Faerie



Valid AU23

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

Faerie is perhaps the most fluid and changeable of lands, reputed (amongst Faeries at least) to be the oldest of the Shards and the place where civilisation as we would recognise it first arose. A land with an ancient history, full of magic and mystery where nothing is ever quite as it seems, enchantments are common and favours carry more weight than money; this is the Faerie of old tales, myth and legend.

GEOGRAPHY

Faerie is a large continental island, forests and mountains dominate here, occasionally breaking to reveal grass plains that roll to the sea. There are very few ancient woodlands though as the lands were inundated by the sea for many years. Only in the highest and oldest places are the original deep places of Faerie preserved. In the same manner, the population centres cluster around the mountains that once were islands. Older, ruined settlements have been recolonised and rebuilt in the lowlands once more but the heart of Faerie is in its hills.

POLITICS

The politics of Faerie are complex – befitting a largely immortal population who conduct their lives through webs of favour and counter-favour - and vary according to whose lands you are in. The constant thread is a tendency toward monarchies and other stable, single-leader arrangements. You will not find much in the way of parliaments here. Faerie politics is not for the unwary and you risk being used as an unwitting cat's paw in another's schemes if not very, very careful.

THE DANCE

They call the constant politicking and jostling for status, power and authority The Dance. All peoples of Faerie Dance in their own ways for it is part of their very nature. Part of this Dance is to never tell a lie if you can at all help it. You can dissemble, mislead, omit, embellish or nitpick to your heart's content. Just not directly lie. Faerie agreements tend to the letter of the law and not the spirit, "I swear not to do you any harm" does not mean "I have to tell you that someone else poisoned your wine"...

THE QUEENS OF FAERIE

Technically there are two rulers of all Faerie, the Queens of the Seelie and Unseelie courts. Currently Queen Athwen Brightblade rules the Seelie and thus the day. Queen Morgan rules the Unseelie and thus the night. The same lands are governed by differing rules and traditions by day and by night.

LOCAL LORDS AND MONARCHS

While almost all of Faerie acknowledge the Queens as the supreme rulers of Faerie, there are myriad different settlements, Dwarf holds, regions and peoples with their own leaders. These are sometimes even called Queen or King (although usually with something of a qualifying statement, Queen of the Dryads for example). This multitude of nobility make up the ever shifting Courts. To confuse things further, there are wild fae who hold only to their local lord. Chief amongst these is the Ard-Ri, King Finlay and his Silver Unicorn tribe who welcome those who feel apart from the courts.

QUEEN MABDH

Long ago, an entire faction of the Faerie Courts were declared outcast – Formori, named for an ancient enemy – by the rulers of the time. They have taken their sentence as their name and harbour a burning desire for revenge upon the Courts. Queen of these Formori is Mabdh, as cunning and vicious a ruler as any could hope to avoid.

HISTORY

The history of Faerie is almost the history of the world, as the oldest sentient races on the planet live there and the recordings of their histories stretch back into myth. Recent history is a little more reliable, but mostly dependent on oral traditions of storytelling. So a pinch of salt is always recommended the further back you go.

THE GOLDEN AGE

The longest period of peace and calm in Faerie history, lasting thousands of years from the moment the then young Fae and Sidhe races took custodianship of the then Shard of Faerie from the Elder Races. The Courts were founded and Faerie society was an idyll. Gradually however, the networks of deals, obligations and favours began to occupy more and more of the day-to-day business of the Shard and the Dance began in earnest.

Whenever you have those grasping for advantage, others are pushed aside or humiliated. Some started to rebel against this and the courts began to cast out those who disagreed with the established order. These Formori found a willing ally in the Goddess Domnu, who took them for her own. War began between the peoples of the Fae.

THE UNION EYE OPENS

Faerie's problems were only just starting. The portal network that allowed swift travel across the shard found Union. An entirely separate Shard-world that in turn opened up the existence of five other, populated, Shards. Movement between the humans and the Fae began and almost immediately tensions between the various races began. The dogmatic fanaticism of Salem was especially offended by the Fae and several abortive invasions had to be repelled.

THE FLOODING & THE MONARCH WARS

It was at this time that some members of the Elder Races re-emerged. These beings, terming themselves Monarchs had taken within themselves aspects of the Gods themselves and were their earthly avatars. Their land of Atlantis arose from the seas of Faerie causing catastrophic flooding, hundreds of thousands lost their lives and millions lost their lands.

The Monarch leader, Mortanus, declared the Shards his to rule. A small band of rebel Monarchs rejected this plan and vowed to stop him. With Mortanus and the Monarchs on one side and the Rebels allied with the peoples of the Shards on the other, battle was joined across the Shards.

THE JOINED COURTS OF NIGHT AND DAY

At the height of the Monarch Wars, the political landscape of Faerie changed dramatically. A wizard of the Courts, "Compo the Everliving" (now deceased), had manipulated two puppets into the thrones of Faerie. The Child-Queen Jessandra ruled the Seelie and once Queen Morgana was overthrown, Queen Blue distractedly ruled the Unseelie. Compo was the power behind both thrones and ruled in truth. Under his direction, the courts gradually ceased to dance against one another and eventually merged into the Court of Night and Day.

THE MONARCH WARS END AND A WORLD IS BORN

As a desperate gambit to cut the Monarchs off from the source of their power, the peoples of the Shards decided to merge the isolated Shards into one world. Cut off from their power the Monarchs were defeated. Atlantis sank once more and the waters receded leaving the devastated former lands of the Fae exposed once more in their wake.

THE HIGH KING

Many of the peoples of Faerie resented the new structure of their society. A new power arose in opposition to the Joined Courts. The Ard-Ri (high king) Finlay welcomed all those marginalised and rejected by the Courts to his Silver Unicorn banner and set himself up as the High King of Faerie. Many of the Fomorii who were not Domnu's slaves flocked to his new Court and for a time it seemed as though Faerie was moving to a new form of rule.

THE DARK RIDER

Shortly after the world was rejoined a strange Portal was located in the far North of Faerie. Strange creatures poured through this Portal from another realm, led by one called the Dark Rider. These creatures were warped and chaotic, stabilised by the unusual material in their armour. A number of Fomori also joined with this new force, being known as the Red Stripe Fomori. The Dark Rider attempted to take over Faerie but was eventually defeated by the combined armies of the Fae and their allies from across the world.

THE COURTS REBORN

At the dawning of the Demon Wars, Faerie herself, sickened by the death of the Dance, incarnated and demanded that the true Courts and the Dance be restored. She charged the band known as the Wanderers to elect new Queens of Faerie. They chose Athwyn to rule the Day and Morgan to rule the Night and thus it has been since.

THE DEMON WARS

Faerie was seemingly only lightly touched by the events of the Demon invasion. Attempts to destroy or overtake the Hive Mind of the Fae by the Demons in the Nightmare forest were thwarted and the Demons eventually driven off at enormous cost to the world. Most painfully for Faerie, the Seat of the High Mage and Galconda, current High Mage and source of all then-known magic were utterly destroyed. Faerie is now in a transitional period while all adapt to the new magics and factions quieted by the Demon wars rear their heads again. Not least, the Formori have found their Goddess again and openly march to war against the Courts.

REGIONS

THE COURTS

The lands of the Courts are simultaneously brand new and impossibly ancient. Rebuilt upon the ruins of thousand-year cities destroyed by the waters the courts reclaim ancient splendour.

However, this ancient foundation is surrounded by the young vegetation of a land restoring itself and patched with new masonry.

The lowland Courts are probably the most vibrant of the Faerie lands, bursting with new possibilities.

Hive mind - Fey from the courts may be part of the Fey Hive mind. Fey in the Hive mind share a consensus of the thoughts and feelings of all its member no matter where they are in the world. The Hive mind is not a tool to communicate, although the strong minded can influence the general thoughts and feeling of the moment within the Hive mind.

STRONGHOLD

High above the lowland Courts is the Fortified city of Stronghold, oldest and most mighty of all Faerie cities.

It guards the Core Portal of Faerie and is at one and the same time the seat of ancient tradition and governance and a bustling trading centre welcoming all the peoples of the world.

FORMORI LANDS

Pushed far beyond the Nightmare forest, out in the salt-poisoned fields and cruel mountains that border the Badlands dwell the enemies of the Courts: The Formori.

Ruled by their Queen Mabdh in the name of their Goddess Domnu they eke a hard existence on the fringes of Faerie and nuture their hatred and resentment of the Courts and their Queens.

Few have roamed in their lands and lived so the exact geography is unknown.

REDRUST DOCKYARD

One known point is the port-town of Redrust. Home of the "red-stripe" Formori, those who cast aside Domnu and magic and embraced the technological advancement long banned in Faerie.

With Domnu re-arisen and the "black-stripe" Formori aggressively mobilised; the status of the Redrust Formori is unknown.

IRON DELVE MOUNTAINS

Running the length of Faerie, the Iron Delve Mountains are the oldest and most unspoiled of Faerie's landscapes. The Northern half of the mountains are dominated by the Dwarf Holds.

Most famous to the outside world is Iron-Delve itself, but dozens of smaller holdfasts stud the mountains and contain the secretive and seldom seen

Dwarven peoples. Each Holdfast has its own King and are fiercely loyal to their own hold and ruler. To the southern end of the mountains is Stronghold: Seat of power of the Faerie government and its biggest trading city. Its massive fortified walls dominate the landscape and defend the Core Portal from any foreign invading power.

THE MONASTERY & DUNSMISH

Nestled amongst the mountains is a tiny monastic settlement belonging to the monks of the Order of Gideon Rosarius. Isolated for decades, it ought to be a footnote in Faerie, but the current Abbot has so enmeshed himself in Faerie politics – and as a counsel to Laird Caffrey of the McUen - that they have become somewhat famous.

The Order is a centre of healing and theological study as they believe all gods are facets or shards of an original progenitor god.

At the foot of the mountain where the Monastery can be found is the village of Dunsmish, a place where elderly McUens go to live out their days in what passes for peace in that fractious people. The Dunsmish Inn is a welcoming place for all travellers.

BADLANDS

Faerie is a creation of Story and Magic. It is often a primal, chaotic place and none more so than the Badlands. North of the Wall erected by the Elder Races to defend their lands from unnamed threats is the place where monsters dwell. Few dare ever venture here and fewer still return.

The seas boil with maelstroms and sentient storms assault ships. Wild magic infests the area with incarnate living spells stalking the night. It is a frozen hell into which only the most foolhardy would stride.

THE SEAT OF THE HIGH MAGE

Highest of all mountains of the world, the Seat of the High Mage was the origin point of all magic in the world and tied Faeries colossal magical forces together.

When its final guardian, High Mage Galconda; Golden Dragon of Justice, was cruelly slain at the climax of the Demon Wars the High Seat itself was devastated.

To journey there would be phenomenally risky in these times as the awesome powers it once contained are now loosed and lash unpredictably at the landscape and any unwise enough to be there.

NIGHTMARE FOREST & BLACK BRIAR MARSH

Separating the Lands of the Formori from the Courts is the terrible Nightmare forest.

This is the dread forest of every story of horror. Here monsters walk amongst the boughs and make the forest by day merely terminally dangerous.

By night, dreaming creatures of shadow and nightmare make the forest their playground. By night, the forest is lethality personified.

Seemingly as if to warn travellers of the greater horrors ahead in the Nightmare Forest, the marshland of Black Briar is a repellent place. Inhospitable, treacherous and swarming with biting insects. Furthermore, the place is rumoured to be the fastness of the wizard Merlin and the mazing magic bound into Black Briar's mists would seem to hold some truth to these rumours. Black Briar guards its secrets well.

PLANES OF ANGER AND THOUGHTFULNESS

These lands were once completely owned by the Monarchs and during the Monarch Wars was used by them to experiment with wyld magics on both the lands and the peoples that lived there in order to help them in the war.

The lands fluctuate with the residual energies of these experiments, being able to influence the minds of those present.

These experiments have also meant that a number of unusual resources can be found in the area for those willing to risk trying to harvest them.

A number of groups are known to live within the Planes, including:

- DAOINE SIDHE a group of Fey displaced by flooding who had to move to the Planes to survive they have now formed the port settlement of Greenhaven (which is just outside the effect of the Planes) and are starting to build up trade routes so those of the Planes can interact with the world.
- TUATHA DE IMBAS Tribe of warriors who nearly all possess magical abilities
- TUATHA DE BAN RI Tribe of warriors who are very resilient to magical effects and the Planes, led by the Ban Ri the effective 'ruler' of the Planes
- WYLD THINGS The various results of the experiments found in the Planes, including some that feast off blood, others that feed off magical energies and a wide array of others.

ATLANTEAN PROTECTORATE

This peninsula of land was given by the courts in grand gesture of peace to the survivors of the sinking of Atlantis

RACES/CREATURES

Below is bit of information on the creatures and races of Faerie, it is by no means complete.

Playable Races: players who choose to play a characters with Faerie origin can pick from these races,: Fey, Forest and Water Sidhe, Formori, McUens (Humans) or Dwarves

Any other race listed are for Faerie background information.

FEY

Fey make up the majority of the population of Faerie. They are the classic Tolkein-esque elves and tend in their manner of dress to be medieval, and their manners are courtly, precise and fond of ritual and tradition. They tend to belong to either the Seelie or Unseelie Court.

UNSEELIE: The Night court, most influential therefore in Winter. The Unseelie are the outwardly nastier edge of the Fey. Most of the monstrous sentient races find their home among the Unseelie. This reputation is largely undeserved as they are as courtly and polite as any Fey. In truth they are simply direct, if an Unseelie wants you dead, then they will kill you. They don't hide behind cat's paws and tend toward a "you keep what you are strong enough to hold on to" mentality.

SEELIE: The Day court, most influential therefore in Summer. The Seelie are – wrongly – often thought of as "the nice ones". This is largely because of their tendency to smile and nod to your face and then arrange matters to your disadvantage behind your back. Seelie are schemers and delight in using cat's paws and dupes to carry out their desires. Both courts are equally likely to contain pleasant, generous people as cruel, selfish ones. The Seelie are just less up front about their natures.

FORMORI :Formori are Fey that have embraced technology and remain where possible separate from the courts, they tend to be the more wild and risk takers, they mark themselves with a black stripe across the eyes.

PLAYING FEY

Player wishing to play Fey will find the Fey heritage background in the main character creation rules

SIDHE

The Sidhe are far rarer than the Fey and go by many names. They are half mortal, half wild spirits of nature and gravitate to uncivilised areas that match their nature. The most common found are the Dryads – Forest Sidhe – and Naiads – Water Sidhe – although the nature kin are so varied that attempts to classify them become hopelessly complex very quickly. Their personalities tend toward the elemental character of the nature they are associated with (so water sidhe can be as often quick and bubbly, as they can sedate and calm). Many, but by no means all, Sidhe swear fealty to one of the courts.

Player wishing to play Sidhe from faerie will find the Sidhe heritage background in the main character creation rules

MCUENS (HUMANS)

Humans are in a minority on Faerie. They tend to be found in tribal, clannish groupings or living among their slow aging neighbours in the fey cities in more menial roles. Humans can be rather looked down on by certain aspects of Fey society as being barely worth the bother. They wear out after a mere 50-60 years, how can one possibly get to know them?

McUens The largest group of Humans in Faerie are the Clan McUen. Led by their Laird Caffrey McUen, these tartan-clad maniacs are the attack dogs of the Fey Courts. Fiercely loyal to Clan first, Queens second and Faerie last, they are the mortal enemies of the Formori people. An deserved reputation for rowdiness and drunkenness stems from the wildness that makes them great warriors and the tactic of clouding the mind so the Druids of the Formori cannot work their mind magics. That it also comes with a somewhat straightforward outlook on life, a belligerence that often leads to fights and a love of simple pleasures means the McUens are often underestimated until far, far too late.

DWARVES

Dwarves are playable race from Faerie

The Dwarves are a secretive folk, usually living far beneath ground in their caves and mines. They are industrious, crafty and good with mechanisms. Unlike the Tolkein Dwarves, these are not by nature short, but they do tend to the stocky, bellicose stereotype in other aspects. Dwarves are plain-spoken, have a reputation for fair dealing and utterly unforgiving of slight or insult.

Players wishing to play dwarves have no special heritage skills they should however try to pick a few of the appropriate talents such as toughness, fortitude, potency, vigour to represent typical dwarvish nature. Dwarves can be long lived living up to 5 times the span of typical human.

DRAGONS/DRAKEN

Players cannot play Dragons/Draken.

It is believed the Dragons are the eldest of all races, even older than the Alfar, they once ruled the whole world and had servitor races called bloodlines. The Dragons have no written history however they are immortal and some have existed for hundreds or thousands of years.

Dragon can change form and size and may human or be flying fire breathing creatures the size of large house, they are incredibly powerful, they come in all the colours of shards and may breath other things than fire.

The Dragons look down upon all creatures, humans, fey etc. has less than them and ignore them most of time, so when a Dragon does speak to you it's usually important and you may die if you give them backchat humorous or not.

There are not many Dragons left in the world and they mostly live out of sight in caves in the Irondelve mountains. They breed slowly and only one Dragon egg has hatched in the last fifty thousand years.

At the top of the Dragon hierarchy are the Gold Dragon. There is, by tradition, only one Gold Dragon in possession of its full legacy at a time. This is because the Gold Dragon is the Dragon of Justice: able to manipulate situations in order to balance the books in times of conflict but also more subtly as playing a part of balance in all things.

The Difference between a Dragon and Draken is important although the creature is still basically the same, Dragons are ancient and born from an egg, Draken are hidden bloodlines that appears in some humans and gradually changes them over many hundreds of years, they are young and looked poorly upon by many Dragons, however others appreciate any growth in numbers.

ATLANTEANS

Players can play Atlanteans - They are Human

The Atlanteans are remnants of one of the Elder Races and those who serve them, very, very few remain following their defeat in the Monarch Wars and the destruction of their homeland. Some are powerful and often connected – sometimes literally – to their old gods and the power they wield but these are rarely, if ever seen in these times.

The normal Atlanteans that remain love to debate everything from the meaning of life to who should clean the floor, every village as a Forum House where local decision are made, argument resolved by a new form of governance called voting. The grand forum in the capital city even decides who will lead the people this month at least. make laws and choose taxes. No man or woman is ever refused entry to a forum and the right to cast a vote.

The Atlanteans do not follow Gods, because many among them, call themselves Gods.

SILVER UNICORNS

Players cannot play Unicorns

The Silver Unicorns are the tribe of the Ard-ri Finnlay. They do not appear to be a race of their own, but rather those that have sworn fealty to Finnlay over the years and have been accepted into his tribe.

DARK UNICORNS

Players cannot play Dark Unicorns

These are one of the Bloodline Races who have shown themselves on Faerie rarely, although no-one knows where they live. They look identical to Fey however as they are masters of stealth, assassinations, glamours, illusions and mental attacks, no one knows for sure what they truly look like and they can blend in with any group. Skilled infiltrators they are known to have interfered in a number of battles over the last decade, on both the side of Faerie and against her, their ultimate motives unknown.

FREAKS

Players cannot play Freaks

Freaks are the denizens of the Sad House. Abode and workshop of the dapper and terrifying tailor of imagination: Mr Skinner. Freaks are rumoured to be powerful nightmares, strong enough to walk abroad in the real world. They seem to be very driven by collecting essences of people, it might be their voice, or the colour of their eyes, or their skeleton...

Dangerous and often unpredictable, the Freaks are to be treated with cautiously but are powerful allies if befriended.

NIGHTMARES

Players cannot play Nightmares

Nightmares are dreams given power by the fear they consume. Mostly they lurk within the Nightmare Forest where the skein of reality is thin and they can step between worlds. They mostly assault the mind but the most powerful can manifest and attack directly. Most dangerous at night.

SCARECROWS

Clothes stuffed with straw so they form the shape of person and then imbued with life. Players cannot play scarecrows. Not a playable race

COSTUME

FEY OF THE COURTS

Fey characters tend toward the tolkein elf look of robes, pointed ears and elegant style. Their wargear is medieval in feel and they eschew modern developments like firearms in favour of tried and true bows.



FORMORI

The Formori are the opposite of style, their clothing is often crude, made of off cuts of the cheapest materials and bits of leather and put togther with little skill.

Formori have a black stripe of make up across their eyes



SIDHE

The Sidhe tend to be similar to Fey in appearance but with a slightly wilder aesthetic and a colour palette representative of their nature. They often have coloured skin markings or hair (or both), some have unnatural features like horns, tails, etc. Most have the pointed ears of the Fey but not all.



MCUENS

The McUens are much happier in kilts, leather, woad and weapons. Celtic berserker stylings.



DWARVES

Dwarves favour uncomplicated Dark Age stylings of tunics, hoods and cloaks. Armour is often worn in day to day life and beards are popular but not mandatory.



THINGS TO NOTE.

NOTEWORTHY PEOPLE

- **Finnlay** The Ard-Ri, High King of Faerie and ArchDruid of Danu
- Mr Skinner Leader of the Freaks, ruler of the Sad House
- Lord Caldespur Former general in Fey military now player in the courts
- Balin Steamhammer Dwarf Engineer Extraordinaire
- Thorin Ironhide one of the many Dwarf Kings
- King Snow one of the many Dwarf Kings
- Lokion Possible leader of the Atlantean Protectorate survivors of Atlantis
- Queen Morgan Unseelie ruler
- Queen Athwen Brightblade Seelie ruler
- The Bean Feasa A witch of ultimate balance
- Queen Mabdh of the Formorii ruler of the Formorii
- **Kalcoran, Slayer of Danu** Mabdh's champion and general of her army
- **Twigleaf McUen** Natural portaller, confidant of the Laird.
- Abbot Abbot McUen Head of the Order of Gideon Rosarius.
- Caffrey McUen Laird of the Clan McUen
- Morpheus Known as the Sleep King he has not been seen for several years
- **The Solitaire** Silent monochrome assassin. Known to target Bards and Storytellers.

GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

(not previously mentioned in regional backgrounds)

- **The Morinehtar** meaning Slayers of Darkness, this is a cadre of elite fighting troops trained by the Wanderers specifically to fight the Demons. They now roam the land fighting evil wherever they find it.
- The Order Hospitalier of Gideon Rosarius an order of pacifist, cloistered men and women (all go by "monk") dedicated to studying all the religions of the world in order to reveal the face of the original god they believe to have created the world and shattered into aspects of itself in the process. Dedicated to knowledge and healing as that preserving life preserves knowledge.
 - ➤ **The Order Militant** there is also a small order of Paladins, relatively new to the Order who are vowed to defend the pacifist monks if they go out into the world and to confront evil wherever it lies.
- The Knights of Discord Are a group of mainly freaks led by Dusk and Dawn who stand outside Skinners domain and are part of the Cabal a international crime syndicate
- **Red Stripes** This is now a small group of Formorri that left those that followed Queen Madb, they followed the Dark Rider who no longer lives. They are easily recognised as they wear a red stripe rather than black across their eyes. They are hunted by many Unseelie and Seelie due to what they did in the name of the Dark Rider.
- **Sprocket Druids** Formori Druids that imbue scarecrows with a magical life.

GODS

There are many, many gods of Faerie. The most notable are found below. Most of Faerie recognise all of them and give special note to their favourite.

- **Balor of the One Eye** God of destruction, drought, blight, fire. Appears as a towering man with a blazing single eye from which fire bursts.
- **Bridgid** Goddess of Spring, fertility, healing, poetry. Daughter of Dagda, often accompanied by boars and oxen.
- Cailleach Hag goddess of fortune telling, weather and winter
- **Creidhne** God of Gold and silversmithing, one of the three gods of art who made the sacred weapons of the deities.
- **Dagda** God of fertility, agriculture, manliness and strength, as well as magic, druidry and wisdom.
- **Danu** Goddess of love, healing and motherhood, patron of the McUens.
- **Domnu** Goddess of the deep, secrets, mist, mother of the Formorii
- Flidais Goddess of animals, woodlands and farm fertility
- Goibniu Smithing and hospitality, one of the three gods of art
- Luchtaine God of carpenters and wrights, one of the three gods of art
- Lugh God of skill and craft, storm god, associated with oaths, truth and the law
- Manannan God of the sea
- Morrigan Crow goddess, fate, fortelling doom, death in battle, has three aspects (Badb, Macha and Nemain) most just refer to the Morrigan
 - ➤ **Badb** Crow goddess, spreads fear and confusion, one of the three aspects of the Morrigan
 - Macha Goddess of war, horses and sovereignty, one of the three aspects of the Morrigan
 - Nemain Goddess of the frenzied havoc of war, one of the three aspects of the Morrigan

NOTES

The colour of Faerie is Black which also represents Guile, Void and Wounding.