they asked of her.

**Vice:** Envy. On those cold nights when she hasn’t eaten in days and the icy fog cuts right to the bone, Loathly Liz sometimes makes her way to the house where her fetch lives and stares longingly through the kitchen window. Some-

times she thinks about taking that life for herself... even if it means leaving the Mob behind.

**Background:** Victorian London has no shortage of lost children. You were just one of the throng, dropped off as an infant on the steps of the Mudfog Orphanage during a particularly cruel winter snowstorm. You spent your formative years there, learning that to survive such a grim institution, you had to be tough, quick, and above all quiet. You learned those lessons well — no one ever even noticed when Grandmother, Grandmother took you away from “that dreadful place” and left behind a thing of cobwebs and treacle in your place. You can’t be sure how long you spent at Grandmother, Grandmother’s cottage, scrubbing floors and hauling cauldrons of water, but the Faerie food you ate made you grow big and strong — big enough and strong enough to break down the door and escape. During your flight, though, you had to forget how to be big and strong to squeeze through tiny paths and avoid lurking Hedge beasts, and now you only remember how to be a giant some of the time.

You lived on the streets for a month before the Back Stairs Mob found you. You spotted a likely mark and tried to pick his pocket, only to discover that “he” was Poor Wretch, who brought you back to Maggie Maudlin and the rest. You have since become a valued member of the motley, and your larcenous skills have meant the difference between eating and going hungry more than once. The fact that you can turn into a rampaging 7-foot stone monstrosity has also proved useful.

**Description:** Tiny and skinny to the point of emaciation, you look a fair bit younger than you actually are (which is a matter of some uncertainty, but you’re probably in your early to mid-teens). Your hair is usually filthy and unkempt, but if it were ever washed it might be blonde. You dress in layers of any and every sort of cast-off you can find: here a piece of lady’s underclothing, there a men’s jacket 30 years out of style, gloves nicked from an Army officer’s washing line, sturdy steel-toed work boots from God knows where. You like things with stripes, when you can get them, and for reasons you can’t quite articulate, anything with the Hunting Stewart tartan makes you feel safe and comforted.

Looking beyond the Mask, your skin is the rough, pebbly gray of stone, and your eyes catch the light and throw it back with a greenish shimmer. Your shaggy hair usually covers the small horns that protrude from your forehead, and on the rare occasion that you smile, you show lower canines that are just a bit too large and sharp. When you assume your giant form, both your horns and teeth become significantly larger and more pronounced.

**Roleplaying Hints:** The world’s a scary place, but you’ve seen a lot of the worst it has to offer, and it hasn’t killed you yet. You’d rather avoid your problems altogether, but if something or someone threatens the people you care about, you’ll tear it to pieces. Speak softly, and act deferential to anyone of higher social standing — it might earn you a penny or two



(or at least avoid a kick), but take not one bit of guff from anyone on your level or lower.

You practically worship Maggie Maudlin, want to be just like the Sweep when you grow up, and have a little bit of a crush on Sir Alistair. Poor Wretch kind of scares you and makes you feel sad.

**Seeming:** Ogre

**Kith:** Gargantuan

**Court:** Spring

**Entitlements:** None

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 1, Investigation 2, Occult 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2 (Running), Brawl 3 (Protecting Loved Ones), Larceny 4 (Pickpocketing), Stealth 3

**Social Skills:** Empathy 2, Socialize 2 (Begging), Streetwise 3

**Merits:** Contacts (Beggars, Street Urchins) 2, Danger Sense, Hollow 2, Mantle (Spring) 1

**Willpower:** 4

**Clarity:** 7

**Virtue:** Faith

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 9

**Wyrd:** 1

**Contracts:** Fleeting Spring •, Smoke ••, Stone ••

**Pledges:** Motley Pledge

**Glamour/per Turn:** 10/1

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
Brawl	0(B)	—	4

## THE SWEEP

**Quotes:** “Oh, I’m quite sure we can come to some sort of arrangement.”

“Now then, little one, my proposal: I will dispose of the odious thing under your bed, and you in return will leave a cup of milk and three shillings in the fireplace every night for a month. Are we agreed?”

“It’s amazing what one can overhear from a chimney, isn’t it?”

**Virtue:** Charity. The Sweep genuinely feels for children afflicted by night terrors, real or imagined, and seldom turns away a child in distress even if he’s unlikely to get a Pledge out of it.

**Vice:** Greed. On the other hand, the Sweep has a fierce passion for collecting secrets, hidden knowledge, and other forbidden information. He’s also a sharp negotiator who doesn’t offer much in the way of pity or sympathy to those who don’t tug on his heartstrings.

**Background:** You were always a curious fellow, even in your mortal days. An itinerant servant (you can’t remember if you were a chimney sweep back then, or if you held some other profession that took you from wealthy household to wealthy household), you relished the social invisibility of the servant class and the scandalous truths it allowed you to overhear. It was that transgression that drew the attention of the Secret-Eater, a particularly loathsome Other who crawled eternally through the deep places of Faerie, seeking hidden knowledge that grew like fat, ripe fruits in the loamy soil. It made you into its scent-hound, forcing you to crawl through the impossibly tight tunnels in search of delicious secrets. By the time you found the secret of how to escape the Secret-Eater and kept it for yourself, your body had been twisted and your soul torn to rags, but you nonetheless found his way back to your precious London.

Arriving back in the city, you took up work as a chimney sweep — the tight, constricted tunnels were familiar to you, and slithering through the chimneys is a fine way to overhear all manner of private discussions. It also allowed you to discover the hidden, monstrous things that lurk in the shadows of a darkened townhouse, and to see the predations they inflicted upon the inhabitants. Some were fae, some decidedly other, but many of them preyed on the children of the houses — and that was something you found unconscionable. The secrets are still your passion, but when you can, you Pledge protection to those under the thrall of supernatural predation.

**Description:** You’re impossibly tall, and while some might call you “thin as a rail,” that implies a certain amount of rigidity that is wholly lacking in your gaunt frame. You are, in fact, nearly boneless, with long, slender fingers that



coil like worms and a bushy shock of wiry black hair on your head. Bright light hurts your eyes, so you wear smoked-glass spectacles on all but the darkest of nights. You dress simply and in tight-fitting garb — clothing ideally suited to crawling around chimneys, tunnels, and other tight spaces.

Your skin has a certain pallid, wormy quality to it, and your eyes are little more than wrinkled slits in your face. You tend to walk with a hunch, both to disguise your impressive height and because holding yourself upright is rather difficult with your rubbery physique. To mortals and those who cannot see through the Mask, you appear to be a tall, lanky man with pale, oddly wrinkled skin and eyes that squint so tightly they very nearly disappear.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You're ever so quiet — after all, no one wants to talk around a loud servant. To those you do address, you are unfailingly polite, even cheerful, but it's all about you getting the best deal for you out of the situation. When frightened children are involved, though, you soften and become considerably more sympathetic. Sometimes, when the terrors that bedevil a child are of the thoroughly mundane persuasion, you think about taking them away to safety — then you wonder how that makes you any better than your Keeper.

You tend to stay out of the way of intra-motley conflict; you tend to default to deferring to Maggie Maudlin. Loathly Liz fills you with a vague sadness — you wish someone like you had been there to help her. You're not wholly sure what to make of Poor Wretch — it's hard to know how to feel about someone who can be anyone. And you're just positive Sir Alistair has some delicious secrets rattling around in his mad, mad head.

**Seeming:** Darkling

**Kith:** Tunnelgrub

**Court:** Summer

**Entitlements:** None

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Investigation 3 (Supernatural Influence),  
Medicine 2, Occult 2

**Physical Skills:** Larceny 3, Stealth 4 (Skulking), Survival 1  
(Urban), Weaponry 1

**Social Skills:** Empathy 1 (Children), Intimidation 2,  
Persuasion 1

**Merits:** Fame (Children) 1, Harvest 3, Hollow 1, Mantle  
(Summer) 2

**Willpower:** 5

**Clarity:** 7

**Virtue:** Charity

**Vice:** Greed

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 7

**Wyrd:** 1

**Contracts:** Darkness ••, Hearth •, Smoke ••••

**Pledges:** Motley Pledge, Reaper's Pledge

**Glamour/per Turn:** 10/1

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
Brawl	0(B)	—	1
Knife	1(L)	—	4

## POOR WRETCH

**Quotes:** "Can't you help me? I'm afraid I've lost myself."

"I don't know... have we met before?"

"Shh... it'll be our little secret."

**Virtue:** Hope. Poor Wretch is a broken, shattered mind, but never gives up hope that the pieces might be stitched back together one day.

**Vice:** Gluttony. Sense memories seem to trigger vague flashes of Poor Wretch's old life, so the Darkling eagerly pursues new experiences whenever possible, even to the detriment of other aspects of life.

**Background:** You have no idea who you were before. Maybe you were a beggar, maybe you were a Peer of the Realm, or maybe you were a poor immigrant or a factory worker. Maybe you were white, or black, or hailed from one of the eastern colonies. For that matter, maybe you were a man, or maybe you were a woman. All you can remember clearly is a red rose on the snow in Covent Garden, a child's voice saying "Where are you going?" and Big Ben chiming three o'clock. Everything else was stripped away by the Willow Weaver, who surgically cut away chunks of who you were and replaced them with bits

and bobs from other mortals it had captured. It sought to make a mortal lover as versatile as one of the Others; in that it failed, for no mortal can hope to match the mad, fractious awe of the Gentry. Disgusted, it cast you into the Hedge, where your few remaining memories of home guided you back.

When you found London's society of changelings, you knew you wouldn't belong. They were all mad in their own little ways, to be sure, but you could feel the pity and revulsion they felt for you, you who lost so much more than they ever feared to lose. "Poor wretch," they murmured, and having nothing else to go by, you made that your name. Not until Maggie Maudlin and her ragtag motley of castoffs and brushed-asides found you running confidence games in the East End did you feel you truly belonged anywhere. It's an odd, patchwork-quilt sort of family, but somehow that suits you just fine.

**Description:** You're a little bit of everything to everybody. Your Mien constantly shifts in subtle ways — not enough to count as any kind of disguise, but noticeably; eye color, complexion, even number of teeth. You're average height and slim to the point of androgyny; your wardrobe does little to emphasize one gender over another, and in any case you have a ready supply of Hedgespun clothing suitable to either gender.

Even your Mask, while it lacks the constant changes of your true visage, is so utterly plain and unremarkable that mortals have a hard time remembering any significant details of your appearance.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You're a patchwork person, cobbled together from the dreams and memories of countless mortals abducted by the Willow Weaver. You have to exert significant mental effort to display a single, consistent personality; left to your own devices you drift wildly. Your accent wanders the whole of Britain and frequently beyond, as does your mood, in-



clination, and even gender. When you do put forth the effort, though, you can slip into nearly any persona near-perfectly. Sometimes a particular experience — maybe a smell, maybe a snatch of an old song or the sight of a dark-haired man — triggers a small flash of what you believe to be memory of your real self. You pursue those flashes with a fanatic's determination.

Your opinions of your motley-mates wander as well, though perhaps not as much as the rest of your personality. You're generally quite fond of Loathly Liz, and while you respect Maggie Maudlin a great deal, she also terrifies you. You privately suspect that the Sweep pities you, and that makes you hate him a little. You've occasionally been romantically involved with Sir Alistair while wearing a variety of forms. You hope that one day he figures out what he wants.

**Seeming:** Darkling

**Kith:** Mirrorskin

**Court:** Spring

**Entitlements:** None

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Occult 1, Politics 3

(Understanding Social Strata), Science 1 (Phrenology)

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Firearms 1, Larceny 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy 2, Expression 3, Socialize 2

(Uncovering Secrets), Subterfuge (Be Whoever They Want You To Be) 4

**Merits:** Barfly 1, Hollow 1, Mantle (Spring) 2

**Willpower:** 4

**Clarity:** 7

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Gluttony

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 7

**Wyrd:** 2

**Contracts:** Darkness •, Fleeting Spring •, Mirror •••

**Pledges:** Motley Pledge

**Glamour/per Turn:** 11/2

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
Brawl	0(B)	—	Chance
Pistol	2(L)	20/40/80	6

## SIR ALISTAIR NEVILLE-PRYCE

**Quotes:** "Now then, Doctor, you must tell me... am I doing this right? The pick goes just here, at the corner of the eye, yes?"

"Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor. Here's the cell, but where's the jailor?"

*"They tried to make me better. Now I shall return the favor."*

**Virtue:** Fortitude. Sir Alistair absolutely embodies the "stiff upper lip" philosophy so common to aristocratic British men of the age. If Bedlam could not break him, surely nothing can.

**Vice:** Wrath. Sir Alistair's bitterness toward the family that imprisoned him, the inmates who tormented him, and the doctors who "treated" him has grown to an all-consuming desire for vengeance. He feels he has been denied his rightful station in life, and will stop at nothing to regain it.

**Background:** You were born into a modestly wealthy noble family, with a title that stretched back to the Jacobite Risings. As the eldest, you inherited your father's title, and tried in all ways to be a dutiful son, but your grasping younger siblings sought to undermine you and steal your birthright. All they needed was the right scandal — which they found when they followed you to a bordello known to service those of a certain predilection. Sodomy is still a crime in Victorian England, and your younger brother John managed to have you arrested and committed to Bethlehem Royal Hospital.

You endured months of horrific "treatment" in the name of curing you of your deviancy, which instead drove you quite mad. Through the cracks in your fractured psyche, the King of Broken Mirrors crawled into this world and took you away to his shattered palace to be his heir (or perhaps his brother, or lover, or father — it was a d-ded strange place). When you finally escaped by mending the shattered palace, you found your way back to Bedlam — which no longer seemed the inescapable fortress it once had. You escaped easily, and have since made it your business to visit in kind the horrors you suffered upon those who inflicted them on you.

**Description:** Though you've fallen on hard times, the flower of British aristocracy still blooms in you. Your features are refined and masculine, your posture impeccable, and your



diction precise. Having come down in the world, you can no longer afford the lofty heights of fashion that you once followed, but you dress in the finest shabby-genteel garb you can manage. You are never without the tools of your revenge: a pair of gleaming steel lobotomy picks. You've become quite adept with them, and as soon as you can afford it you're considering having a set made of cold iron.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You are the upper class. Never let them forget that. You are the nobility, and that makes you better than just about everyone else. Comport yourself with dignity and maintain your composure. Speak precisely and to the point, and do not suffer fools gladly. Always remember that a great wrong has been done to you, and that only by your own cunning will that wrong be righted. Never pass up an opportunity to take your revenge, but remember that your motley has offered you succor when you needed it most; you owe them a debt, and a gentleman always repays his debts.

**Seeming:** Fairest

**Kith:** Bright One

**Court:** Autumn

**Entitlements:** None

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 1, Composure 1

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2 (Literature, Politics 2)

**Physical Skills:** Brawl 1, Stealth 3 (Ambushes), Weaponry (Lobotomy Picks) 3

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Intimidation 3 (Righteous Vengeance), Socialize 3, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Hollow 1, Mantle (Autumn) 2, Status (Aristocracy) 1

**Willpower:** 5

**Clarity:** 7

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 11

**Health:** 6

**Wyrd:** 2

**Contracts:** Dream ••, Hearth •, Vainglory ••

**Pledges:** Motley Pledge

**Glamour/per Turn:** 11/2

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
Brawl	0(B)	—	3
Lobotomy Pick	1(L)	—	7

## MAGGIE MAUDLIN

**Quotes:** "We are the hidden ones, you see. That is our gift, and also our burden. To be seen is to be seen."



*“I’ve a dream for that. Won’t cost you but a tuppence.”  
“You just listen to old Maggie. She’ll set it all right.”*

**Virtue:** Temperance. Maggie always considers every angle before she acts, and never lets her sentimentality get the better of her.

**Vice:** Pride. Maggie is wise, everybody knows that — especially Maggie herself.

**Background:** You were a coal baron’s daughter once — rich, but tainted by your connection to “trade” and “new money.” The aristocracy treated you with barely-contained disdain, the lower classes with outright envy. Despairing of finding a husband for you (and seeing that as the only worth to be found in a daughter), your father packed you off to a convent when you were 17. Prayer never came easily to you, though; you knew of no problems you couldn’t solve with your own two hands. When the Witch Maker took you from the garden one crisp winter night, you learned of one. The Witch Maker took you to her grotto and put you to work as her apprentice and assistant, forcing you to mix and measure and boil with exacting precision, lest her sorceries go awry. Any and every mistake was brutally punished, but you waited, you watched, and you learned. At last you learned enough to change the recipe of one of your Keeper’s potions: instead of conjuring a storm of winter ice, you conjured a storm of iron nails. You fled in the ensuing carnage with the screams of your Keeper ringing in your ears.

When you found your way home, you found the world much different than when you left. Patterns of occult connections seemed to be everywhere. Suddenly you understood how it all fit together and where it was all going — and always, always you could see the signs of the Others encroaching on the mortal world. You had the vision to see it, and you

had the occult knowledge to do something about it. All you needed was a motley with the right skills to help you.

**Description:** You’re small and slight, with too-large blue eyes and sharply-pointed ears. Your time in Faerie aged you beyond your years, and you walk with a hunched, shuffling gait. Years of breathing in the toxic fumes of your Keeper’s spell-work have left you with a thin, raspy voice that seems to be stolen by the slightest breeze. That suits you just fine — you enjoy the feeling of power you get when others have to quiet themselves and hunch down intently to hear your wisdom.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Your ultimate goal is to find a way to seal the Others away in Faerie forever. According to your prophecies, each of your fellow motley-mates has a key role to play in this quest, even if you don’t know exactly what that role is. So you keep them close and bide your time, waiting for the right portents to signal the beginning of your great work. In the meantime, you keep them alive as best you can, using your mystical knowledge to craft baubles and trinkets that you sell to those segments of the population that prefer a bit more secrecy than the Goblin Markets offer.

**Seeming:** Wizenod

**Kith:** Oracle

**Court:** Winter

**Entitlements:** None

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Crafts 3, Occult (Fae, Prophecy) 5

**Physical Skills:** Brawl 1 (Strangling), Larceny 1, Survival 2 (Urban)

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Expression 1, Intimidation 3, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Mantle (Winter) 1

**Willpower:** 4

**Clarity:** 7

**Virtue:** Temperance

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 4

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 8

**Health:** 8

**Wyrd:** 3

**Contracts:** Dream •••, Eternal Winter •, Fleeting Winter •

**Pledges:** Motley Pledge

**Glamour/per Turn:** 12/3

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Dice Pool
Brawl	0(B)	—	2
Cane	1(B)	—	2

# T

*he millennium crawls to an end.  
Queen Victoria has reigned for decades.  
The English Empire has touched every part of the globe.  
A surge of reason, technology, and literature  
enriches the lives of everyone,  
all for the small cost of class warfare, violent oppression,  
and a shocking loss of common decency.  
The world has never before  
so resembled the dreams of the Gentry.*

**Victorian Lost: A Maze of Smoke and Hedge** is a historical setting for **Changeling: The Lost**. This book contains information on the late Victorian Era, including both actual history and fanciful imaginings of this time. You'll find discussions of the occasionally violent tensions between the rich and the masses of the poor who worked in their factories and homes. This book also examines the competing visions of rural and urban life. Some saw the countryside as pure and cities as corrupt, while others viewed rural areas as ignorant and backwards, and cities as centers of progress and invention.

**This book includes:**

- Setting material and player and Storyteller advice for running Changeling games in the late Victorian Era.
- New and updated contract clauses, as well as two new kiths.
- A short serial for your chronicle, as well as a pre-generated Victorian motley: the Back Stairs Mob.

*For use with the  
World of Darkness Rulebook*



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