



*The*  
**Faerie  
Ring**

FOREWORD BY JEFF GRUBB

*Along the Twisting Way*

**PRELUDE**

*by Scott Gable, Wolfgang Baur, and Joshua Stevens*

**D&D**  
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ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE



## Credits

Foreword Jeff Grubb  
Design Scott Gable  
Editing John Rateliff  
Illustration Julie Dillon, Crystal Frasier  
Cover Illustration Julie Dillon  
Graphic Design Crystal Frasier, Scott Gable  
Special Thanks Michael Bauer

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*The Faerie Ring*

# A Brief History of the Fey, Faerie, and Fairy Tales

## A Foreword

**By Jeff Grubb**

Let's go back to the earliest years, to before the roll of dice, before the platonic solids, and even before Plato himself. Way back to when the gods were responsible for the lightning and the thunder.

The fey were there. They were unseen, spiritual creatures—always present, always lurking at the corners of our vision. They were responsible for effects that did not seem to have causes. They haunted our buildings and dogged our steps. They were always watching... and waiting.

They went by a plethora of local names and had a bevy of regional habits. Some washed their hats in the blood of their victims. Some knocked the stones deep within the mines. Many would lure the unwary and unwilling to their dooms. Some of them gave their names to other, more tangible, more terrestrial creations—dwarves and elves and kobolds and goblins and gnomes. Ultimately, in those earliest of days, the fey could claim kinship with the Fates themselves, and like the Fates, they could move among mortals, working their deadly and capricious magics.

Indeed, Faerie was a place for the fey, much like a nunnery was a place of nuns and a heronry was a place for herons. It was where the fey were when they weren't here. It was where the fey lived, where they plotted, and where they ruled. And if you happened to find your way there, well, too bad for you.

We called them the Fair Folk and the Little People although their power was not little and their attitudes were often far from fair. They were not worshipped so much as they were propitiated. Bowls of milk and small cakes were left out, not in hopes of reward, but as payment, so these spirits would turn their attentions elsewhere and leave those who believed in them in peace. They were little gods, masters of domains that only extended as far as they could reach and for as long as they chose to pay attention.

These ancient fey were by turns both noble and mischievous, both superior and stealthy, both wise and capricious. This dualism has remained with them through the ages. Shakespeare presents us both with royal Oberon and Titania and with prankish Puck. They had the wisdom of things unseen and the mercurial selfishness to get their way.

By the Victorian era, though, the fey diminished, both literarily and physically. This was a time of rings of stones or mushrooms ascribed to the power of these people, and when portrayed (or even photographed), they were small and childish and winged and in no way a threat to the greater world. So they threatened to diminish into nothingness. They became cautionary figures in old folktales and creatures to entertain children. Fairy tales lost their fearsome edge, and the word itself became a hallmark for the childlike and the imaginary. The fey entered the nursery and threatened never to leave.

J.R.R. Tolkien sheered the elves clean off from

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the rest of the fey, hewing more tightly to noble Oberon than to flighty Puck. They were magical and mighty and benign, and their time had come and gone. And they were disappearing themselves. Tolkien, though he hewed the elves from the rest of their fey brethren, also split them into twain as well: there were the wood elves of *The Hobbit* and the high elves of *The Lord of the Rings*, which would have repercussions further down the line.

Fired by a growing interest in fantasy in the 60s and 70s, Dungeons & Dragons arrived with the central casting of its player character races right out of *The Lord of the Rings*. Now elf was different from dwarf, and neither was an ethereal spirit. The dualism between high and low, between the noble elves and the more arboreal versions continued through to the present edition when they were split once and for all into elf and eladrin.

But the *pucks*, the *fairies*, the *little people* remained diminutive. Griggs, spriggans, nixies, pixies, leprechauns, quicklings, dryads, and all manner of other regional folktales were now catalogued and defined—and always in their smallest and most benign forms. They filled slots and environments, but they were always more cute than dangerous, more irritating than perilous. Having already been romanticized, the little people were now in danger of being quantified and demystified entirely.

And that changes here. The dark side of the fey—including the sidhe and the courts Seelie and Unseelie—has always remained as a shadow cast by the encouraged brightness of the fey. They have always been wonderful and awful in the traditional meaning of those words—brimming with wonder and power, invoking awe in those who encounter them (and survive). With this volume of fey lords, fey ladies, and fey lands, the old straight paths are brought back up to the surface, and the deadly

nature of the fairies and their rulers is made clear.

But indeed, where do the fey rule? The old Celtic tales tell of sunken kingdoms and realms beneath the barrows, but in the catalogued world of Dungeons & Dragons, where would a truly fairy tale kingdom belong? The organization of the Great Wheel of the Outer Planes had a large number of advantages, but it also had the disadvantage that it would be difficult to add anything to it once it was in place. Yes, there was an outer plane of Arborea, but the elven gods of Arvandor were time-sharing with the Greek gods of Olympus, and besides, its placement made it more Good than Chaotic. It was a place of gods and faithful petitioners, more solemn and less deadly, perhaps, than the roads that the fey walked.

So that left the demiplanes—small chunks of unreality, bits of extraplanar real estate that a particular fey lord could manage some small kingdom. A more fitting place for their wild craziness, but again, the fey face the threat of being diminished, confined to a lesser location in the greater scheme of things.

Yet in the Faerie Ring, we look at the fey and their worlds in a different fashion. Now those old demiplanes are knitted together into a new fabric. Here are Hob, Manitou, and Red Jack, and the lands of Purgatory, the Eternal Twilight, and Shambala. Here are empires worthy of the fey lords. More than mortals but not quite gods, unfettered by mortal morals, the fey lords rule their lands utterly and, often, cruelly.

And it breaks the shackles of European visions of the fey, for these

spirits have been world-wide in our mythologies, and they come from all corners of their lands to seek proper respect and propitiation.

The kindly ones are back, and they are far from kindly. The wee folk have returned, and they are not as wee as centuries of propaganda would have you believe. They are as dangerous a group of lords and ladies as you would ever care to encounter, and they control their lands. Woe to any mortal who crosses them without their permission.

But of course, you have that chance. Go right in. I won't stop you.



# In Defense of the Fey

## A Preface

There's never really been a ton of material for the fey in this game we all love. Of course, there have been a few standout pieces here and there, but they seem so few, especially when compared to the massive amounts of information available for the various humanoid races or for outsiders. Why should this be the case? More fey was always something that I, for one—as player and as GM—would have eaten up.

So was planted the seed of the Faerie Ring. Of course, it wasn't that easy, and the obstacles in the way were likely those that prevented much material on the fey in the first place. Those being...

**What are the fey?** In flavor and mechanics, what are they? How do they fit with everything else? Where do they live? What do they do when they're not tormenting adventuring parties? Why do they torment adventuring parties?

**What is their story?** The fey must have a story just as anyone else does. What is their history? Where have they been, and where are they going? Who are the important personalities of the fey? How do they relate with the rest of the multiverse?

**Where are the others?** The majority of the existing fey are built from a very select portion of folklore and mythology—primarily that of western and northern Europe, largely Celtic and Germanic.

This is great material, but what about other cultures as sources?

Having identified some of the biggest hurdles, it was a bit more manageable, though no less daunting, to see what could be. Dragons are awesome. Fiends are awesome. We need fey to be awesome, too.

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The plan was clear for the Faerie Ring: somehow, make the fey awesome. How were we going to attempt that? What were the fey to us?

**Define the fey:** In defining the fey, we actually expand our options. An unspoken default definition for fey might currently be “those creatures called *fey* in our real-world mythologies.”



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Unfortunately, there's little room to expand beyond that. If given a more in-game definition, it should actually be easier to create new paths for the fey—not excluding what came before, but building upon it.

First and foremost, it's important to acknowledge that the fey are *different*. They don't think the same way as we do. Theirs is not always a morality that we can understand. They are more than the chaotic tricksters of legend. They are complicated. A lawful fey should be just as valid as a chaotic one. There is just as much variety in their personalities, from individual to individual, as there is in humans—perhaps more.

Some are utterly alien to us. Odd as it may sound, the fey share more with the cosmic horror of H.P.

Lovecraft, in *some* ways, than the majority of evil outsiders. The outsiders of the game are defined by ideals: idealized good and evil, chaos and law. The fey are not, instead typically being viewed as completely amoral creatures. Lovecraft's horror was always about our insignificance in the face of uncaring, alien intelligence. That sounds kind of feylike to me. Well, it's time to unleash that overwhelming, amoral tide of fey!

**Broaden the fey:** The term *fairy* may have come from Western Europe, but that doesn't mean that other cultures don't have equivalent ideas. Call them fairies, spirits, yokai, peri; they're all over the place. Folklore, mythology, animistic religions, even literature all offer a plethora of ideas amenable to the fey, just waiting to be used.

And it only makes sense that all of these fey interact with one another. A given humanoid culture may only know of a handful of fey, but that doesn't mean there aren't others out there. Just because a farmer has only seen a leprechaun doesn't mean a kitsune is any less real. You can see this in such works as Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman*, in which all myths can be connected (whether fey or not): Bast (let's say an outsider or god) freely interacted with Titania (a fey sovereign), for instance. It wasn't as if any one culture's ideas had any more sway over another's.

**Give them a story:** Just making the fey have more monster entries, though, isn't going to make them more compelling. For that, you need to tell a story. You need to paint a history, as if these personalities have always been there. You need to introduce conflict, give them a reason to exist. You need to tie them together, so they have a framework in which to live and breathe.

The accounts of Lafcadio Hearn, the folktales about Baba Yaga, the stories of the Brothers Grimm: this is how a mythos is built. James

Jacobs showed us all how it could be done for demons in his long-running *Demonomicon* series in the pages of *Dragon*. So why not for the fey?

This is the *Feynomicon*.

## What is the Faerie Ring?

The Faerie Ring is many things, whatever you need it to be. Really, it comprises a little bit of everything, slowly mixing and building a new, detailed world of the fey. There's tons of new flavor and mechanics in roughly equal parts. Built around the strongest personalities of the faerie realms, a new mythology is developing with new fey options for both players and GMs.

**Sourcebook:** Perhaps at its best, it functions as a sourcebook or even a mini-setting. What's a *mini-setting*? In this case, that's a section of a larger setting. An expansive and developing *cog* that, hopefully, seamlessly slides into place in your current favorite setting, providing new, rich forays to the lands of the fey. It's a corner of your greater world devoted to the fey that you can incorporate into your game whenever you desire: a growing world that can be tied into your current game, complete with new rules, NPCs, plot seeds, monsters, and more.

**Player's Guide:** Even as the behind-the-screen world unfolds, there will be a constant supply of player material in new playable fey races, feats, incantations, items, even some new classes—all centered on the fey.

**Setting:** If you're feeling like something truly different, as the Faerie Ring expands, you should be able to play entirely within its boundaries. There are new races, new lands, new adventures to be had entirely in the lands of the Faerie Ring.

Beyond that, it looks like there may be some fey adventures on the horizon as well...



# The Realms of the Fey

## An Introduction

Dear Titus,

*Originally, I had no intention of responding to your query, let alone honoring your request. There is certainly little love between the fey—my brethren—and humanity. And, really, what would it accomplish?*

*Needless to say, I've had a change of heart. I have come to appreciate that sharing my knowledge and insight with you might go far. Not in the useless notion that you harbor of bringing our peoples together, but in instilling the proper respect—and perhaps even a little fear—for us. Humanity knows so very little, after all. I believe they need a glimpse of what is out there in order to better appreciate their own insignificance.*

*More selfishly, I am limited by the scourge of time—though perhaps not as much as you. The fey are so scattered and diverse that even being one of their own, I could not hope to catalogue them all in one lifetime.*

*Together, perhaps we can learn a bit more about the fey.*

*So, where to begin? Perhaps by laying the foundations...*

—Zheddo the Bluetongue,  
Most Knowledgeable Sage in Exile  
of the Darkling Dominance

## Cosmology

**The Outer Planes:** Looking at the typical model of the multiverse, we see the Outer Planes forming its outermost sphere. These planes are held to be the domain of the gods, of morality, and of final reward and retribution. And they are of so very little use to the fey. If they were smart, humanity would take the lesson.

**The Inner Planes:** Just inside the Outer Planes are the Inner Planes. These are the very foundations of the Material Plane, the raw material

from which everything else is forged. This is matter and energy churning to a cosmic tune in service of all things material—the bones and blood, if you will, of the Material Plane. In this fey's opinion, these planes are not terribly welcoming... or interesting, for that matter. Let us pass on.

**The Material Plane:** Arguably, the heart of the multiverse. The Material Plane is commonly accepted as the center of everything, and it is where you call home. This all seems simple enough, but it gets complicated very quickly when you consider that there is more to the Material

Plane than simply your own world. Countless stars swarm the plane, and about each twirls a multitude of worlds. Beyond that, speculation by many a reliable source says there are alternate versions of your world and all those other worlds, continuously forking their way through time and space.

Without the Material Plane, the Inner Planes would have no purpose. Without it, the high-and-mighty Outer Planes would have no future, starving from a lack of belief, a lack of souls to feed them.

Above all, the Material Plane is a terrific source of amusement, and I can think of no greater purpose for its existence. I could go on and on, telling you things of this, your own plane of existence, that would shake you to the very core and melt your mind like wax. But such is not our object just now. Later, perhaps.

**The Transitive Planes and the Preternatural Planes:** Finally, we come to the point of our little tale. Largely misunderstood and oft ignored, the Transitive and Preternatural Planes are the playground of the fey. In fact, they are often collectively known as the Realms of the Fey. That's not to say that the Material Plane isn't important to the fey but, really, you live there already, and you hardly need *me* to provide a map to your own backyard.

## The Transitive Planes

The Transitive Planes are the Astral, Ethereal, and Shadow Planes. A convenient grouping of planes based entirely on the humanoid fascination with

the concept of *utility*, for these planes are known—and named—for their usefulness in travel, both within the Material Plane and beyond it.

Those more interested in essence than utility would label these as part of the Preternatural Planes, viewing the Transitive Planes as simply highly specialized specimens on the spectrum that is the wide variety of Preternatural Planes. After all, many of the Preternatural Planes are just as accessible to travel as the Transitives: Dream itself comes immediately to mind. The more traditionally minded, while perhaps aware of these facts, keep the Transitive Planes separate as their own distinct category, recognizing that these three planes have unusual characteristics that set them apart. But really, what plane doesn't?

To be clear, from here on when I refer to Preternatural Planes, that includes the Transitive Planes. Perhaps it's the perceived lack of utility in the other Preternatural Planes that have led to their obscurity in mortals. The fey know better.

## The Preternatural Planes

Ah, the Preternatural Planes. A vast array of planes—countless in number and constantly changing—sharing a complex relationship with the Material Plane. The Preternatural Planes are inextricably linked to the Material Plane, existing on its very edges and orbiting like moons. Sheathing the Material Plane, they dance around it in complex patterns, each plane's cycle as unique as the plane itself. At one extreme is the Astral Plane, stubborn and still, content to fill its given role and never budge its course. Others go so far as to periodically overlap and coexist with the Material Plane. And just as the analogous moons, the planes are constantly waxing and waning in relation to the Material Plane, advancing and

receding in their influence.

Were the Preternatural Planes around from the beginning, born from the same events that shaped the Material Plane—sibling planes, if you will? Or were the Preternatural Planes created one by one, well after the Material Plane was spawned and in response to key triggers, spontaneously erupting from the Material Plane itself? As a whole, it's unclear. However, some of the Preternatural Planes have arisen in recorded history, seemingly created from nothing. Others have been annihilated, every trace of their existence obliterated. A pity that our information on both processes, and what triggers them, is woefully incomplete.

Some of the more daring scholars have even suggested that the Material Plane as we know it is only *one* Material Plane of many, the current one. According to this line of thought, eventually one of the Preternatural Planes will take the Material Plane's place as the dominant regime while the current Material Plane falls into succession as the newest Preternatural Plane—just as had befallen its predecessor—in an eternal cycle. Perhaps one of the fey's worlds will one day take over the realms currently dominated by your people. A delightful prospect, is it not?

Whatever the case, the Preternatural Planes, with the exception of the Astral Plane, are entangled so closely with the Material Plane that they often behave as a single, highly complex plane. Perhaps the Preternatural Planes are simply *layers* in a vaster Material Plane within which what we now call the Material Plane is but the dominant layer—for now, anyway.

For the most part, the Preternatural Planes (or Preternatural Realms) are reasonably similar to the Material Plane, sharing many qualities but for a significant emphasis on some force or

characteristic. The Plane of Shadow, for instance, resembles a Material Plane engulfed and twisted by shadow. Planar traits can vary widely, of course, and some Preternatural Planes are so bizarrely idiosyncratic that they seem baffling and unsettling to those from more “normal” realms. Scholars busily try to make sense of it all, of course, using science and magic to seek patterns to the mysteries, plotting the vastness of unlimited realities on complex maps and in intricate orreries that seek to mirror reality itself. Some secrets, however, may not be coaxed away from the selfish planes so easily, and it can be perilous to pry.



Some of the Preternatural Planes follow:

**Aralu (or the Gaol of Always):** The endless subterranean labyrinths of Aralu serve as a terrible, secret prison for the fey. No one admits to knowing its origins although, of course, one hears rumors. I'm told the chambered caverns seem to extend to forever, no one knowing just how far or the number of prisoners held within. Many of the inhabitants are artifacts of forgotten ages. What secrets must they must hold.

**Dream (or Dreamtime, the Dreamlands, the Plane of Dreams):**

A meandering but pervasive realm of dreams and nightmares, this plane connects all those entities with the capacity for dream. A constantly changing realm, whose natives flit along, following the currents of dream.

**The Eternal Twilight:** When many speak of "the Faerie Realms" or some similar appellation, the Eternal Twilight is what they truly mean. Considered by most of my people to be the heart of the fey, its idyllic lands of gorgeous, untouched wilds call fey to its embrace like nothing else. As its name suggests, the plane is eternally sheathed

in the spectrum of muted shades that make up dusk and dawn.

In one way or another connecting to more Preternatural Planes than any other plane, the Twilight serves as an important crossroads. Because of this, the fey deem it the center of their world. A massive continent at its center known as the Embassy serves as neutral ground where the various courts meet, whether in grievance or revelry, in accord with ancient treaties.

Those lands peripheral to the Embassy are claimed by various of the more powerful fey lords and are anything but neutral ground, being typically strongly contested.

**Forever Sea (or Isles of the Blessed):** A sea not of water but of sky. A vast multitude of islands, each teeming with its own rich and seemingly unique ecosystem, float in the wind. They cluster into archipelagos and drift in the complex airstreams.

**Glassway:** Made up entirely of a seemingly living crystal and glass, this plane is among the strangest of the Preternatural Planes, with truly alien vistas. And, perhaps, the most beautiful I've ever visited. Here, living glass trees cover crystalline mountain ranges as the refracting light permeates the whole realm in a dazzling cascade of color. An eerie and dangerous intelligence—slow, deep, and deliberate—seems to pervade the land.

**The Green Expanse:** The greatest of all forests. Korapira has planted her roots here, utilizing her demesne, the Heartwood, to broaden this plane's reach and connect to all forests everywhere. Imperceptible to most, the influence of the Green Expanse is slowly driving all the remaining wild lands throughout the multiverse to reclaim those lands stolen by civilization.

**Nowhere (or Plane of the Lost):** Where do lost things go? Nowhere. All of the things ever lost

## Notes on Design: The Preternatural Planes

Why is there a need for the Preternatural Planes?

There's a twofold answer to this question and to why the Preternatural Planes should be deemed important enough a concept to develop. The first reason is generic in scope. It's nice to think that there's a place somewhere in the multiverse that is a suitable fit for *any* kind of story. That, no matter what kind of tale you want to tell in your games, there's a place for it within the rules system.

For instance, what about an insanely massive jungle with miles-high trees, no sight of land or sky, and cultures that rise and fall without ever leaving its branches? You could try to shoehorn such a realm in somewhere—perhaps a new continent? But then you may be concerned about how that would affect the rest of your world. Perhaps as an outer plane? But suddenly you're faced with a question of good and evil or order and chaos that you may not have wanted. Perhaps a demiplane somewhere? But that may feel tacked on. The Preternatural Planes were created to provide a place for a type of adventure that may be hard to place otherwise. Likewise, concepts for planes of dreams and mirror worlds and similarly irregular locales never seem to find a solid place to sit in the multiverse. The Preternatural Planes enable you to include these places in a way that feels more natural to your cosmology.

The second reason is more about the fey, specifically. They just never seem to have had a place to call their own. Where are the "Otherworlds" and "Underworlds" of fairy tale in our games' cosmologies?

The idea of Preternatural Planes provides a place to have adventures that don't fit comfortably anywhere else and it provides a home for the fey. This is a purely optional element that is not required to enjoy and utilize the other elements in this book.

can be found in Nowhere. And once things find their way to Nowhere, they typically stay. This junkyard realm is not an easy place to leave, for Mahu is the door, and he jealously guards what he considers his—which includes anything and everything within Nowhere. It is not just objects, though; creatures are caught within its borders as well, giving rise to odd ecologies as creatures of random races are forced to make do within the vast fields of junk.

**Purgatory:** A plane of lost souls, and not at all a pleasant place. To many, Purgatory is thought inseparable from Sheol (see below), the latter existing as the Shores of Purgatory. In truth, Purgatory is a kind of soul trap and exists in an almost parasitic relationship with Sheol. Those souls that enter Purgatory (or are consumed by it, as some say) are trapped here, prevented from reaching the Outer Planes to finish out their journey. While here, they continue to behave as if still alive. This has led to the development of a unique culture, a hodgepodge of all the various cultures to which those souls trapped here once belonged. The plane's most noted feature is the enormously vast necropolis of Perdition. Here, the resident lost souls are lorded over by mysterious fey, the so-called *angels of death*. Are they jailers—or are they jailed, too? All the plane's inhabitants cling to mythical claims of a path out of Perdition but continue in their unending unlife as its citizens.

**Sea of Rahab:** As if entrapping the darkest and most terrible depths of the sea, the Sea of Rahab is a watery nightmare created during the fall and rebirth of the Chaosbringer, Rahab. Forever she occupies her throne within, choreographing the chaos. Of late, her twisted children stir more than usual and are beginning to cast their gaze beyond the borders to which they had grown accustomed.

**Sheol:** The front door of death, a brief rest for

the recently deceased before they move on. Call it a staging area for the afterlife, if you will. This is death in its purest state, free of punishment or reward. Many souls stay only very briefly, some longer—waiting for another to join them, trying to complete some unfinished business, vainly hoping for resuscitation. It's unclear what decides one's readiness to move on; perhaps merely accepting the inevitable. Some never do, instead eking out a monotonous unlife in the shadowed wastes, a pale attempt at recreating a life once lived but now never to return. Such deniers risk being drawn into Purgatory every day they mangle, but without the desire to move on or the ability to reclaim the living world, there is little else. A few manage to claw their way back to the Material Plane to haunt the living.

**The Wasteland:** On the surface, the Wasteland is a blasted land supporting nothing. Constant giant hurricanes ravage back and forth across its cracked, parched earth, pockmarked with craters and scoured by wind. Beneath the surface, though, those who insist on surviving here have secured themselves. And these Hidden People more than survive; they flourish in vast underground cities.

## The Fey

Most cultures easily recite stories of the fey. From region to region, the tales vary greatly but always portray these creatures in the most colorful ways. On the surface, the accounts seem little more than entertainment and whimsy, with perhaps a moral interjected here and there. Concrete details are scarce and, more often than not, so contradictory or ridiculous as to be easily dismissed. However, those most intent on their study eventually realize that the fey are more diverse and complicated than they ever imagined. For every truth you try to pin

on the fey there is an exception—not so unlike you humanoids.

## Origins

The fey are tied inextricably to the Material and Preternatural Planes—one presumes, even, they emerged from the same churning vastness, the same sea of primordial chaos and cosmic order, from which these very planes arose.

Many of the fey's own myths recount this creation as an intentional act performed by the planes. These tales paint the fey as the eyes, the fingers, and the fists of the planes. It should be noted here that their personification of the planes is typically as an amoral and uncaring juggernaut, not the vague benevolence held by many humanoid cultures.

Other myths hold that the fey are merely by-products in the incessant process of change these planes go through. In this view, sloughed-off planar debris from the earliest of times gained sentience as the first fey, who proceeded to carve out a life for themselves as free-willed entities.

It had been all too easy to discount these myths as fancy, but our recent understanding of the sovereigns forces us to reconsider every shred of these myths.

## Philosophy

Frequently, the fey are mashed into just a handful of archetypes, ranging from the stalwart defender of nature to the psychotic child-thief. Certainly, these traits exist in the fey, just as they do in the humanoid races, but it's just not that easy. Nothing related with the fey is ever easy. I will repeat: we fey are much more varied and complex than such simple portraits would suggest. Hells, any given fey

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animals. Even those fey that favor humanoidly likely view you as little more than favorite pets. Er, present company excluded, of course.

The second generalization is that the fey are very individualistic. That is not to say that we are completely random and reclusive creatures, as so often portrayed. Quite a few of us, in fact, belong to strongly disciplined cultures and rigid social hierarchies. And, very much like your folk, we have beliefs and opinions that are not identical to others of our race. We make choices. We do not necessarily share the same philosophical and moral underpinnings. You never know what you're going to get with any given fey. That's what makes my people so very interesting... and so very dangerous.

The fey are never simple. I can say without pride but as simple fact that we are among the most complex entities in existence.

## Habitat & Society

The sheer variety of fey makes it impossible to effectively generalize. Fey live in countless habitats and are at home anywhere in the Material and Preternatural Planes. Of course, there are exceptions in that some fey have an incredibly strong tie to a single plane. The mogwoi, for example, share an extremely strong connection with the Material Plane. Attuned to the plane, they—and those others tied to their respective planes—possess a level of kinship with their

homeland greater than most fey. Some say they are merely extensions of the plane itself, a guess that may come closer to the truth than generally believed.

Social structures of the fey, too, see incredible diversity and cover all of the possible social structures seen in the humanoid cultures. Many fey follow paths wholly different from yours and exhibit behavior that would come across as strange and even shocking in a mere humanoid... sorry; I mean, in a humanoid such as yourself.

## Anatomy & Physiology

Fey typically exhibit forms and features similar to those of natural creatures, whether humanoid, animal, or plant. Often, these characteristics mix in individuals in what, to you, must seem strange indeed, creating beastly or plantlike mosaics of life. Though tantalizingly similar in ways to what you know, they unsettle your sensibilities all the more for their juxtaposition to your expectations. Physiologically, most fey are very similar to the natural forms you're used to: they eat, sleep, breathe, breed, and exhibit many other hallmark features of the natural world. Of course, again, these are merely generalizations; there exist many exceptions. For instance, most fey are what I believe you call "sexually dimorphic" and breed sexually, yet certain fey, reproduce asexually. Of course, this is common in some of the simpler creatures of nature, but among humanoids, it's unheard of—not so for the fey.

After the occasional difference in appearance, there also looms the fey's propensity for astounding supernatural powers as a most notable difference between fey and "natural" creatures. Where do these powers come from? Prevailing theories suggest our very nature simply makes us more



has likely acted out both those extreme personas at multiple points in his or her long life, along with a million other personas.

There are only two generalizations I will admit to regarding my people. The first is that we do not think in the same ways you humanoids generally do. By your standards, the fey are completely amoral and alien. We may follow a code of conduct within our own cultures, but any basis we have for right and wrong exists entirely outside of the frame of reference of most humanoids. Typically, we fey view you in the same ways that you view

capable of tuning into the warp and weft of reality, the planes themselves, in order to perform miraculous feats of magic. We are nothing less than conduits for the power of the planes.

Finally, we should not overlook the odd phenomenon of fey adoption. Though normally not capable of such feats, natural creatures occasionally rise to a similar state of being, achieving wondrous ability. And, in so doing, they become fey.

## Variety

Various subtypes, or families, of fey exist, some of which are explored further within the chapters of this volume, *The Faerie Ring: Along the Twisting Way*. Others will be explored in future volumes. Just a few of those existing are listed below.

**Changeling:** Changelings are fey that were once something else, such as humanoid. Twilight children are the best known of changelings.

**Devata:** A devata is a unique fey that has taken on the role of spirit guardian. They are typically individuals from any given race that have been chosen for—or tricked into—this esteemed role; however, some races, such as the lokapala, have given themselves entirely to this devotion.

**Dream/Nightmare:** The dream and nightmare fey are a unique, dichotomous family that calls the Dreamlands home. They flit through the multiverse, traveling the dreams of sentient creatures.

**Elemental:** The elemental fey are a family that, in addition to their ties to the Material and Preternatural Planes, has a link to one or more of the Inner Planes. There are few elemental fey left, for a great war ravaged their kind in which the salamanders violently renounced their ties to the fey realms, destroying the ancient gnomes in the process. The sylphs and undines remain, but only

as a pale shadow of their former glories.

**Fata:** The fata fey each possess an uncanny ability to see through time and space—foretelling possible futures, recounting distant pasts, viewing other worlds. The wyrd, the furies, and twisted Decade number among the fata.

**Geist:** We fey can be a tenacious lot, and even death may not stop us. Rather than dying, some instead transform into another state, called a geist, in which they avoid—or postpone—their natural death. This can be a natural progression for certain fey races, a unique occurrence for a specific individual, or a forced, artificial process (as with Korapira's sentinels). Geist often form strong ties to certain creatures, objects, locales, or even concepts. (Technically, geists can form from any intelligent creature with a soul, but the fey seem especially attuned to the process.)

**Gloom:** A gloom is a fey that never should have been. These twisted horrors are remnants of tragic accidents and horrible experiments.

**Gnomekin:** Despite the tragedy of their past, with the destruction of the ancient gnomes, modern gnomes and their kin—such as far darrig, black hats, redcaps, and cluracan to name a few—have become quite prolific.



**Lost:** The lost fey are a sad case indeed, one which we don't like to talk about. These fey technically no longer exist, having been destroyed or in some other way lost and forgotten. But that doesn't stop them from influencing the multiverse and, on occasion, even appearing briefly as vagrants in time. The ancient gnomes are typically the first of the lost that spring to mind.

**Mogwoi:** The mogwoi are an ancient family, perhaps the oldest among the fey. While many fey have a connection specifically to the Material

## Dissecting the Fey

The various fey lords are analogous to the various lords of the outer planes. Just as demons and devils and angels have their own lords, those incredibly powerful entities whose reach threatens the gods themselves, so too the fey. The fey lords play the same “ecological” role as any lord of the outer planes.

The differences are largely the same as the differences between fey and demon, or fey and angel, or fey and any other outsider. The biggest differences can be summed up by what the base creatures represent: demons represent Evil and Chaos, angels represent Good, fey do not “represent” anything but themselves.

The fey are representations of neither Good nor Evil, Chaos nor Law, though any given individual fey may be good or evil, chaotic or lawful. Not to put too fine a point on it, we fey are a great gray morass of morality and ethics. And any given individual fey may espouse different beliefs and motivations at different points in his or her life—or even at different points in the week.

The hallmark of the fey, if such a thing exists, is complexity. We are unpredictable. But this is not the same as being chaotic, as is often presumed. Some fey have strict codes of honor or lead regimented or courtly lives that favor a more lawful bent (sometimes known as “the iron silk,” those unwritten laws of courtly custom and etiquette to which all courtiers adhere). But even those lawful fey have a certain unpredictability about them—a certain *feyness*.

Simply, fey sometimes don’t do what others (especially non-fey) expect. It doesn’t change what they are; in truth, this *is* what they are. Fey do good things for bad reasons and bad things for good reasons. They are complicated and composed of a million, billion contradictions and motivations. In many ways, we fey are very much like the humanoids. Perhaps “more humanoid than the humanoids” would be an apt description.

Plane, the mogwoi’s link is more profound: they actually grow more and more dependent on the plane as they get older. Mogwoi exist on the Material Plane in remote regions, typically, away from prying eyes. The oldest are unable to leave the Material Plane—even for the Preternatural Planes. These effects are less insistent for younger mogwoi.

**Peri:** The peri are a family of fey that, in addition to their ties to the Material and Preternatural Planes, has a link to one or more of the Outer Planes. This may be through heritage, such as with the nephilim, or through some other process, such as those “fallen angels” the Grigori and the Hagfish.

**Sidhe:** A race all their own, the sidhe have taken a darker path than most. Their influence, typically unwanted, has reached far.

**Yokai:** The yokai are fey that have an especially strong association with nature—to the plants and animals, to the elements, to their environment, to each other.

## Hierarchy

All fey exist within a natural hierarchy of power. Certainly, there is always power to be earned or taken, with kings,

dictators, and tribal elders willing to step forward to take it. Some power, however, is not so easily gained. This power comes from the blood, from the land, from the vagaries of fate. And it always chooses its own vessel.

**Sovereign:** Sovereigns are the natural lords of the fey. These entities possess incredible power that they wield at their whim. They are not promoted from lesser fey but born directly from the very fabric of the Material and Preternatural Planes. Bits of extraneous reality periodically slough off from the planes, and just as in our most ancient fey creation myths, on rare occasions some of these bits take on a sentience of their own, becoming fey sovereigns.

This process can be very violent: Korapira’s birth left behind a 50-mile-diameter crater although this particular birth is thought to be exceptionally destructive. Each sovereign is believed to come into being in a different way: whether a devastating explosion, a fire from the sky, a virgin birth, a coalescing of shadows, or any other number of ways. However they come into being, sovereigns are fully-grown from birth, or achieve that state with extraordinary rapidity. All of their great innate power is there at their fingertips (for those who *have* fingertips) right from the beginning although they are not always fully capable of controlling it at first.

Sovereign births are quite rare with Korapira’s being the only one recorded with any certainty within the last 1,000 years or so—perhaps within the last 10,000 years. It is also the only one to have been observed at the time (though most of the observers perished) or to have been documented with conclusive, extant validation in non-fey races’ annals, the origins of other sovereigns being largely shrouded in myth.

Most sovereigns are extremely old and many,

including all the mogwai lords, predate the advent of the humanoid races on the Material Plane. Luckily, my people have been around quite a bit longer than yours, so we have been able to obtain a good deal of information on our sovereigns that would otherwise be lost. These entities are elusive and dangerous, seemingly inscrutable and very, very powerful. It is always wise to remember that even we do not know everything about them.

Some see the sovereigns as embodiments of various principles of nature. This may be true; I really cannot say. Although it seems a bit simplistic, so it must be wrong, since we fey are never simple. But even if it's right, I pity the soul that thinks this knowledge will grant them any power over a sovereign.

**Demesne:** Sovereigns possess a connection with their demesnes from birth. These demiplanes are an extension of themselves: sovereigns are either born in the demesne's tender grasp or immediately hear its call and seek it out. Their demesne is specifically linked to them. It is theirs. Its traits and landscape are completely controlled and alterable by the sovereign, slowly molding and remolding in tune to each sovereign's subconsciousness over the course of a lifetime or rapidly shifting in response to conscious manipulation.

Sovereigns can travel back and forth from their demesnes at will and, seemingly, even draw power from them when needed. Each demesne can exist either as a pocket dimension (a demiplane with attributes according solely to its sovereign's whim) or superimposed over part of another plane, again at the sovereign's whim. For most sovereigns, this latter method is typically only possible with the Material and Preternatural Planes serving as host planes although certain lords have been known to travel the multiverse, latching on to whatever plane is available. When superimposed, the host plane

is pushed from the demesne's insertion point to its periphery, possibly creating an incongruous seam. Kept too long like this, the demesne risks becoming a permanent addition to the host plane: Manitou's abdicated lands, for instance, have long since "taken root."

Mogwai sovereigns are alone in possessing no true demesnes. However, they can form permanent links with portions of the Material Plane; such a territory acts as a surrogate demesne and, indeed, is typically called their demesne. These mogwai territories are typically remote and dangerous. Though not as malleable as the true demesnes of other sovereigns, they still respond and lend their power to their mogwai lords in a limited capacity.

Should a sovereign be permanently destroyed, his or her demesne collapses if a demiplane. However, those demesnes that have bonded to another plane and, of course, mogwai territories remain but become twisted and warped.

Servitors and heralds and other favored creatures of a sovereign typically have free passage into and out of that sovereign's demesne. Others, however, may have more trouble.

**Servitors:** One of a sovereign's earliest actions is typically to create servitors, something they seem almost compelled to do. Sometimes these creations are individuals, sometimes entire races, but always fey. Each servitor begins life as an autonomous entity although it may choose or be forced into servitude soon after. No matter their circumstances, all share a spiritual link to the sovereign that created them. What this means for a particular servitor is a personal matter.

Sovereigns typically perform this spectacular act of creation only once, for it takes much time and expends much of their initial essence. Servitors tend to take on certain aspects of their sovereign. Raised and bred to serve the sovereign's

needs—whether out of respect, fear, or force—ultimately (barring special circumstances), they are nonetheless free-willed and make their own decisions. Rogue servitors are certainly known, but they are usually viewed as enemies of their former sovereign and of their own kind. Though sovereigns may also command other creatures, they typically do not share the same connection with them as with servitors.

Mechanically, being a servitor of a particular sovereign allows a creature access to certain abilities and feats associated with that sovereign. It is similar to the connection that clerics have with their gods. Many of the playable fey races are servitors to various sovereigns.

**Herald:** Heralds are powerful servants of the sovereigns. They can be created, like servitors; transformed from lesser creatures, like the Hagfish of Rahab; or be the sovereign's own offspring, like Puck. Most heralds serve

## Epic Play

The standard fey presented in this volume span a wide range of CRs. However, the fey lords themselves are all high-level creatures, hovering around CR 20. Most of the lords are also deliberately designed to have a second stage of power (maybe more in some). Each of these can draw power from their demesnes or something else to reach epic levels.

If and when the epic levels of play are ever created for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, these later stages will be presented.

their sovereign of their own volition although some may have been pressed into service (details are usually unknown to all but the sovereign and herald involved). They are a sovereign's right hand, functioning as inspiring lieutenants, trusted advisors, and wily ambassadors.

Mechanically, each herald is a unique individual capable of channeling a portion of the sovereign's power for his or her own use. It is similar to the connection of a servitor to its sovereign but much stronger. It is not unknown for high-level PCs to be granted herald status by various sovereigns as a boon for extraordinary services rendered.

**Quiddity:** Sovereigns are born in a seemingly random fashion, apparently directed by the planes themselves. Sometimes, though, through incredible circumstances—powerful and ancient magics, reality-shifting cataclysms, intense

emotion—similar entities known as quiddities arise (sometimes known as *artificial* or *accidental sovereigns*).

Quiddities, unlike true sovereigns, are always created from a previous creature—which is almost always fey. Unlike sovereigns, they do not control demesnes or create servitors of their own although they may still take lands and command armies as any normal creature. However, despite this lack of some defining qualities of sovereigns, quiddities are still extremely powerful entities.

The birth of a quiddity typically entails either intense and painful emotion or tremendous violence, and the life of a quiddity usually follows a similar pattern. Born of tragedy, they tend to burn ferociously bright, even brighter than sovereigns over short periods, and they heavily impact those along their trajectory. But they often flare out just

as fast and bright, as one fey poet put it, “once they’ve said their piece.” It’s thought they’re impossibly focused and driven by something—greed, love, vengeance—and that this is the only thing keeping them going. Once it’s gone, once their love is requited or their vengeance slaked or whatever purpose created them is served, they are finally released to oblivion. Or so the story goes.

If you remember that there has only been one sovereign born in the last millennium, it might prove enlightening to know that there have been seven known quiddities born in the last century alone. For some reason, this number seems to steadily climb through the centuries. Ω

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