

DREAMS and NIGHTMARES™



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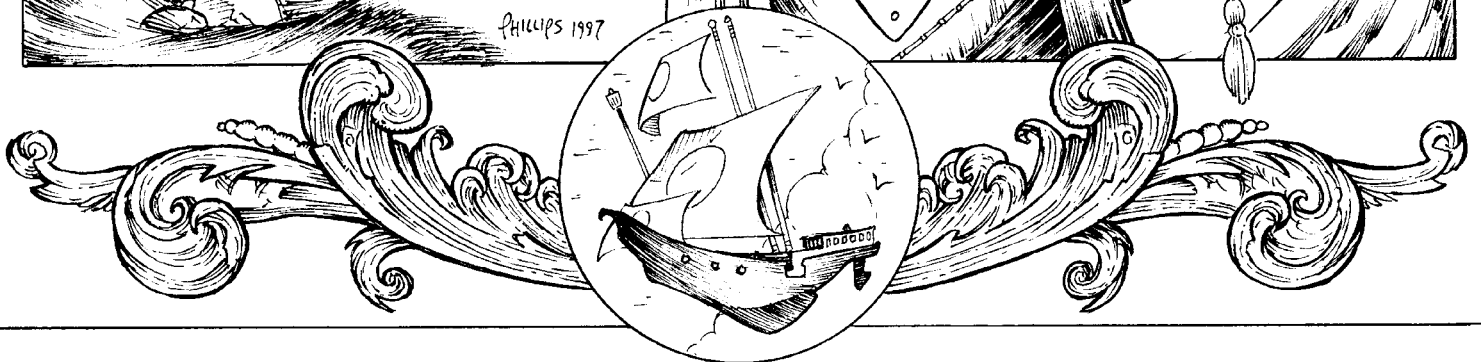
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INTRODUCTION: A GUIDE TO THE DREAMING

Magda gazed at her creation with a blend of appreciation and skepticism. It was a fine looking vehicle, to be sure, but she had her doubts. With as little time as she'd had to build the contraption with her other nocker friends, she just hoped it would hold together.

Mailanka grinned at her, his even teeth flashing brightly in contrast with his ebony skin. The eshu had a handsome smile, and Magda thought about whether or not she could sculpt a bust of him that was half as fair. Probably not, she decided.

"Well?" she asked, her coarse voice sending streamers of smoke from her cigar. "Are you planning on looking at the ship all day, or are you going to load it up properly?"

The eshu smiled again and gripped two of their bags in his muscular arms. "You've done a wonderful job, Magda. The Dreamcatcher is as fine a vessel as I've ever seen."

Magda wanted to swell with pride, but being a nocker she wouldn't allow herself the luxury. Instead, she glowered and huffed. "Save your praise until we see if the blasted thing is skyworthy. I don't want compliments on the looks of a ship, but on her performance."

The booming voice that answered her comments came from someone other than Mailanka. For a moment, Magda was afraid Bloody Nick had found them already. "If I doubted your ability, Magda, I'd have long since embarked on this quest." Magda turned to face Sven, as he hoisted a box of rations onto his shoulder. Sven grunted under the weight, which didn't surprise her; it had taken the combined efforts of Magda, Mailanka and Dmitri the satyr to push

the crate across the stone floor. "What did you put in here, Magda," Sven wheezed, "your anvil and forge?"

"No. Just the forge. I figured the anvil might be too heavy." Sven stared at her with wide eyes, until she shook her head. "I'm joking. It's extra sails and a keg of elderberry wine. The sails because you can't be too careful and the wine just because." Magda almost made a comment about waiting for Mug to show up, but she cleared her throat instead. Mumpoker Uruisig Gruaghan, Mug to his friends, was well ahead of them, wandering in the Dreaming and searching for the cure to Lady Amelia's illness.

Bloody Nick had done his work well when he cursed the Lady. Her pallor was almost as bad as a sluagh's, and her skin was even clammy. Magda had sat by her side, along with a dozen other changelings, waiting for Mug to return with the cure for what ailed Amelia. They'd already been waiting for six long days.

Magda turned away from everyone else, wanting no one to see her at the verge of tears. Mug was only a redcap, and Lady Amelia was a bit stuffy for her usual tastes, but both were Magda's friends, and she wanted to keep them around for a long, long time. Absent friends were the worst possible sort of friends to have. Amelia's only hope lay in finding the Cup of Einhorn, which could cure any poison, no matter how foul. And as for Mumpoker...well, he might just be beyond hope. Almost no one ever came back after leaving a trod. The Dreaming was too dangerous, too unpredictable, for that.

And then there was Mortimer the sluagh. No one would have known what had happened to Mug if it hadn't been for Mortimer. Magda had never really cared for the pale changeling — until he'd proved his worth. Against all odds, he'd returned from an encounter with Bloody Nick and his gang of Unseelie fiends — only a little worse for wear, but greatly saddened at the loss of his friend Mug.

Mug was a rarity in the world, a Seelie redcap. Unfortunately for him, Bloody Nick and his bully boys were redcaps too. They considered themselves “proper” redcaps and took the idea of a Seelie member of their kith as a personal insult. When Mortimer had returned to the freehold, he'd been wounded and weak. His pale skin had been blotched with red and black bruises so deep, they looked as if he had been struck with cold iron. Despite his pain, he'd told the story of how Mug learned that Bloody Nick was behind Lady Amelia's illness: In typical fashion, the redcap had beaten the truth out of an ogre working with Bloody Nick. From what Mortimer said, that fight alone had cost Mug dearly. Still, he hadn't waited for reinforcements. He'd gone after Bloody Nick on his own. Mortimer had trailed behind Mug, barely able to keep up with the injured redcap.

It'd taken Mug half a day more to learn that Bloody Nick was in the Dreaming, anticipating the outcome of his schemes and celebrating with his cohorts. Some time ago, Amelia, by thwarting Nick's plan to frame Mug for a murder Nick had committed himself, had injured the redcap's pride. Nick had a tendency to remember past wrongs.

Mug disappeared for three days, and people began to talk. Some claimed he'd finally succumbed to his baser instincts and joined the Unseelie camp; some believed he was responsible for Amelia's illness. Even Magda had begun to question where his loyalties lay, a fact that filled her with a deep shame.

Mortimer returned around the time Lord Erin was contemplating what to do about Mug. The sluagh recounted Mug's pursuit of his own kith into the Dreaming and how a pooka in Bloody Nick's gang had convinced the redcap to leave the trod, which the pooka had claimed was a trap. Mortimer had tried to call out a warning, but his voice was too soft for Mug to hear. Before Mortimer could get closer, Bloody Nick's cronies had attacked to prevent the sluagh from warning Mug. The broken bones and wounds on Mortimer's body were mute testimony to what the redcaps had done when they'd discovered the sluagh. Only a few dozen steps away from the shimmering Silver Road, Mug had vanished from sight. Moments later, Bloody Nick himself had shown up. All Mortimer could say was that the Unseelie redcap wasn't happy with what had happened to Mug. He'd been wanting to whittle Mug down to size, and hated losing the chance to do so. While Nick roared his anger at the fools who'd let Mug fall away into the Dreaming, Mortimer had managed to make good his escape.

And now, Magda and four others, all friends of Mug's, were departing aboard a hastily built chimerical ship to find the redcap and the Cup of Einhorn.



Magda started when a hand touched her shoulder and pulled her from contemplation. The hand was strong, warm and comfort-

ing. She'd been lost in thought. Forgetting her usually gruff façade, Magda patted Mailanka affectionately on his hand.

“We're ready to go, Magda.”

“No time like the present. Let's get this show on the road.” She turned and walked up the gangplank. She stepped aboard The Dreamcatcher and allowed herself a twinge of pride at the gentle rocking of the airborne vessel. It'd taken five nockers to build the ship so quickly, but the design was all Magda's and her pride was warranted. The sleek, elegant ship bobbed ever so slightly with her steps. “I'm glad you decided to come along, Mailanka. I've only been beyond the Near Dreaming a few times.”

The eshu smiled, as an almost dazed look clouded his eyes. “I've been countless times, Magda. But it's always different. Don't count on me to guide you safely. I can't make any promises about my abilities. The Dreaming is ever-changing — and no two visits are ever the same.”

Magda looked at the eshu, and at the faces beyond his. Dmitri smiled whimsically, already expecting a fabulous adventure. Sven stared out at the sky beyond the freehold, his face unreadable. Walter the boggan smiled nervously, but even his worried mind didn't stop him from polishing the wooden railing with an oiled cloth. Some things are simply second nature.

Magda forced confidence into her voice as she tried to swallow her doubts about whether she could captain The Dreamcatcher. “What are we waiting for? There's people to save and sights to see. Let's be about it!”

Mailanka released the mooring ropes, and the ship began to rise into the air. The warm, scented breeze of the Near Dreaming began to fill the sails of the chimerical ship and pushed her deeper into the world of Myth.

Magda watched the dock where they'd moored the ship and the distant entrance to the freehold beyond grow smaller, and she wondered what lay ahead.

An Introduction to the Dreaming

I just closed my eyes again
climbed aboard the Dream Weaver's train.
Help me to get away from my worries of the day
help me forget today's pain
— Gary Wright, “Dream Weaver”

When we were children, the Dreaming was always near. We knew, with complete and utter conviction, that there were monsters hiding under the bed and lurking in our closets. We knew that Santa Claus was coming to bring us gifts, even when we weren't quite as good as we should have been. We knew that Halloween would bring us candy and scares, and that, somewhere out there, the real monsters were moving through the night, waiting to catch us alone in the chill of an Autumn evening.

As we grow older, the Dreaming becomes less real. The beastie hiding in the closet is only the floorboards settling.

Santa is a lovely fantasy, but he brings gifts only to children. Halloween is a fabulous excuse for a party, a chance to throw eggs at doors or toilet-paper the home of the old biddy down the street who always scowls when she sees you...and maybe a chance to steal a kiss while pretending to be someone you forgot you were going to be when you grew up. Paychecks, taxes, bills and the remnants of half-forgotten wishes litter the road ahead of us and behind. Somewhere along the way, we forget the best parts, except when we're feeling sentimental over a lukewarm beer. The Easter Bunny isn't quite as exciting as a first kiss, and the feel of a lover's caress takes the place of a chill brought on by strange noises in the darkness.

We forget.

But the Dreaming still remembers.

Every imaginary friend a lonely child ever had wanders lost in the Dreaming and wonders just what went wrong. All of them long for a reunion with those special someones who gave their existence meaning. The personification of endless millions of fantasies are there as well: The Girl Next Door every boy pined for is in the Dreaming, perhaps keeping company with the Handsome Prince who was supposed to take some girl away from a world that no longer held the promise it had in the "the good old days" of her youth.

Every childhood fear is there. The clown doll you had when you were seven is waiting with knowing eyes and a grin that promises secret terrors. The dog that bit you when you were five is lurking in the confectionery grasses, and he's several times bigger than you remember. The bully who took your lunch money is still waiting to collect a few debts. The faceless thing that slithered between your floorboards and scratched at your window late at night is also in the Dreaming. Then there's the shadowy form from the closet, still watching you when no one else is around.

The Dreaming remembers, and it waits with bated breath.

Just what is the Dreaming? The Dreaming is an entity created by the minds of people everywhere. The Dreaming is a realm where every wish is a reality and every fear is a certainty. It's a place that shouldn't exist but manages to be real just the same: a place powered by the minds of every living being, a world of its own, where legends still walk and demons are real. The Dreaming is the chaotic landscape of the collective unconscious, haunted by wishes for pleasure and vengeance, peopled by the stuff of myth and outlawed by the beliefs of the masses.

Mortals visit the Twilight Realm when they sleep, adding to the rich textures that exist in this irreality. But even when awake, humans can add to the power of the Dreaming. While





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mortals can't consciously visit the Dreaming, their hopes, desires, dreads, and doubts all fuel the power of the Mythic Realm. Even a mortal's daydreams affect the Dreaming, though their impact is far less substantial. Mortal dreams created the Dreaming in the first place. From the first fears of lightning that our distant ancestors suffered, to the hopes that, one day, humanity may expand beyond the Earth and visit the stars, every mortal longing and fretful doubt adds to the potency of the Dreaming.

The Dreaming is a place where no human can physically set foot without assistance, despite the powerful influence human minds have upon the landscape. Much of the Dreaming changes constantly, a rough sea of turbulent, chaotic transformation without end. Here, chimera are born, often dying within seconds. The fortunate ones escape from these great Spawning Fields and move to more stable areas of the Dreaming. Some even flee into the mortal world. Although changelings have studied the Spawning Fields, they have no real concept of exactly why these areas exist.

There was a time, long ago, when the Dreaming was a part of the world and, simply by existing, it made the Earth a better place. Human rationality changed all that. There were some among the first humans who feared the unknown and sought to define what they could not explain. The world was reconfigured by written words and laws. The dragons and factories were forced into the Dreaming. The world separated into Realms of Myth and Flesh. Changelings and mortals dwell in the world of Flesh — the mundane world, where fact is fact and fantasy is a "waste of time." The Dreaming is the world of Myth, where dreams are reality, and reality is a passing whimsey. The two worlds are asunder now, divided by beliefs and structured lives, by the conviction that dreams are only for children. This cataclysmic event was so powerful that the Dreaming itself actually shattered into smaller fragments, known to most as the Dream Realms.

But the Dreaming is hardly without power. When we sleep, we dream. And when we dream, we touch the Dreaming. There is no escape. The Dreaming is inevitable, and when in its grasp, mortals are truly powerless.

For the changelings, the Dreaming is a place of wonders remembered and revisited. The Mythic Realm is a place of power. Changelings carry a piece of the Dreaming within their very souls and are connected to this realm of fantasy in ways that mere humans can never comprehend.

The Kithain walk with one foot in the Realm of Flesh and one in the Realm of Myth. For changelings, the Dreaming is always available. They dress in clothes made of the stuff of dreams and are empowered by the Dreaming's essence. Changelings call this dream essence Glamour, and it is what sets them apart from the humans among whom they dwell. Glamour is the very energy of dreams. It is as real as the changelings want it to be, and it is their tool to use. With Glamour, Kithain can create anything, provided they understand how to use the Dreamstuff.

Chimerical Reality

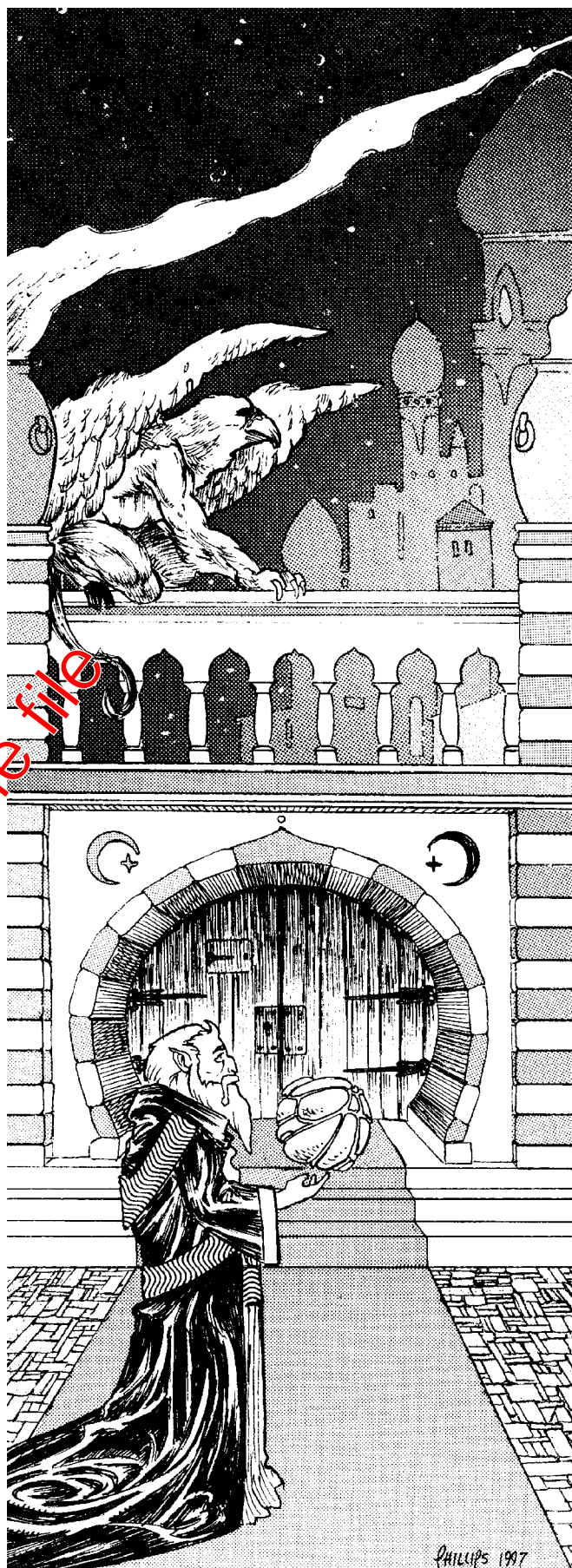
Glamour infuses every part of a changeling's life, from helping him remember his faerie nature to altering his perceptions of a world too grim for changelings to face without the aid of dreams. The world seen by changelings is actually the same world mortals see every day. The difference is simply their ability to see the chimerical trappings that are invisible to mortal eyes. Mortals see gray office buildings and traffic-jammed streets. To changelings, those same cityscapes can appear as towering castles filled with colorful wagons. A crumbling, abandoned house becomes the majestic manor home of a baron, complete with chimerical guardians. The power of Glamour is strong enough that some changelings start to suffer from the challenge of separating Myth and Flesh. They are torn by the difficulties of being stuck between their two worlds. This insanity is called Bedlam.

Chimera

Chimerical creations are as much a staple in the lives of the Kithain as food and water. Where there are changelings, there are bound to be inventions of the imagination made real. Fantastic suits of armor that defy the laws of physics, books that speak when spoken to, elegant clothes that shimmer with hints of a thousand unguessed colors: All are a part of chimerical reality for the Kithain. These items are real only for beings who can sense and experience the Dreaming and its power. But for those rare and precious few, the items are very real indeed. What is commonly perceived as a simple static wagon can easily become a chariot of gold with wheels of fire in the hands of a skilled Dreamsmith.

Weapons of fantastic capability are crafted from Dreamstuff and powered by Glamour. Legendary weapons from history remain lost to the real world, but they still exist within the depths of the Dreaming. Chimerical swords capable of cleaving steel and arrows sharp enough to pierce a dragon's heart are available to the changelings. Wonders await all who have the eyes to see them and the courage to defy Banality and touch them.

Chimerical creatures are entities in their own right, capable of feelings and thoughts both vile and pure. In most cases, chimera live in the Dreaming, where they can dwell for all eternity. Whether brought about by someone's wishes or simply having existed for countless eons, chimera are a part of the Dreaming and, thus, of every changeling's world. Sometimes, perhaps because they've grown too curious or because they seek the forbidden fruit of the mortal world, chimera fight through the Mists of Forgetfulness that separate Flesh and Myth, and are born again in the world they once knew — or the world they've simply longed to know. Once here, they must maintain the Glamour that gives them flesh by feeding on the stuff of dreams, lest they fade into nothingness. Their struggle to survive is as primal as that of anyone who suddenly finds herself drowning in a dark pool of water: Chimera will do anything to continue breathing, even if it sometimes means they must kill.



Dreamers and the Dreaming

The Dreaming is alive, make no mistake about that. But the life it has is not quite like anything else in existence. The Dreaming is not sentient, nor can it ever become sentient. Instead, it is a primal pool of emotions. All colors, tastes, sounds and scents are more intense in the Mythic Realm, and so are feelings. Anger is intensified, and here it is a raging inferno, rather than a candle's flame.

There are no restraints on people when they dream, and waking fantasies are also without limit. Anything is possible, and nothing is sacred. Dreamers can't control what occurs in their slumber, though many have tried. Their preconceived notions of self-control are useless while they sleep, and even the most restrained of them has no choice but to surrender to the chaos of dreams.

The very liberation of Dreamers' minds is the truest force of the Dreaming. It is the source of all power for the Dreaming and one reason for the Dreaming's constant state of metamorphosis. There are very few stable locations within the Dream Realms; most of what a changeling sees there on one visit is either gone or has moved to another location by the time she passes through again. The main reason for this flux is that dreams change over

time: not only the ambitions and fears of Dreamers, but the very things of which they dream.

During certain times of the year — especially in the Near Dreaming — the thoughts of sleeping humans turn toward special holidays, such as Christmas and Halloween (to choose two Western examples). In any part of the world, as human minds drift closer to such special occasions, certain aspects of the Near Dreaming become flavored by the approaching holiday. Many Kithain enjoy chimerical fireworks in the Dreaming as the celebration of Independence Day nears. By the same token, many childlings take special pleasure from entering the Near Dreaming as Christmas approaches, because they know that Santa Claus often leaves packages filled with wonderful chimerical creations. (Grumps often give warnings about such toys, many of which have a life of their own, and not all of them are user friendly. Parental anxieties about whether or not a toy is safe for a child to play with have lately led to rather serious problems in the Dreaming.) Valentine's Day, in the Dreaming, is a favored time for satyrs everywhere, for obvious enough reasons. Halloween is always interesting in the Near Dreaming, and many a sidhe knight goes hunting for chimerical monsters spawned as Samhain draws closer. In every season, there are special occasions, and for every occasion, there is a least one unusual and repetitive occurrence



in the Near Dreaming. In this way, Dreamers actually have an influence over the Dreaming, though they are (for the most part) entirely unaware that the realm even exists.

The Dreams of Children

Children occasionally catch glimpses of chimerical reality at the age before “rational thinking” interferes. True, youngsters can seldom communicate their Dreaming experiences clearly enough to make their doting parents aware of these “visions,” but they do sometimes see the Dreaming. Their dreams also have a more profound impact on the Near Dreaming than other humans’ dreams. Anxieties and hopes are usually far more primal for children than they are for adults. Young minds are unencumbered by the realities of the mundane, and Banality hasn’t yet managed to take hold in their hearts and minds. Some believe that children are a primary reason for the chaotic changes that take place in the Dreaming, whenever the shimmering Firchlis rushes through the Mythic Realms and shifts everything around, warping the Dreamscape. The Firchlis alters most things there, but some remain the same, regardless of the sudden changes. There are almost always things of beauty in even the darkest parts of the Dreaming, because children still believe in miracles. There are always unpleasant surprises in even the most fabulous places within the Mythic World, because every child has a special fear of the unknown.

The Dreaming and the Insane

There are those mortal minds that simply can’t take the pressures of the mundane world, and sometimes, during the course of life, these minds twist and fragment. The lives of the insane are a perpetual torment of fantasy pleasures and imaginary pains, of biting rage and deep depression. Just as with children, the insane have a powerful effect on the Near Dreaming. When clustered together in asylums, they can have an especially terrifying impact on the Mythic World: The most dangerous of chimera often frequent areas where the mad are gathered. Creatures of unspeakable rage are formed from their dreams, and these beasts are often more feral than redcaps on a rampage. Most disturbing of all, these chimera typically seek wandering Kithain, are drawn to them, in fact, like moths to flame. Many have wondered why chimerical monsters created by the insane are so fascinated by changelings, but no solid answers have ever come forth, as these chimera seldom bother to explain themselves before attacking. The most commonly held belief is that the beasts seek to destroy the inherent child-like qualities of changelings, something the chimera themselves can’t achieve. Another common theory is that knowledge of the Dreaming and of changelings is what drove some of these mortals’ over the edge, and this sort of lashing out is an attempt at retribution. Whatever the case, most Kithain tend to avoid areas of the Near Dreaming where the mad have influence.

Changelings and Dreams

Many believe the Kithain have their origins in the dreams of mortals, that the fae were birthed from early desires and fears, when the world was still young. Perhaps for that reason,

they are connected to the Dreaming, but not necessarily to dreams themselves. It’s not uncommon for a changeling in the Dreaming to come in contact with an actual manifestation of a sleeping mortal’s dream. People who are heavily stressed or are feeling particularly powerful emotions can have their dreams manifest completely. Although a few very gifted fae can influence the dreams of sleeping humans — can actually control dreams and change their course — they are exceedingly rare.

However, while in the Dreaming, changelings can take what they desire from a mortal dream in the form of chimerical items. If, while passing through a dream, a changeling should happen upon an elegant cloak or a sword, it takes nothing more than the slightest effort for him to reach out and retrieve the item he sees. This action has absolutely no effect on the dream itself, and even though the Kithain might now hold the cloak in his hand, the cloak in the dream remains unaltered. This ability even extends to sentient parts of dreams, but the risks are extreme when pulling a person from a dream into the Dreaming proper. Because dreams tend to change, and the “roles” of people in dreams change too, what appeared, at first, to be an innocent young lovely for a satyr to woo can easily become a multitentacled chimera with a serious attitude problem, should a pleasant dream become a nightmare.

Any objects a changeling takes from a dream remain solid and real, so long as they remain in the Dreaming. Leaving the Dreaming means losing items she’s chosen as her own, unless she invests them with her own Glamour to maintain their solidity in the Flesh World.

Stable Points in the Dreaming

There are places in the Dreaming that simply don’t change in any noticeable ways. Most often, these stable points are found in the Near Dreaming and are situated in areas where cities, towns and freeholds exist. Changes do take place in these areas but are seldom major. The transformations are so small and so slow that few ever notice them. Most of these areas are connected, even today, by trods.

Spawning Fields

Spawning Fields are dangerous places under the best of circumstances. These chaotic oceans of pure Glamour are direct, one-way connections between the Dreaming and the mortal world. Chimera are born constantly within these fountains of power and often die quickly. Spawning Fields appear seemingly at random within the Near Dreaming and vanish just as capriciously.

Some changelings speculate that Spawning Fields may be direct conduits to Arcadia. A few have even tried entering these places in the hopes of finding a way to return to the faerie homeland, but most who follow this route never return, and the ones who do are drastically altered. Exactly what the energies of the Spawning Fields do to changelings remains a mystery;

however, it is known that these forces somehow “burn away” changelings’ mortal seemings, which leaves them little more than sentient chimera, unable ever to leave the Dreaming.

Banality and the Dreaming

The Dreaming is the antithesis of Banality. Changelings who’ve spent too much time among humans and are suffering from Banality often enter the Dreaming in order to cleanse themselves of their accumulated Banality. The good news is, it works. After a short time in the Dreaming, Banality fades from the Kithain. The bad news is, it sometimes works too well. Extended stays in the Dreaming can lead to Bedlam.

The very essence of the Dreaming extinguishes the darkness of Banality. Banality simply can’t exist for very long within the overwhelming influence of the Mythic Realms. However, while it exists, changelings under its influence can have unusual effects on the Dreaming. Trods weaken in their presence, as do chimera.

The Dreaming typically responds to Banality as the human body does to a cancer or infection. While the Dreaming’s most common response to Banality is simply to make it more difficult for the changeling to enter the Mythic Realm, in some extreme cases, the Dreaming sends powerful chimera to attack the banal target — much like the way the human body sends white blood cells to fight off invaders. Sometimes, the Dreaming itself responds, turning pleasant landscapes into frightening nightmare realities filled with gale force winds and torrential rains, hail the size of trolls’ heads and lightning that incinerates whatever it touches. Unfortunately, the Dreaming is not very discriminating in its attacks, and anyone around the banal target is likely to suffer its ire as well.

Cold Iron

Cold Iron cannot, under normal circumstances, enter the Dreaming. Most Kithain would never consider even trying to bring this banal material with them into the Dreaming, as they understand that the effect on their one refuge from the mundane world could be extremely damaging.

There is one recorded exception: Toward the end of World War One, a French Dauntain, convinced that bringing iron into the Dreaming would end the scourge that had ruined his life, managed to smuggle an iron crowbar into the Dreaming through means unknown. The effects were immediate. The Near Dreaming around Versailles, where the hapless fool executed his plan, was vaporized, and throughout the Mythic Realms, storms the likes of which the Dreaming had never experienced exploded into existence. The backlash from the contact obliterated more than a dozen freeholds in France and other parts of Europe, as well as everyone inhabiting those holds. The Dauntain, too, was destroyed. If he has ever incarnated again, no one knows of it. Incidentally, the iron crowbar was forcibly expelled back into the world of Flesh and has since become a much coveted talisman among certain groups of Dauntain. Some blame several new sleeping disorders on the Dauntain and his crowbar. His name remains unknown, else it would surely be used in stories to frighten childlings.

The Dreaming’s Effect on Banality

Banality is the contraposition of the Dreaming. When the two meet, something has to give. While in the Dreaming, the something that normally fades, at least in the case of changelings, is Banality.

Over the course of time, the Dreaming cleanses a Kithain’s body of Banality. This process is a slow one, though changelings notice the difference almost immediately. For every day a changeling spends in the Dreaming, he loses one temporary point of Banality, up to 9 points. After that, the loss of Banality becomes a much slower process.

Banality seems to build a resistance to the Dreaming’s purifying effects. A permanent point of Banality takes no less than a year before it begins to fade. Once broken down, however, the remaining temporary points drop away at a rate of one per month.

The next permanent point won’t be affected by the Dreaming until a full five years are spent in the Dreaming, after which the remaining temporary points fade at a rate of one per year. The next permanent point takes 10 years in the Dreaming, and so on.

Banality is inevitable, but its influence is weakened while in the Dreaming. However, even being in the Dreaming isn’t enough to remove all Banality from a character. No matter how low a character’s Banality drops, the effects of the Dreaming cannot reduce her Banality to nothing. There always remains the seed of Banality, a dark shadow that flickers in the heart of the changeling.

Only extremely powerful items or the most grueling quests can remove the final traces of Banality from a changeling. (See the *Immortal Eyes* trilogy of fiction or the adventures by the same name for details on one artifact powerful enough to remove all traces of Banality from a character). The effects of so many lifetimes away from the Mythic Realm are hard to erase.

While the Mists of Forgetfulness do aid in cleansing mortals of their Banality, the effects on humans last only as long as the individual is within the Dreaming. Once separated from the Mythic World and the Mists’ influences, all Banality accrued by a human returns to him.

The Mists of Forgetfulness

The Dreaming protects Itself. Whereas the waking world is altered by the will of humans, the Dreaming refuses to suffer the same fate. Once, long ago, the Shattering caused irreparable harm to the Mythic Realm. The damage occurred because the Dreaming simply couldn’t conceive of the Shattering or its consequences. Since that time, the Dreaming has learned from its mistakes. Immediately after the separation of Myth and Flesh, the Dreaming created the Mists: a barrier that continues



to grow stronger as the centuries pass. These walls of heavy fog serve as a buffer between the Dreaming and the waking world. They shelter the Dreaming from undue influences and protect it from all who would intrude. The Mists, simply put, numb the mind of anyone who could cause the Dreaming serious harm.

More than just a way to erase the memories of trespassers, the Mists of Forgetfulness are a powerful defense against Banality. All who breathe the Mists, or even feel the Mists touch their flesh, absorb the Dreaming's energies. Those energies dampen a mind's disbelief in the fantastic and make it more prone to accept what it perceives. The process starts as soon as a mortal or Kithain enters the Dreaming; the deeper one travels into the Mythic Realm, the more profound are the effects. For mortals, this effect is reversed upon leaving the Dreaming. For the Kithain, who are a part of the Dreaming in ways far beyond mortal comprehension, the benefits remain.

But the Mists of Forgetfulness work in both directions. Just as they shield a changeling from Banality, they remove the memories of the Deep and Far Dreaming, protecting from any possible human influence the most powerful aspects of the realm.

As the Dreaming protects itself, it also protects the Kithain. Changelings who enter the Mythic Realm beyond the Near

Dreaming are granted back a part of themselves that is locked away while they dwell in the mundane world. Changelings become more fae and less mortal the deeper into the Dreaming they journey, and as they leave they once again lose those aspects that would surely be crushed by the mortal world's Banality. The process simply inverts the one whereby the longer she remains apart from the influences of Glamour, the more she becomes a mere mortal.

Otherwhere

Some changelings believe they understand the cosmos in all its glory. They believe that the universe and all its dimensions are laid out in ways that don't quite mesh with what other supernaturals believe is accurate. The descriptions below reflect what the Kithain believe is the truth. Mages, wraiths and Garou would scoff at these concepts. In truth, all the supernaturals are partially right, and they are all partially ignorant of the greater truths and mysteries of the universe.

More than merely to separate the Mythic from the Flesh, the Shattering actually broke the Mythic into countless pieces. Some of these fragments are little more than wisps of dream that flicker and fade. Other fragments are far more stable,