

# Changelings

Corporeal Forces: 2

Strength: 4

Agility: 4

Ethereal Forces: 2

Intelligence: 4

Precision: 4

Celestial Forces: 2

Will: 4

Perception: 4

Vessel: human/2

Skills: Area Knowledge/3 (Varies), Dodge/1, Dreaming/4, Driving/1, Emote/3, Knowledge/3, (How to be a whatever), Language/3 (Varies), Large Weapon/2 or Ranged Weapon/2 (any), Lying/3

Songs: Corporeal Entropy/6

Elements: Society (The Family) (primary), Astronomical Concepts: the Stars (secondary)

Affinities: Deception (Moderate), Glamour (Slight)

Dread: Having ethereal nature discovered (Common/2)

Well, folklore was never precisely what you'd call a *hard* science. There's a lot of misinformation in there, and it was even worse in the old days. And most of it was unflattering to ethereals like the Fae.

To be fair, the denizens of Faerie have quite enough of a *deservedly* bad reputation (the leeching off of humans, the

glamour, the Wild Hunt, their alignment with Hell, little things like that) that it's not surprising how they also get blamed for things that they did *not* do. Unfair, to be sure, but nobody that the Fae are even remotely prepared to believe has ever said that life was fair.

Case in point: the folklore of the changeling. According to legend, fairies would steal children away for their own purposes, replacing them with imposters who would often last quite a long time before being caught out and subsequently disappearing in a cloud of smoke. There's more to the legend than that, but it all involves motifs, archetypes, plot elements and the rest of that damnable critical analysis methodology that more than one ethereal has idly daydreamed about making illegal, upon pain of death. Hard to blame them, seeing as a folklorist has roughly the same effect on their existence as somebody who could disrupt the strong nuclear force at will, at range, and without thinking about it would have on *ours*.

At any rate, faeries do not steal children. They *replace* them.

Well, more accurately, they replace newly dead children. They do *not* kill children themselves. Not because faeries are such a sweet example of sapient life, but for the very practical reason that an angry angel is a killing machine;

there are few better ways to make an angel angry than to kill a baby. Even the Mercurians and/or Servitors of Flowers -- actually, *especially* Mercurians and/or Servitors of Flowers: Changelings aren't humans, after all. For that matter, it needn't even be *said* what a Servitor of Children will do to a baby-killer, for whispering will do just as well.

So what the Fae do instead is find a recently deceased human baby, which was frankly not that difficult a task for virtually all throughout human history. (The use of Changelings is not as prevalent today in the more industrialized parts of the world, but it continues.) They will quietly bury the corpse, and take its place. The lucky Fae will then... grow up. Fit in. Hope that a celestial never comes within Disturbance range while the fae is artificially aging its vessel. Grow 'old' and 'die'. In the meantime, the Changeling gets to enjoy the corporeal plane, and act as the ethereal on the scene for the Seelie Court, Unseelie Court, or possibly both.

There were worse ways to go through life.

Generally speaking, the Host does not actively hunt Changelings, although it will certainly investigate a genuine lead on one. This is not because Heaven has suddenly become forbearing; rather, it is a recognition of the Host's limited resources. There's also the problem that

the discovery of a Changeling *has* to end in its vessel-death, by both celestial and ethereal logic. Stories of creatures that slay and take another's shape are common to most cultures, after all, and it's amazing just how badly an otherwise-rational human being can react to proof that the old stories are *true*. Since the Host is committed to keeping humanity unaware of the supernatural (with only extremely limited exceptions), well: best to let hidden pookas lie. If you don't ask questions, you won't hear the answers.

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