

Changeling!

Rules for an MLP-themed version of the Mafia/Werewolf party game.

The town of Apple Branch is a new one in Equestria, far from the watchful eyes of Celestia and Luna. Set up no more than 50 years ago, much like Ponyville, the small community therein has long since been an inclusive one, with members of all three tribes -- a sort of small, extended family, even with only about 20 or so ponies. They don't thrive, exactly, but nor have they been terribly hard-up: for most of the inhabitants, there might not be much to do, but it's the kind of laid-back, enjoyable life which almost anypony can get used to.

Every so often, a new hoofful of ponies arrive. Some leave almost instantly, bound for their more hectic and work-a-day lives. Others remain a while, perhaps making friends, but are drawn back to the hustle and bustle of society. But some stay, and make their way in this community, and show that they have the right, relaxed attitude and the desire to work to make them trusted members of this family.

But even in the most peaceful areas of Equestria, shadows lurk and plan. The nefarious Queen Chrysalis, leader of a group of bug ponies known as the Changelings, has set her eye on the loving community, and has secretly infiltrated the community with the shapeshifting insects, looking to ensnare the townsfolk. Now, with the advent of a new invasion of the horizon, the ponies of the community need to band together to root out the perpetrators - before it's too late!

Changeling! is a variant of a group of party games which are generally known better as 'Werewolf', 'Mafia', or 'Town of Salem'. In it, at least two persons take the roles of the opposition, and incapacitate or kill the citizens of the town around them, until only a few are left. When the number of foes matches or exceeds the number of other villagers, then the foes win - but if the villagers manage to root out the perpetrators, then their village is safe... until *next time*.

In *Changeling!*, each of the players are assigned a race, first off, of Earth Pony, Pegasus, or Unicorn. The players can pick one of these three themselves, or have it assigned at random, depending upon the rules. The three races have the following traits:

Earth Ponies are strong and hardy, capable of fending off an opponent under the right circumstances. The roles they can have assigned to them at random are *Sheriff*, *Protector*, and *Dark Hunter*.

Pegasi are flighty creatures, exceedingly quick but relatively weak, and capable of daring escapades. Their assigned roles are *Ranger*, *Stormwatcher*, and *Spy*.

Unicorns are magically-inclined, and their abilities often make them the first choices for targets - but they're also the most valuable resources in town, and can result in a

turnaround or a solid victory. Unicorns are generally assigned these roles: *Alchemist*, *Seer*, and *Medium*.

There are additional roles, but we'll get into those shortly. Next, we have the *Changelings*. At the beginning of a game, two to three players (depending on the count) are assigned to be Changelings, instead of another race. They will, however, pretend to be their initially-chosen race throughout the game, lest they invite suspicion. Changelings, being consummate infiltrators, will do anything they can to avoid attacks. Also, one of the Changelings will be marked as the *Alpha Changeling*, capable of transforming another towns person into a member of the hive once per game.

At the start of the game, the Storyteller will let each player know, in secret, what sort of roles they are playing: if they are a *Villager* or a *Changeling*, and what their roles, if at all, are. It is highly suggested that roles are used comparatively sparingly - perhaps, in a 12-pony game, one would have 2 changelings, and no more than 4 of the other 10 players would have a town role.

The game has two phases. First off, the Day Phase reveals who has been killed in the previous night. During the Day Phase, villagers speak with one another in discussion of who might have possibly killed or kidnapped their fellow villager (sniff!) and then discuss who to beat up or kill in response (rar!). At the end of the Day Phase, villagers (including hidden changelings!) take a vote upon whom to assault. The person with the most votes gets the snot beaten out of them, an action sure to reveal a changeling - or evoke sympathy and regret in those villagers who guessed wrong.

In the Night Phase, those with specific roles are able to make use of them, such as the Sheriff, Hunter, Seer and others. More pointedly, however, the Changelings hold a consensus on who would be the next person to kill/capture. Unless a specific role is protecting that person, there is no preventing this assault.

Once a person has been killed/captured, via either villager assault or changeling murder, they are *out of the game*. They can no longer provide information to the other players. The exception is if a player is a Ghost, which is a special circumstance.

After this, the Day Phase starts again, and the cycle continues until win or loss.

If, at any time, the number of Changelings meets or exceeds the number of other villagers, then the Changelings win. If the Changelings have been totally exterminated, then the villagers have driven off the menace -- for now...

Roles are played out a little differently in this variant of the game. Because the three pony tribes have their own unique flavours to them, there are a few adjustments to the

weighting system, which not only make the Changelings' choices a bit more tricky, but also give some indication to the other players as to who's not really acting in the best interest...

Remember to assign the Changeling status before assigning roles. This simplifies the task.

Earth Pony Roles are the *Sheriff, Protector, and Dark Hunter*. Before selecting a character to give that role, flip a coin. If heads, only Earth ponies are eligible. If tails, all characters are.

Each turn, during the night cycle, the **Sheriff** has the option to arrest a townsman on suspicion that they may be a Changeling. If they do so, cancel all actions for that character over the next 24 hours: they cannot vote, they cannot attack (if a changeling), and they cannot use any of their role's actions. The exception is the Seer, who can still use their abilities to deduce if somepony is in fact a Changeling. On the plus side, a person in the holding cell cannot be attacked by Changelings during the night.

The **Protector** functions a bit differently. Each night, the Protector may choose a fellow individual to protect. That individual won't be alerted as to the status of the Protector; however, if a Changeling attacks, then they will be fought off. There is a 25% chance that the Protector will perish during such an attack, or be captured instead.

Finally, the **Dark Hunter** has the ability to attack a given person every second night (or thereabouts: they can't attack the night after they do so), if they are convinced that the party in question is a Changeling. Their goal is simple: to rid the town of Changelings at any cost. The Dark Hunter does not incur any penalties for doing so, but they may be as much of a bane as a boon to the rest of the Villagers...

Pegasi Roles are the *Ranger, Stormwatcher, and Spy*. Follow the same rules as per Earth Pony roles.

The **Ranger** has a good sense for when they're likely to be assaulted. A Ranger has a 50% chance of any foes' attacks missing them, including those of the Hunter and Alchemist. From there, there is a ½ chance that the Ranger will have an idea of what race the party appears to be: Pegasus, Earth Pony, or Unicorn.

The **Stormwatcher** knows when things will turn against them, often in the most violent way. If they are lynched/attacked by the townsfolk, they will have the opportunity to turn the tide by killing one person who voted against them.

The **Spy** may pick one person, during any given night, to watch. If that person is assaulted during the night, the Spy won't be able to save them, but they will have clues given to them about who one of the Changelings was. Of course, making the other villagers believe them... that's another matter entirely.

Unicorn Roles are the *Seer*, the *Alchemist*, and the *Medium*. Again, same coin-flipping rules apply.

The **Seer** is widely regarded as one of the stronger roles in the game. They have the ability to, once per night, perform a working which reveals to them the status of one of the villagers - be it as a Changeling or Villager, as well as data in regards to their classification. Some exceptions do apply.

The **Alchemist** is a potentially harmful role, but can be beneficial in the right hands. They have the ability to poison or put to sleep any given villager - and while that villager is asleep or poisoned, they may not take part in their active role. This lasts one day/night cycle, starting in the day. Changelings cannot attack, though poisoned villagers may still vote to lynch. Seers, however, will not be able to scry.

The **Medium** is an odd case. They are the only ones able to communicate with a Ghost, who might be able to tell them something about attacks - or serve as a focus of vengeance. They've a 50% chance of encountering the Ghost on a given night. Classes who are aware of the Medium's status can sometimes funnel useful information through her - but be advised, there might be watchful eyes...

Unclassed Roles include the following:

The **Ghost's** ability only applies after they've died, by hook or by crook, so to speak. Once a player becomes a Ghost, they have a 50% chance of appearing to the Medium every night, and relaying information. Finally, the Ghost has the option, just once after they die, to kill or maim *one* Villager or Changeling, rendering them out of the game.

The **Faux Seer** is an optional role, and means that the player *thinks* that they're a Seer, but every guess they take is wrong somehow, be it seeing a role in the wrong place, or seeing a Changeling where there is none (or vice versa), or even seeing everyone as a Changeling. Mediators are advised to use their discretion there.

The **Doctor** is only a role if there are one or more Alpha Changelings around. They can, once a day, test a person for Changeling possession and administer a cure.

The **Mayor** of the town is a non-optional role. They do not have any special powers, but their vote carries twice as much weight as other villagers. (Two votes/phase instead of one.) The Mayor can, however, also be a Changeling...

The **Quisling** is a pony who helps out the Changelings in exchange for not being eaten. They are classified as an enemy, despite not being an actual Changeling unless they are Converted.

Changeling Roles include:

The **Changeling Alpha** can, once a game, Convert a Villager, transforming them into one of Chrysalis' slaves. If they are so transformed, they no longer keep their Role, becoming an ordinary Changeling. The transformation takes 2 days: So, two nights after the party is infected, they then join the opposition.

The **Witch** is a Changeling with a power to stymie effects. They can target one person every other night, and affect them with an ability which prevents them from doing their job - protecting, or locking up, or the like. The target does not know what happened; perhaps they just got too drunk?

The **Mask** is a Changeling with the ability to readily mimic any other member of the townsfolk. They can cast a vote in lieu of any other person who is *in absentia*, in order to throw suspicion upon them or make changes to the deciding factor. However, they can only do this once per day.