

# 26 New Beginnings

[GM: The re-alignment of Patterns marked the end of the first major story arc. The PCs achieved a Major Milestone and could...

- Adjust their Aspects (including High Concept and Trouble)
- Shuffle a point between their Approaches
- Gained one refresh (actually Max FATE in Amber Accelerated) and could trade-in some of their Max FATE to buy additional Stunts (Powers or Skills). Max FATE = 3.

Aleyn chose to Walk the Pattern (off-screen) and changed his High Concept to “Knighted King’s Agent (with Amber Blood)” to reflect his new position in the setting. He changed the wording of his Trouble Aspect from “Hunted!” to “What’s the true nature of the Soulblade?”. Finally he spent a point of Max FATE to buy Trump Teleport which would allow him to open a Trump Gate and gives him an additional box of Trump Stress.

Cassie didn’t yet change any Aspects, shuffle any Approaches or spend her new Max FATE, now = 5. Her High Concept remains “Lost Child of Amber” and Trouble remains “Father?”.]

## Aleyn



For his service during the recent troubles, King Random held a Knighting Ceremony. It had long been suspected (mainly due to his extreme longevity and toughness) that Aleyn was a child of one of the Amber Elders (possibly even one of Oberon’s) but without official recognition, he wasn’t a “Prince”. The Knighting gave him a better official position and a suite in the Family sections of the Castle (and didn’t cost Random anything).

He returned to Tir Na’Nogth to Walk the Pattern and only Cassie was told of his attempt. She accompanied him intending to Trump him out of trouble, if he seemed to be about to fail. Whether it was his confidence because of almost completing the Pattern last time despite being fatigued before he started, or whether the Pattern in Tir “remembered” Cassie’s instructions to “go easy on him”, he made it to the centre. He felt an enormous rush of adrenalin and something fundamental in his nature was changed. The resentful watching eyes of the spirits of Tir Na’Nogth finally turned away from him.

He was later to realise that all existing Trumps and Trump Sketches of him had subtly altered to show shreds of Pattern drawn in the hems of his clothing and images around the edge of the cards that hinted at his misshapen-dwarf form. He isn’t sure if this is something that happens to all who walk the Pattern AFTER they have already had Trumps drawn, or if it unique to his situation.

From the Pattern's centre, he waved a cheery farewell of Cassie and wished himself at House Jeseby in the Courts of Chaos. Trellys was delighted to see him and quickly spotted the difference in his Trump. His mother Countess Ranna Jeseby, gave him some advanced training in Trumps (Trump Teleport) – grateful for his help in securing the favour of Bances of Amberash.

## Aleyn and Kato Jen

From House Jeseby, Aleyn trumped to the compound of the old Trump Artist, Kato Jen – on a hillside a few miles from the City of Amber.



They exchanged views and philosophies on the nature of Art and Trump.

Aleyn made a Trump of Kato Jen so he could return the one he had been given by the samurai, Kato Jen.

The old man had noticed the change in Aleyn's Trump and got him to admit he had Walked the Pattern. Knowing this meant that Aleyn would be able to Shadow-walk, led the old man to ask a favour. He was drawing close to the end of his life and finding Trump Artistry more and more fatiguing. He had one major regret in his life...

*"Many years ago, I studied with Brand of Amber. Although he looked much younger than I, his skill and depth of knowledge was astounding. One day, he offered to show me an Artefact he had created that had increased his understanding of the Art greatly. He led me on a journey of a few days, riding through the forests of my homeland but soon through strange twisted woods and forested hills that were unknown to me. I have realised since that we walked in Shadow worlds. He talked excitedly about the thing I was about to see and all the while the forest about us grew darker and more foreboding.*

*I lost my nerve and used a Trump to return home. I was afraid I had angered Brand and fled to the City of Amber to take service with the King as a Trump Artist. We were in short supply at the time as there had been a spate of deaths and disappearances of those with the talent. It was always suspected that House Jeseby were responsible, clearing away rivals so they could charge more for their own work.*

*I failed to take samples of soils or leaves, but I have sketched from memory several scenes from that journey. Perhaps these pictures will be enough to let you Shadow Walk to the place. Brand is long gone now, but perhaps the Artefact remains and I have always wondered what it was and whether it did indeed hold secrets of our Art."*

## Cassie



Cassie had spoken her mind to Fiona and King Random, complaining that they had blamed her for not “fixing” the Patterns sooner, “although if you knew what I was supposed to do, why the hell didn’t you tell me about it sooner?”. Random was suitably abashed, clearly still disturbed by the means by which Cassie had been “created”!

Fiona was more belligerent. “Visions from Tir Na’Nogth are tricky things you know. By telling you what was to come, destiny could have become unravelled. I told you all you needed to know and only when you needed it. You should be grateful to Flora and I for your very existence!”

Clearly there was no more to be discussed so Cassie walked out on them.

She shadow-walked back to Nisi ton Teraton (The Isle of Monsters) to check on their companions Morgan and Trakka, and on the state of their “garden”.



The companions were becoming bored “We didn’t sign on to be gardeners!” but there were enough of the mysterious plants to make two more Pattern Boosters and one Trump Booster. It would be a few months before there was a second harvest.

When Aleyn arrived at the island (via his Trump of the Beach House) they agreed to (at some time) hire proper gardeners and take Morgan and Trakka travelling again.

The two **FINALLY** [after 25 sessions!] exchanged information about their origins.

Cassie’s story was shorter. She had (*according to Fiona and Florimel*) been “manufactured” via the science of Shadow Earth from DNA material harvested from the twins, Deirdre and Corwin. This had apparently been done without the knowledge of the two parents. The story was given more credence by the fact she had not been destroyed when she stepped onto Corwin’s Rose Pattern. The surrogate mother appears to have absorbed some of Cassie’s Amber strength and managed to break out of the Lab and destroy it. Cassie was raised in secret and only came back to Florimel’s attention when she tried to trace her parents via DNA screening.

Aleyn's story was much longer and had to be coaxed out of him each time he tried to obscure relevant facts in a deluge of reminiscences. The salient points were...

- He was born some time in the 11<sup>th</sup> century on Shadow Earth (centuries before Corwin was exiled there)



- At that time, Shadow Earth appears to have been a Dominion of House Amon, especially of Setep.
- Setep taught Aleyn (a blacksmith) how to etch Trump-related runes into a blade. He appears to have made 9 such blades, with chosen warrior/smiths from around the world.
- The Soulblades appear to absorb some of the essence of the people they kill and extend the life of the wielders.
- When two of these “Immortals” meet, the blades hunger for battle and the winner absorbs the loser’s essence (and the other blade). Over the first few centuries, Aleyn slew 4 other Immortals.
- It seems to have been Setep’s intention that the Immortals would eventually kill each other until one Soulblade had absorbed all the power from the others. Unfortunately (for Setep) shadow Earth drifted out of the reach of his Logrus-based Shadow-walking abilities – possibly the presence of Pattern-imprinted Amberites? Possibly just a natural drift away from Chaos toward the stability of Pattern?
- Centuries later, in Renaissance France, Aleyn found himself in a duel (a petty quarrel to first blood) with a highly-skilled Artist (a Trump-capable Artist) called Marque de Callais. This handsome red-headed young man became enraged when Aleyn scarred his pretty face and attacked him with murderous intent. When the Soulblade killed him, there was a lightning storm of incredible proportions (even more than from slaying other Immortals) and Aleyn absorbed even more strength, toughness and longevity – and as he later discovered, Pattern Imprint and Trump Artistry!
- Although he found no more Immortals with Soulblades, in the early twentieth century, Aleyn realised that Evelyn Flaumel appeared to be unusually long-lived. He followed her and found himself shadow-trailing her through strange new worlds.
- Eventually he reached Amber, rose through the ranks of mercenaries and his skill, toughness and longevity came to the notice of King Eric. He appeared to be an unacknowledged offspring of an Amber Elder, but until he was acknowledged, he couldn’t be a “Prince”. Eric (and later King Random) employed him as an agent and a potential Trump Artist.
- It now appears that Setep (after his servant Neferu recognised the Soulblade in the Shadow Britannia) is VERY interested to see how the Soulblade managed to keep him alive for so many centuries. He has made a couple of attempts to gain possession of the blade (and Aleyn) and has now offered an open invitation for Aleyn to visit him and given him a Trump for Neferu in case he wishes to get in touch.
- If Setep learns that the Soulblade managed to “steal” Pattern Imprint by killing an Amberite, he would be EVEN MORE DETERMINED to get hold of the blade. This would give him access to ALL the Infinite Shadows rather than just the HALF currently reachable by Logrus Shadow-walking.

“So, you aren’t REALLY a member of the Family! You absorbed Pattern Imprint by killing this Marque de Callais?”



**“Yes – and he appears to have been a son of Brand! Whatever remains of Brand (in the Abyss), he knows what I did and wants revenge!”**

## In Search of Corwin

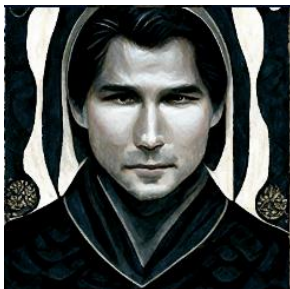
Leaving Trakka and Morgan behind again, they headed off to locate Corwin with Aleyn practicing his Shadow-walking abilities to bring them to a version of France between the world wars. This wasn't too difficult for him as he'd actually been there.

Cassie took over for the final adjustments, finding a version of Paris with bistros and tree-lined boulevards. She left Aleyn in the outskirts of the city in case she needed a quick Trump exit.



Wandering towards the café where she'd seen Corwin in her Pattern visions, Cassie felt something strange happening to her memories. Recent events became vague. Her reason for being here began to fade. Quickly she erected a Pattern Defence (visualising the Pattern and using it as a shield against the mental effect of the Shadow).

When creating/discovering this Shadow, Corwin had been imagining a happy place from his time on Shadow Earth. A place where he was carefree, with no memories of Amber. She found him at a table, surrounded by beautiful young women, drinking wine and delighting them with Poetry.



Cassie (protected by the Pattern) watched for a while and realised she would need to Shadow-walk Corwin out of here. When his poem mentioned an exciting fencing contest, she challenged him to a mock duel. He agreed and went to fetch a dusty scabbard from his room above the bistro and drew a silver sword etched with Pattern-like markings. This must be Greyswandir!

Claiming to know the perfect place for the duel, Cassie led Corwin and his entourage of admiring girls through the streets.

The Shadow-walking seemed to work and soon they were in streets that the others didn't recognise. Fortunately, Corwin was too drunk to be suspicious. They reached a large courtyard with a small copse of trees in the centre. As Cassie had been struggling against the mental effects and struggling to keep the interest of Corwin, she had let the exact details of Shadow drift. They were now in a version of Occupied France (lucky for her, they didn't bump into any German troops).

The duel began and Corwin (despite his drunken state) was clearly a superb swordsman. He playfully swiped at Cassie's clothing, attempting to undress her. As he sobered up and with Cassie prompting him, he seemed to be slowly recovering memories. She backed off, leading him around the trees and Shadow-walking the giggling girls out of the way and eventually Corwin sat down, holding his head as the memories flooded back.

She trumped Aleyn, then they trumped back to King Random. The King was delighted at the rescue of his brother. Corwin remembered that his son "Merlin!" had come visiting a few years ago and is still trapped in the shadow – with no memories of Amber and attending an Art School.