

Fey Feature

The Seelie Court's Turning of the Seasons Celebrations

By Gwendolyn F. M. Kestrel and Faith M. Price



The fey thrive on parties and galas, seeing them as a chance not just to break up the monotony that can come with a near-eternal lifespan, but as a tool in their endless quest for social status. Celebrations offer opportunities to flaunt connections and curry the favor of those in power. Hence, the fey celebrate a myriad of festivals throughout the year.

Much of the fey's power and longevity derives from the living energy found within nature on the Faerie Plane that serves as their home. Because of this, festivals often serve as a reminder of their dependence upon the flora and fauna in which they dwell, as well as upon the heavenly bodies that control life cycles. While many festivals are newly created and draw mainly local fey, celebrating the Turning of the Seasons is a Seelie Court tradition from millennia past. These festivals draw fey from every plane and region.

Summer Solstice

While an occasional absence from the lesser solstice and equinox celebrations is vaguely frowned upon, no fey of any good standing in the court would wish to miss the spectacle of the Summer Solstice, a month-long celebration that begins on the longest day of the year. It commences with an elaborately choreographed dance that tells the history of the Seelie queens, starting with the most ancient of queens, the Queen of Original Illumination. This opening ceremony can take up to five days, and is held on the grounds surrounding the court of the present Seelie Queen.

Following the dance, fey sponsors bring forth their protégés to perform for the court. Stories are told, poems recited, and ballads of great beauty sung, all honoring either the queen or nature. After the queen has listened and seen all the players, she bestows a prize on her favorite. The artist may receive a blessed pen or voice-enhancing bauble, but the fey sponsor receives the true honor and her prize is far greater. To her, the queen gives a *garland of starfire*. Each flower on the garland is made from the essence of the stars.

Garland of Starfire: This beautiful garland has eternally fresh flowers. Plucking a flower from the garland activates the spell associated with it. When created, it has between two and five blossoms (1d4+1). A tiny violet creates *dancing lights*. A purple carnation conjures *glitterdust*. A multi-hued dahlia produces a *prismatic spray*. A yellow rose brings forth a sunburst. The garland occupies the headband, necklace, or amulet space.

Caster Level: 15th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *prismatic spray*; *Market Price:* 375 gp per violet, 1,500 gp per carnation, 5,250 gp per dahlia, 6,000 gp per yellow rose; *Weight:* --.

During the Summer Solstice festival, the queen also chooses a new Master of Gatherings. He takes responsibility until the next Summer Solstice for ensuring that the court is suitably amused with entertainment at all court gatherings. Winning this office is an extremely prestigious honor, but dangerous as well, since the queen does not tolerate failure or mistakes.

The celebration ends with the giving of gifts to the queen. Each noble knows that her gift will be judged by the queen and all the fey in attendance, and that social status may be gained or lost based on her choice. Gifts are often prepared months in advance, resulting in elaborate offerings, each more unique than the last.

Members of the court are not the only ones who use this occasion to gain favor. Any of the common fey can petition the queen's steward to have his gift opened personally by the queen. If she finds the offering amusing, the giver may receive a small token of the queen's appreciation. If the gift is judged ordinary, the fey may find himself an object of ridicule or much worse.

Fall Equinox

The Fall Equinox is celebrated in the oldest forest, the Oaks of Beginning Earth. This five-day celebration begins with the Feast of Bounty. Rich food and wine are brought forth, and toasts of thanks are proposed for the provisions of the year. The feast can last for several days, as each fey in attendance is expected to make a toast.

While the Queen attends the festival, she is not the central focus. The hunt, held on the day of the equinox, is the premier gala event. Each year a new quarry is chosen and armed with certain magical charms and disguises. Hunting parties of all sizes ride in pursuit. The queen presents a *horn of bounty* to the fey who captures and returns the prey.

Horn of Bounty: A *horn of bounty* greatly resembles a cornucopia. Once per day, the user can endeavor to play the horn for 10 minutes and make a Perform (trumpet) check DC 15. If successful, the horn produces the effects of the *heroes' feast* spell.

Caster Level: 11th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *heroes' feast*; *Market Price:* 26,400 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

Winter Solstice

The 10-day Festival of the Winter Solstice celebrates endings and rest. It begins on shortest day of the year, and is traditionally held among the ruins of the ancient Stonehart Giants. These ruins remind the fey that, as they replaced the giants, at some point they too will be replaced by a newer species.

During this gala, the fey are uncharacteristically tender towards each other. While jockeying for position still occurs among the nobles, many small slights that would normally cause elaborate displays of offense are overlooked. Even the Seelie Queen has been known to (very occasionally) overlook a small breach of etiquette.

Gifts are exchanged among the fey, primarily to show affection and appreciation of friendship. Many fey bring extra gifts as a precaution; to be caught without a reciprocal gift for an acquaintance is considered a grave insult.

The festival ends with a masquerade ball. Glowing balls of lights glitter in the night, casting a rainbow of colors on the snowy ballroom. Outrageous costumes of feather, flora, and fauna cast the fey in an even more otherworldly light. In this moment, an outsider would see the intrinsic elegance and pathos of the faerie kingdom. During the last moments of the ball, the queen bestows a final gift on the subject whose costume most pleased her. The gift, a *cloak of sheltering*, protects the wearer from the hazards that mark the winter months.

Cloak of Sheltering: This beautiful gray velvet cloak is lined with silver fox fur. It continually provides the wearer

with life-sustaining nourishment. The cloak also refreshes the body and mind, so that its wearer need sleep only 2 hours per day to gain the benefit of 8 hours of sleep. In addition, the cloak continually protects the wearer from cold. When the wearer would normally take cold damage, subtract 15 points of damage per round from the total to account for the cloak's effect. Lastly, once per day, the wearer can speak a command word to produce a comfortable place to stay per *Leomund's secure shelter* spell. The cloak must be worn for a full day before it works.

Caster Level: 5th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *create food and water*, *Leomund's secure shelter*, *protection from elements*; *Market Price:* 40,800 gp; *Weight:* --.

Spring Equinox

The celebration of the Spring Equinox marks new beginnings. After the long dark of winter, a breeze of youth blows across the plane. Even the eldest of the fey experience renewed vitality.

This five day festival ends on the equinox, and focuses on birth and play. It is traditionally held in a meadow near the court of the Seelie Queen. Many fey come dressed in garments consisting solely of leaves or spring flowers, and wear garlands of white or yellow on their heads.

Riddles are told and plays produced for the amusement of the queen and her court. It is at this time that any new births, on the rare occasion that they occur, are announced. The period of celebration ends with a scavenger hunt. Impossible clues send seekers across many planes in pursuit of imaginary items. The winner of the hunt receives a *treefriend pouch* of *liveoak* acorns.

Treefriend Pouch: This simple pouch made of thin, finely crafted doe skin contains 1d6 acorns. On command, an acorn grows into a Huge oak tree that comes to life per the *liveoak* spell.

Caster Level: 11th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *liveoak*, *plant growth*; *Market Price:* 4,125 gp per acorn; *Weight:* --.

About the Authors

Gwendolyn F. M. Kestrelis is an editor for Wizards of the Coast's Roleplaying Games R&D department. Recent credits include editing *Faiths and Pantheons*, *Oriental Adventures*, and *Magic of Faerûn*, and designing part of the *Book of Challenges*. She's a frequent contributor to the Wizards of the Coast website. Also, check out the website she created for her fiancé, Andy Collins, at www.andycollins.net.

Faith M. Price accidentally fell into the adventure game industry nine years ago. Since then she has worked for two game manufacturers, and has written for numerous magazines. She currently lives in Washington with two RPG designers and two cats, all of whom require regular feeding and attention.

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