

Your Journey Begins Here

Like most people, you've probably had the sense — at least once — that things were not right with the world and that not everything was as it seemed. You've felt that sinister truths hid behind a façade of normality, veiled partially by the rational, orderly “natural laws” we call science. And when night falls, when the shadows grow long and the wind whistles through the trees, you shudder and remember the truths of your ancestors, who were right to fear the dark. You've just entered the World of Darkness, a world very much like our own, save that the shadows hide very real monsters (though most people fool themselves into believing it isn't so).

In **Changeling: The Lost**, the fifth Storytelling game set in the World of Darkness, you and your friends tell the story of some of these monsters, namely men and women who had their lives stolen from them, men and women who were enslaved and changed into something not fully human. They struggle to make a new life for themselves in a world of promises and dreams. Though they can control the thoughts and dreams of others as a maestro conducts an orchestra, their new existence is not an idealized fairy tale.

Kidnapped into slavery by the True Fae, your changelings escaped back through the Hedge, the magical barrier between our world and Faerie, to find that they do not fit into the mortal world. No longer having a place in the world, but not wishing to return to Arcadia, they are caught between the two, forever balancing the dual nature of their existence.

The life of a changeling is full of fear and uncertainty. Her Keeper could return at any moment, or the fetch left behind in her place could hunt her down, seeking to secure its place in mortal society. She is surrounded by deceit and illusion, and only the elaborate system of oaths and pledges she crafts around herself keeps her safe from the Others and their changeling allies.

THE GAME

Changeling is a Storytelling (or roleplaying) game. In it, a group of players cooperates to tell a story. Each player takes on the role of a single changeling, except for the Storyteller. This player essentially takes on every other role, describing the world to the other players, acting out the parts of other characters and determining what challenges the players' characters face. Players roll dice to determine if their characters

can overcome the challenges before them. In a typical exchange, the Storyteller describes the scene in which the players' characters find themselves. (“You rise from a night's rest in the small shack on the outskirts of town you use as a hideout. A scratching at the door tells you someone is trying to get in. What do you do?”) The players then describe their characters' actions, usually in the first person. (“I sneak up to the door and look through the peep hole.”) The Storyteller then describes the results of the action, going back and forth until the scene is resolved. Dice are rolled when players have their characters try things that aren't guaranteed success. Jumping out of a moving car without getting hurt would require a dice roll; leaving a stationary one wouldn't.

This booklet contains everything you and four of your friends will need to play your first game of **Changeling**, except for some pencils and paper (for notes) and several 10-sided dice (these specialty dice are available in most hobby shops and are sometimes called “d10”). Those of you who are going to be players should read over the character backgrounds in the back of this booklet and choose the one you want to play. The Storyteller should read the rest of the booklet in preparation before playing.

THE RULES

Changeling uses a set of rules called the Storytelling System. Many of the rules are introduced in the scenario proper or on the character sheets (special powers and so on), but there are a few basics to go over first.

- **Rolling Dice:** When rolling dice in the Storytelling System, you do not add the numbers together. Instead any single die that comes up 8 or better is considered a success. You usually only need one success to accomplish a task, but more is always better (causing more damage in combat, for example). Any die that comes up a “0” (considered a 10) counts as a success and can be rolled again (and potentially get another success). If you roll no successes at all, your character has failed that action.

- **Dice Pools:** The number of dice you roll to attempt something is called your dice pool. It is usually made up of the total of two traits on your character sheet (one Attribute and one Skill) and modifiers imposed by any special equipment your character uses or adverse conditions.

THE CHARACTER SHEET

- **Modifiers:** The Storyteller determines what modifiers apply to any dice pool. These either add to, or subtract from, the dice pool (the number of dice rolled). These modifiers usually come from tools used (a bonus is listed with the tool), Merits that the character has (described in the character description), or general circumstances. The Storyteller should grant or impose a bonus or penalty (usually ranging from +2 to -2) if the circumstances are especially favorable or deleterious. For example, an attempt to climb a wall that is slick with rain and slime would suffer a -2 penalty, whereas doing so on one with plentiful handholds and ledges would gain a +2.

- **Chance Die:** If modifiers reduce your dice pool to zero dice (or even less), you should roll a single die (called a chance die). A 10 rolled on a chance die generates a single success, while any other result is a failure. Rolling a 1 on a chance die indicates a dramatic failure, and the Storyteller should describe especially troublesome results (a gun jamming, a blowout during a car chase, etc.).

- **Actions:** Almost anything a character does is considered a *simple action*. You determine the dice pool, roll the dice, and see if you succeed or fail. In combat you can perform one simple action per turn.

Sometimes, you'll be asked to take an *extended action*, which represents doing something over a period of time, like researching something in a library or searching a room. In this case, every time you roll the dice represents a fixed amount of time (usually 15 minutes, but it varies for some more involved actions). You accumulate successes from roll to roll until you get a certain number (described in the text), at which point something happens, or you run out of time.

Some actions can also be *contested*, which means that two people are working against each other, such as in an arm-wrestling match, or when a character tries to sneak past a watchful guard. In a contested action, each player (or the player and the Storyteller) rolls the dice pool for their character and the person with the most successes wins.

Finally, some actions are *reflexive*, which means that they happen automatically and don't take up any time—you can perform them and still perform a simple action in that turn.

- **Turns and Scenes:** A *turn* is a 3-second period and is used in combat. A *scene* is a longer period (usually as long as it takes for everyone to do what they want in a particular place). Some changeling powers function for a single turn, while others last the whole scene.

This booklet contains character sheets for the five characters that players will use in “Dwelling in Darkness.” These sheets contain all the game numbers that define a character's capabilities, divided into a variety of types of traits. Most traits are rated from one dot (•) to five dots (•••••), much like a star rating system for movies. Different traits represent different things:

- **Attributes** represent inherent capabilities, such as Strength, Intelligence or Presence.

- **Skills** represent learned abilities, like Firearms or Medicine. A word or phrase in parentheses next to a Skill indicates a Specialty, an area of the overall Skill in which the character is particularly talented. If you are asked to roll a dice pool in which your character doesn't have the right Skill, you suffer a penalty of either -1 (for a missing Physical or Social Skill) or -3 (for a missing Mental Skill). If, on the other hand, you have a relevant specialty in the Skill in your dice pool, you get a +1 modifier.

- **Health** determines how wounded your character is, and it has both dots and points. Your character's dots are filled in on your character sheet, and they represent the total number available to him when he is uninjured. His Health points are recorded in the corresponding boxes, denoting his current state of health. (See “Health and Damage” for how to mark off Health points and the effects of wound penalties.)

- **Willpower** represents your character's reserves. You can spend one point (and one point only) of Willpower on any roll, and you get three additional dice in your dice pool. Alternatively, you can spend a point to raise your Defense trait by two against a single attack. Willpower is valuable, and you regain it only for acting in accordance with your character's **Virtue** and **Vice** (see individual character descriptions). It is ranked from 1 to 10, unlike most of the other traits.

- **Wyrd** represents the inherent power of the character's supernatural nature. It's a representation of how intimately they are tied to the magic of Arcadia.

- **Glamour:** This is the amount of supernatural energy currently in a changeling's system. Characters spend Glamour on various things from activating powers to enhancing their own supernatural natures.

- **Contracts** are special changeling powers, which are explained in the characters' descriptions.

- **Merits** are special edges a character has, such as Contacts or Resources or Stunning Looks. The effects of each are explained in the character's description.

• **Defense** and **Initiative Modifier** are traits used in combat and are explained in that section.

• **Speed** is the number of yards a character can move in one combat turn and still perform an action. A character can run up to twice his Speed rating yards in a turn if he sacrifices his action. Speed will most likely come into play in a chase.

• **Clarity** is a measure of your characters' sanity, of how well they can distinguish the elements of Fairie from those of the mortal world. Your characters can lose Clarity over the course of play. Clarity is ranked from 1 to 10, unlike most of other traits.

COMBAT

Violence is inevitable in the life of the changeling. When a fight breaks out, it can be important to keep track of who is doing what, and how badly they are hurting each other. When that happens, follow these steps:

First tell the players that their characters are entering combat. Until the combat ends, everyone acts turn-by-turn, with each character everyone getting one chance to act each turn. Next, have everyone roll Initiative, which is the result of the roll of a single die + the character's Initiative modifier as listed on the character sheet. (This is a rare case where you add the number that comes up on a die to the value of your trait, instead of rolling a dice pool and looking for a success.) Starting with the character with the highest Initiative result and continuing on to the lowest, each character gets to take a single action (usually an attack). The player can choose to yield his character's action until later in the Initiative queue, or until the next turn if she wishes. Resolve each character's action before asking the next player what his character does.

If a character attacks another character, the attacker rolls the appropriate dice pool:

• **Unarmed close combat:** Strength + Brawl, minus target's Defense and armor (if any)

• **Armed close combat:** Strength + Weaponry, minus target's Defense and armor (if any)

• **Touching an opponent:** Dexterity + Brawl, minus target's Defense

• **Ranged combat (guns and bows):** Dexterity + Firearms, minus target's armor (if any)

• **Ranged combat (thrown weapons):** Dexterity + Athletics, minus target's Defense and armor (if any)

Add bonus dice based on what weapon is being used or what effect is being performed, then subtract penalties for circumstance conditions. The player rolls

the remaining pool. Each success equates to a Health point of damage inflicted, the type of which is determined by the nature of the attack. The Storyteller describes the attack and wound in narrative terms.

Once everyone has acted, a new turn starts and the player with the highest Initiative gets to act again. Players *do not* make new Initiative rolls every turn.

Complications

• **Avoiding Damage in Close Combat:** Your character's Defense trait represents his instinctive ability to duck and weave and make an enemy's close-combat attacks more difficult, and so serves as a penalty to incoming attacks. If your character hasn't yet acted this turn and is willing to forgo that action, he can dodge, which doubles his Defense for the rest of the turn. If your character is attacked multiple times in the same turn, however, it becomes harder for him to avoid being hurt. For every attack targeted at him past the first, reduce the character's Defense by 1 (to a minimum of zero). If your character is dodging, the doubled Defense reduces by 1 for each additional attack.

• **Avoiding Damage in Ranged Combat:** Unless a ranged attacker is close enough that he could just as easily attack in close combat (a few feet), or is throwing a weapon, Defense doesn't apply. To avoid damage in a firefight you can either find cover (hide behind something solid) or fall prone (drop flat to the ground). Falling prone constitutes a character's action for the turn but levies a -2 penalty on ranged attacks. Anyone within close-combat striking distance (a few feet) gets a +2 bonus to hit a prone character, though.

• **Concealment and Cover:** If your character is partially concealed behind an object, she is harder to hit with ranged attacks. The penalty goes from -1 (crouching behind an office chair) to -3 (poking up out of a foxhole). If you are *completely* concealed, the attacker suffers no dice pool penalty but has to score enough successes to shoot through the intervening object (called the cover). Piercing an object reduces the number of success rolled by a number based on the durability of the cover: from 1 (for wood or thick glass) to 3 (for steel). If this penalty reduces the number of successes to 0, the attack fails to penetrate the cover and you take no damage.

• **Range:** Every ranged weapon has three ranges listed in yards in the format short/medium/long. An attacker suffers no penalty when her target is within the short range. If the target is at medium range, she suffers a -2 penalty. At long range, this penalty goes to -4.

HEALTH AND DAMAGE

• **Damage Types:** There are three types of damage, each more serious than the last: bashing, lethal and aggravated. *Bashing damage* generally results from blunt or stunning attacks. *Lethal damage* generally results from cuts, gunshots and other more serious attacks. *Aggravated damage* generally results from especially vile supernatural attacks or fire.

• **Marking Damage:** When a character suffers damage, the player marks off that number of Health points, starting with the box under the leftmost dot of his Health trait and proceeding left to right. The symbol used depends on the type of damage.

Bashing damage is marked with a slash in the first available empty box. So imagining that Carlos (one of the characters in this scenario, who has seven Health dots) had just taken one point of bashing damage, his Health boxes would look like this:

☐ / ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Lethal damage is marked with an X, and it pushes any existing bashing damage right on the track (so that it always appears to the left of bashing damage). If Carlos next took a point of lethal damage, his track would be:

☒ / ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Aggravated damage is marked with a large asterisk (*) by adding a vertical bar to an X. It also pushes any existing lethal and bashing damage right on the track (so that it always appears to the left of lethal or bashing damage). If Carlos next suffered a point of aggravated damage, his track would be:

☒ ☒ / ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

• **No More Health:** Marking off a character's last Health box usually means that the character has become incapacitated. If that rightmost wound is bashing (and the character is mortal) she falls unconscious. If that rightmost wound is lethal or aggravated, a mortal character quickly bleeds to death. Note that this would mean the character has no bashing damage at all, since it will always be the rightmost. Changelings suffer damage in the same way as mortals—their souls may not be intact after their abduction, but their bodies work just the same.

• **Additional Damage:** An unconscious mortal or a severely battered changeling can still be damaged by further attacks. Without further Health boxes to mark

off, you represent this damage by upgrading existing wounds. Any new bashing wound upgrades an existing bashing wound to lethal (make the leftmost / into an X), while new lethal damage can upgrade older wounds to aggravated (make the leftmost X into an asterisk). Additional aggravated damage also converts a point of bashing or lethal damage to aggravated (make the leftmost / or X into an asterisk).

• **Healing:** Mortals recover from damage thanks to rest and medical attention, and without the aid of magic or magical goblin fruits from the Hedge, changelings must rely on the same. Left to heal naturally, characters recover one point of bashing damage every 15 minutes, one point of lethal damage every two days, and one point of aggravated damage every week. Lost Health is recovered from right to left on the character sheet.

EFFECTS OF BEING A CHANGELING

The characters in this scenario are already familiar with their supernatural nature, but since the players can't be expected to know the inherent benefits and drawbacks of being a changeling, we have compiled the details into this comprehensive list.

• **The Mask:** Ordinary humans cannot see changelings for what they are. All things fae, including changelings, are protected by the Mask, an illusion that makes them appear to be mundane versions of themselves. Only the fae, such as changelings, can see through the Mask; all others see a hulking man instead of an Ogre, a bent old woman instead of a goblin crone. The fae can also ensorcell humans, granting them the temporary ability to see through the Mask.

• **Glamour:** Changelings have a trait called Glamour. It is the power that fuels all the wondrous and terrible miracles of Faerie. In game terms, it is a measure of how much magical energy is within each changeling. Glamour can be used to fuel Contracts as well as the following inherent powers:

• Many kith/seeming blessings require an expenditure of Glamour to activate. Details about these specific powers can be found under each character's description.

• A changeling may spend a point of Glamour to strengthen the illusion of the Mask for a scene, preventing other fae from seeing his fae mien. His shadow still betrays him, however.

• By spending his entire pool of Glamour at once, a changeling may temporarily dispel the Mask for a

scene, allowing anyone to perceive his true mien. This ability is an exception to the usual limitation of only being able to spend a number of Glamour points in a turn determined by Wyrd.

Though there are numerous ways for changelings to regain Glamour, the characters in this story do not have access to the resources necessary for most of them. For the purposes of this story, the characters may only regain Glamour by harvesting the emotions of mortals. To do this, a changeling simply must find a human who is experiencing strong emotions and attempt to leech some of that energy. Both “positive” and “negative” emotions can potentially provide Glamour; the strength of the emotion is what truly matters, not the type. Exactly what kind of roll is required to gain Glamour in this fashion depends on the action or situation taken to obtain. For example, an Ogre who wishes to get a quick rush of fear might pick up a hapless victim and slam him against a wall, requiring a Strength + Intimidation roll; a Spring Court club kid might use Manipulation + Socialize to entice a naïve young thing to join him for a bit of lustful fun in a darkened corner; and a retiring Darkling might use Composure + Empathy to soak up the sorrow of a funeral home while maintaining the pretense of a grieving relative. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of what traits are required for a particular harvesting roll. One Glamour point is obtained per success on a harvesting roll. A changeling who is attempting to coax out the emotion of their Court receives an additional Glamour point in the event of a successful roll (not to exceed their Glamour maximum). Thus, a Winter Court Darkling seeking to feast on the sorrow of mourners at a funeral home would receive a bonus Glamour point if his roll succeeds, since sorrow is his Court’s emotion.

- **Cold Iron:** Those who know the secrets of the fae tell a curious tale about the Fair Folk’s weakness to cold iron. Long ago, a powerful True Fae made a Contract with iron itself, but that Fae failed to honor the terms of the contract. Thereafter, iron swore itself as an enemy to the prodigal people, cold and unyielding in its grudge against them. This elemental animosity passed down to the changelings, as well.

In effect, an item made from at least 90 percent pure, unalloyed iron ignores defenses contrived by the fae and their magics. A protection Contract will not offer any safety from an iron weapon, for example. A changeling wearing fae armor will feel a cold iron knife pass into his flesh, as the armor fails to protect him.

This weakness extends further where the True Fae are concerned. The Others take aggravated damage

from cold-forged iron weapons. While any sort of iron will pierce their magical defenses, it is important to note that on cold-forged iron, iron shaped without the benefit of a forge, inflicts aggravated wounds.

- **Clarity:** A changeling is no longer human, but neither are they fully fae. Upon returning to Earth, most changelings find themselves walking a fine line between two worlds. They cannot deny what they have become, but at the same time it is their strong connection to this world that allowed them to return, and they feel a need to identify with and be accepted by the world around them. Clarity tracks this delicate balance between the mundane world and the maddening realms of Glamour. A changeling with high Clarity is able to easily distinguish between the two worlds and might even become slightly more adept at spotting supernatural phenomena otherwise hidden from view. By contrast, a changeling with low Clarity finds her perceptions spiraling out of control. She starts having trouble distinguishing her dreams from reality, and starts mixing up elements from the two worlds.

At a rating of 7 (where most of the characters start) theft or any sudden changes in perspective (taking psychotropic drugs, unexpected life changes, etc.) can cause a loss of Clarity. When the character commits such an act, the player rolls a number of dice based on the severity of the sin. The worse the sin is, the fewer dice are rolled. (Petty theft is four dice, manslaughter or massive property damage is three dice, murder is two dice.) If the roll fails, the character loses a point of Clarity. (Willpower can’t be spent on this roll.) Characters with reduced Clarity find a way to cope with their loss of perspective, and allow themselves to drift further out of touch. It will now take a worse sin to cause another roll to degenerate. At Clarity 6, only grand theft (or worse) or revealing their fae mien to un-enscorcelled mortals can spark such a roll. At Clarity 5, it takes intentional mass property damage or the murder of another changeling. At Clarity 4, it takes an impassioned crime such as manslaughter or the breaking of a formal oath.

Characters who do lose Clarity also risk becoming unhinged mentally. If a player fails a degeneration roll, he should immediately roll his character’s reduced Clarity as a dice pool. If he fails that roll, the character gains a derangement. This can be any form of minor but pervasive mental disorder, such as depression or a phobia. The player should roleplay this new character quirk, but it has no mechanical effect.

Dwelling in Darkness

This story takes the characters deep into the World of Darkness, and reveals some of the terrible secrets that exist just outside of human understanding. It is meant as an introduction to the strange lives of changeling characters and as a launching point from which Storytellers can begin chronicles of their own devising. Though the characters start out in Miami, their ultimate fate is in your hands. This stand-alone scenario is meant for the Storyteller's eyes only. If you are planning to take on the role of one of the characters in "Dwelling in Darkness," please stop reading now. Storytelling games are much more enjoyable if you experience the plot twists and surprises along with your characters, so don't spoil the fun for yourself.

PREPARING FOR PLAY

First, read through the rules at the beginning of this document, just to get an idea of how the mechanics of the game work. Then, have a look at the character sheets at the end of the booklet, and note the characters' different capabilities and advantages. We don't expect you or the players to memorize everything right out of the gate, but if you give the characters a quick once-over in conjunction with the rules, the numbers will make more sense in game play.

Let the players read over their character' backgrounds, roleplaying hints and traits, and answer any questions they might have. Help them understand how the rules work with regard to the dots and num-

bers on the character sheets. Also, read through "Dwelling in Darkness" once before attempting to act as Storyteller. We've tried to make it as easy as possible on you, but you should have an idea of what's coming up. Plus, players will always make decisions that you—and we—didn't see coming. That's great! That's part of role-playing. It does, however, require you to think on your feet.

If you know how the plot progresses, you can take what the players do and allow those decisions to steer the game toward a satisfying conclusion, rather than having to say, "No, you can't do that because it would take us too far off track."

CHARACTERS AND BACKGROUND

"Dwelling in Darkness" revolves around the actions of a newly-formed motley of changelings. Though many of them have joined the Courts that run various parts of Miami, none of them have been a part of the freehold for more than six months. The Lost are slow to trust others, and this short time has not been enough for the characters to become fully accepted by the more established changelings. Snubbed and suspected of being in league with the Others, the characters found themselves outsiders among even their fellow outcasts. Rather than be totally alone, they chose to band together for mutual protection and support.

Rather than obeying the custom of letting each Court nominate a ruler as its season comes into play, Miami has been held in the

