

THE FEY

The fey - the critters, as Thomas calls them - are not an easily classifiable bunch. Some claim allegiance to multiple categories and clans, others claim none and exist in singular splendour, and a multitude of minor factions and traditions exist - but there are a few generalised groupings that everyone agrees on.

The Fair Family, or Liosa (also sometimes called the Sidhe or Sith, or simply the Fairest) are one of the largest groups. Their magic is linked to light and to electromagnetism, making them masters of illusion and invisibility (bending light), and wielders of lightning. Their political and magical leadership are known as the Summer Court, and many of them are old enough to have seen Europe colonised by the original Celtic tribes.

As their direct counterparts, the Formori, or Dark Court (also sometimes called the Winter Court), embody shadow-magics, and those linked to hunger and death. The various vampire clans, *strigoi* and nightwings and raksha, all form part of the Dark Court, as do the frost giants and skinwalkers, the redcaps and the sorcerers of the Black School. Although they hold themselves apart from the majority of the Formori, the *erinyes* - the furies, who hold the Court of the Righteous and who are known colloquially (and never where they can hear it said) as harpies, are also considered to be Formori.

There are, of course, the five dragon clans - who are not nearly as extinct as they were, until recently, believed to be:

- The Aorin, the White Dragons who descend from Mathon of Gwynedd, are now led by Talsin ap Kerridwen; they were once numerous, but now there few of them remain. Their power is thought to be in the naming of things, and in the spoken word; Mathon was said to be able to hear his name whispered anywhere in Europe.
- The Aokin, the Red Dragons, of whom only Mephistos survived - and his disciple, Varog, who is now not exactly a dragon, and might actually be a low level eldritch horror. They wield fire,

to create and to destroy; Mephistos claims that his power was gifted to him by his 'Grandmother Lightning'.

- The Aogun, the Green Dragons, whose underwater court was once the largest among all the fey. They are now led by Kin, the child of Quinlong Aogun who was the original Green Dragon King.
- The Aoshin, the Black Dragons - or rather the Black Dragon, since Lucienn has never taken a disciple into his clan, and exists as the sole example of it.
- Similarly, the Oryu, the Golden Dragon, is thought to be the only one of her clan and kind. It isn't exactly true, though; some of the Oryu's priestesses are less mortal than they pretend.

Outside of the didact of Liosa and Formori, there are three groups: the Hler, the Eleutherios, and the Mora.

As the People of the Sea, or at least of the waters, the Hler are as varied, fickle, and changeable as their element. Some are friendly to mortals, others consider them no more than food; selkies and sirens, nereids and glaistig and phuka all are Hler. They may not always agree with one another, and are more chaotic than any other fey faction, but they stand together against the the other factions when necessary. In the Dawn Court, a motley collection of the leaders and the Powers among the fey, the Hler are represented by Ruin, the Mother of Storms, and by Mannan Mac Lir, the Son of the Sea, to whom land and water both are home.

The Eleutherios are the wild fey of the forests, mountains and rivers, as the Hler are of the seas, rivers, lakes and ponds. There is, of course, overlap, which is what makes clear classification so difficult. Naiads claim both categories as their own, for instance, as do the glaistig, and phuka, and certain tribes of selkie-folk. The maenads are probably the largest cohesive group among the Eleutherios, as all maenads follow Tammuz, but there are dryads and

oreads, hulderfolk and centaurs and satyrs and unicorns, and a multitude of smaller fey. Their magic varies widely, but all Eleutherios are able to wish good or bad luck on mortals and on other fey. Many of the Eleutherios claim that they were never human, that they are the only true children of the Otherworld; perhaps it's true.

As the Hler are to the waters and the Eleutherios to the land, the Mora are to the mysteries of the Otherworld itself. All Mora have horns of some sort - even the kitsune have horns, though they very seldom show them - and all have an aversion to silver, for reasons that no one outside the clans of the Mora knows. They are the only fey not affected by iron, however, and not one of them will say why that is, only that they do not fear the dark; it does mean, however, that they are able to handle and work most metals, making them the artisans and technophiles of the fey. The Mora include the dwarves and dokkalfar of legend, who created many of the artefacts used by The Fair Family and by the Formori, as well as the kobolds who mine gems and precious metals from the caverns of the Otherworld, and the gremlins who infest and modify mortal machinery and technology. Many, though not all, Mora are associated with underground places, and certainly they are the most knowledgeable about the Labyrinth and the Inner Lands.