

Changeling The Dreaming

Seelie Court Guide

*“River Styx is high and wide
Cinder Bricks and razor wire
Walls of iron and concrete
Hound dogs howling round the gate
Them dogs’ll lay down and play dead
If you got the bones, if you got the bread
But if all you got is your own two legs
You best be glad you got ‘em”*

— “Wait for Me” – Anaïs Mitchell

Introduction

This Guide serves as a supplement for portraying a Seelie Court player character in the MES CtD: *Breaking Winter* Chronicle. The intent of this document is to give storytellers and players additional supporting information to allow for a cohesive, setting-appropriate Changeling faction.

History

The Unseelie say there was once a time when the Seelie passed their crowns willingly to the Unseelie, but if that was the case there are no Seelie with any Remembrance of it. The closest are the rare and unusual memories, distant and foggy, full of terror; they lay tied to an altar, waiting for the swift cut of an obsidian blade across their necks.

Truthfully, the Seelie never understood why they were resented. Under their control, Changeling society was always able to resist, and for many, thrive. The Unseelie benefited from their rule just as much as they did. And, now that they see the alternative, they silently wonder how anyone could disagree. Unseelie rule brings Winter, and Winter is death.

High King David Ardry, The Commoner's King, was among the brave souls who gave their lives during the final battle of the War of Masks. With his death the last hope of Summer seemed to slip away. Desperation is just the mirror of resolve, and the Seelie were resolved to live or die that day, their resolve was rewarded, but victory was acquired at great cost.

But was it indeed victory? They were unprepared for stories of late night meetings, and spies that slip oaths and detections like serpents to come to life. While many Seelie were and remain grateful for the Shadow Court's help over the Fomorian Armies, others see it as a Trojan Horse - a false gift that allowed worse into their midst.

Moreso, these honorbound changelings never could have prepared for the pain and heartbreak of seeing their friends and lovers turn out to be liars - Shadow Court members wearing a Seelie or Unseelie facade for many years. It was the ultimate betrayal.

Seelie eyes did not turn to the Kingdom of Willows for support. Many staunch Traditionalists had opposed Faerilyth when David had selected her as his bride, and they worked to make sure she did not feel welcome when she visited their freeholds after David's disappearance.

Many thought she was merely a pawn of Meilge, at best, and an Ailil harbinger of chaos, at worse. After Meilge's arrival onto the battlefield, many Seelie spent countless nights cursing her name by their campfires as they quixotically fought to maintain their former power, seeing her hand behind every conspiracy theory of the death of David.

But in time their Queen proved herself to be true and independent. The Seelie Court now recognizes that she was never their enemy, she upheld David's legacy, all major holds they retained were due to her intervention. Many schemes in play were halted, and now both Seelie and Unseelie alike are reawakening in greater numbers and surveying their new landscape. Faerilyth bought the Seelie Court time to recover, but, more importantly, her actions gave them a pathway. She gave them hope.

Hope that the warmth and light of Summer might come again.

Seelie Code

Death Before Dishonor

Dishonor is a stain on a Changeling's good name, and with the coming of Winter, sometimes all one may have is a good name. Dishonor can take many forms, but the breaking of an Oath blessed by the Dreaming is seen as a severe offence. For some Seelie, Honor is expressed through the old virtues found in the Chivalric Code, while for others it is understood more as a sense of fairness, of truthfulness, of an action that is morally just and appropriate. In order to preserve one's morals, or even vanity, Death may be preferred to being unmasked as a criminal,

a traitor, an oathbreaker, or other such shame. More astute Seelie will note, the Code is Death *Before* Dishonor; the clever courtier knows how to present themselves well in public, while still indulging in the occasional dishonorable actions. Just don't make your shame known. Otherwise, be prepared to fall on your sword, metaphorically — or literally — if needed.

Love Conquers All

While the Unseelie have their Passions, the Seelie have their Loves. Whether it be courtly, romantic, platonic, or even idealistic, these loves give the Seelie purpose and something to fight for, or defend. While True Love, with all its esoteric expressions, is usually seen as the most pure expression of this Code, Seelie Changelings more broadly embrace this Code as one of hope and optimism. Afterall, in so many stories it is love, hope, and perseverance that wins the day, and perhaps this new Winter can be overcome through the same.

Beauty is Life

For the Seelie, Beauty is the expression of Life, while death is ugly and anathema to the eternal Changeling soul. Life should be one filled with beauty, with art, with creativity and creations that inspire others to greatness. The defending of Beauty is seen as valorous, and often a Seelie Changeling may give up their life to preserve some rarity, such as a tree in the Dreaming that only bears fruit every decade, but whose bounty is said to taste of what the Changeling most enjoys. While an Unseelie Changeling may not see the purpose of such a tree and find its protection silly and wasteful, to some Seelie, there is a deep appreciation for the uniqueness of such a wonder, for its uplifting but transitory nature. The protection of something so beautiful and rare shows that death will not be yielded to, at least not without a fight.

Never Forget a Debt

The Seelie Court is one of honor.. A debt is seen as a promise of future repayment, or even more. Sometimes this Code is expressed altruistically, where a Changeling goes out of their way to help another, as they too were once helped. Other less charitable expressions of this Code appear as a seeming perfect recollection of every slight or debt that one is owed, and the extraction of such when the situation, or whim, merits it.

The Escheat

The Right of Demesne

The Seelie Court has always been the strongest proponent of this law, primarily as it assured Seelie rule under nobility, Sidhe or otherwise. Likewise, the Dreaming recognizes the ruler of a Freehold, and this mystical connection is seen as proof by many Traditionalists and Reformers of the importance of a central authority. Afterall, such a relationship is reciprocal, and be they

called subjects, vassals, or citizens, any Changeling can call on the holder of Authority in times of need.

The Right to Dream

Even as Winter is upon the Dreaming, most Seelie still publicly denounce Ravaging, and do their best to not waste Glamour. Dreamers and the Glamor they produce are vital for the survival of the Dreaming and Changelings. Reverie usually results in works of art, which can be displayed for their own artistic value, and only with great sorrow are they destroyed during times of need to release the Glamor stored in them. Besides, every Dreamer hurt by Changeling actions may result in another Hunter, and the Seelie Court has enough to worry about with the Shadow Court.

The Right of Ignorance

This law protects all Changelings from falling prey to humans and Prodigals. The Seelie Court carefully watches for Changeling interactions with the Prodigals — only meetings sanctioned by the highest local Authority are permitted. With so much Banality in the world, any exposure of Changelings and their Arts risks the loss of even more Glamour. Woe to the Changeling that relies solely on the Mists to hide their actions, as they may find themselves harshly punished.

The Right of Rescue

Every Changeling is worthy, and deserving, of Rescue in times of need. From the newly awakening Changeling undergoing their Chrysalis, to even to one's enemy should a Dauntain or other agents of Banality appear. This law assumes good faith, and cannot be invoked to lure others into obvious traps. Only those truly in need will be considered. Notably for the Seelie, this law extends to some of the now rare Chimera.

The Right of Safe Haven

The loss of a Freehold, let alone a Balefire, would be a tragedy even in Spring. Now, these places must be protected with even greater zeal. The Seelie Court knows what it is like to have lost the safety of one's home, to have been betrayed by former lovers, family, or friends, and they do not wish to see that sorrow fall onto others. Despite the Court's setbacks, many nobles and motley leaders have opened their Freeholds to those in need of succor, albeit with more security measures.

The Right of Life

The death of a Changeling is the death of a piece of the Dreaming, and the Seelie are loath to let another spark of Glamour vanish. Seelie Authorities may be more likely to keep political prisoners than hold executions, and they encourage duelists to use only chimerical weapons. While the Seelie Court has been lax with such chimerical duels, many are fearful that even Chimerical death risks too much. Still, the Seelie are not pacifists and will fight their enemies

with all the force needed to defeat them. Death should always be the last option, and the loss of any part of the Dreaming must be properly mourned.

Current Status

Those Changelings of the Seelie Court are not used to being on their back foot, nor are they used to hiding. However, this is precisely the situation that they find themselves in.

Some are living proudly, openly and publicly as Seelie Court members. While the Shadow Court, at least as a whole, does not currently seem to be working towards the Seelie's destruction, the Seelie that are proclaiming their true Court affiliation and intent to bring an end to winter openly are aware that any night could be the night that someone comes for them.

Other members of the Court are attempting to rely on their political acumen and blend into the large number of Unseelie. However, it is a fine line they walk, and more than one covert Seelie has been unmasked quickly due to minor slip ups.

However, they are trying to cope and the members of the Seelie Court are working to remain aware of their surroundings, and their allies. The betrayal of so many still haunts those that remember, and no one wants to fall for the same trick twice.

Those that cannot handle the new order of the Dreaming often try to band together in Seelie controlled areas.

Court Themes

The Seelie Court is a story of faded glory and lost power. By opting into this Court, you are saying that you are looking for a story of diminished power, an environment where you character may be targeted by Unseelie characters for seemingly no reason, and an experience where to what extent you will go to maintain and reestablish your power will be constantly called into question.

Impulses

All Seelie Court members must choose an Impulse to belong to.

Traditionalist

There has never been a lot of love lost between Traditionalist Seelies and the Unseelie Court, and that poor relationship has devolved even further. Since the Shadow Court's claiming of the Freeholds the Seelie considered theirs, Traditionalists have begun placing the blame for Winter on all Unseelie. They advocate for a return to high court and rigid power structures, and the

most fervent among the Impulse do not even acknowledge the truth of the Shadow Court's current dominance. Many Traditionalists are advocating for the removal, by any means necessary, of any Unseelie from any position of power. Ironically enough, this has led to several no traditional stances — most notably the elevation of Seelie commoner nobles over Unseelie Sidhe.

Reformer

Seelie Reformers feel a bit like Cassandra. After spending years warning that the system must change to be more inclusive of the Unseelie, or the consequences would be dire, their predictions have held true in ways worse than they could ever have imagined.

Now, Reformers are responding to this in one of two ways. Some are leaning on the positive relationships they had formed with the Unseelie, trying to make places for them and their friends at the newly forming Unseelie Courts. Others, however, have turned to more esoteric pursuits. Many Seelie Reformers are delving deep into quests for lost relics or information about the ancient past. If what the Unseelie say about the crown once passing is true, perhaps the most important contemporary reform could be the most ancient practices.

Modernist

Seelie Modernists share the same beliefs as the Shadow Court Modernists; all that separates them are their motivations and how far they are willing to go. Both believe the class distinction between commoners and nobles is ludicrous, and instead encourage those around them to embrace the 21st century. They are the first to acknowledge that the world is not the same as it was 600 years ago, when the Seelie allegedly interrupted the cycle, and will loudly proclaim to anyone that will listen that there is no going back, and new rituals and traditions must be found for any Changeling to remain relevant and survive mostly unscathed.