

Under Hollow Hills

The Circus:

There is a traveling circus under the hollow hills. You are its performers, its ringmaster, its clowns, its sideshow, its stars. You are fairy kind and human kind, and you perform for great and small, revelers all.

You go where you choose, and to you a human child's birthday party in a vacant lot is the same as the command performance of a great Crowned Head of fairyland. (And *more like stuffed head*, saith the Hob.)

The Playbooks:

Before you play, choose a playbook.

One of you must play the *Mistress of Ceremonies*, the MC. Your job isn't to play a fairy in the circus, but to play fairyland and the mortal world, and anywhere in between, and everyone who lives in either or both. Someone should volunteer now!

Note that while the word "mistress" is gendered, the role of MC isn't.

Everyone else, choose one of these circus playbooks following.

The Boondoggle Hob:

You're goblin kind: strong, wry, grand and uncouth.

In the circus you can be ringmaster, performer, cook, and heel dragger. You're always there to comment upon others' work.

You like to play a person by *distracting them with tricks & visions*, or by *provoking them*. You like to play a situation by *making yourself something else*, or by *shrugging it off*.

(And *fair, fair, all fair*, saith the Hob.)

The Chieftain Mouse:

Note that while "chieftain" is a gendered word, gender is a game in fairyland, and you can play it however suits you.

You're mousey kind: valorous, honorable, romantic, and loyal.

In the circus you can be ringmaster, barker & caller, planner, and overseer of work. You're always there with an observation.

You like to play a person by *addressing them courteously*, or by *sitting counsel with them*. You like to play a situation by *seeking out the little wild things*, or by *summoning the Mousy Clans*.

(And *here's you with your stature greater than your stature*, haw haw, saith the Hob.)

The Crooked Wand:

You're witchy kind: practical, private, insightful, and calculating.

In the circus you can be fortune teller, conjurer, planner, and problem solver. You're always there with a secret to tell.

You like to play a person by *blindfolding them*, or by *laying them bare*. You like to play a situation by *sinking into the mud*, or by *throwing the bones*.

(And *secrets within the secrets, you, but I see the kindness you're hiding and don't think I don't*, saith the Hob.)

The Crowned Stag:

Note that while "stag" is a gendered word, gender is a game in fairyland, and you can play it however suits you.

You're fairy nobility: regal, generous, self-involved, and radiant.

In the circus you can be performer, ringmaster & host, planner, and worker. You're always there, gorgeous and flirty.

You like to play a person by *catching eyes with them*, or by *standing regal before them*. You like to play a situation by *stepping into the woods*, or by *summoning your court*.

(And *a true majesty, a true gorgeous majesty you are*, saith the Hob. And *never you let us forget it!*)

The Feather Cloak:

You're shifty kind, and a bird: resourceful, cheerful, busy, graceful, and humble.

In the circus, you can be barker & caller, aerialist & tumbler, lookout, and provisioner. You're always there with advice and gossip.

You like to play a person by *making them blink*, or by *serving them tea and honeycakes*. You like to play a situation by *hiding away*, or by *watching for your chance*.

(And *your voice it is sweeter than the lark or the linnet or the nightingale at the break of day*, belts out the Hob, with no more sense than that.)

The Firefly Whisp:

You're pisky kind: enchanting, sprightly, full of fun and malice.

In the circus, you can be clown, juggler & tumbler; purveyor of novelties, trinkets, tickets & refreshments; provisioner; and planner. You're always there as a voice of reason.

You like to play a person by *daring them to follow you*, or by *greeting them with honest pleasure*. You like to play a situation by *tripping it gaily*, or by *vanishing*.

(And *great and small, revelers all*, calls out the Hob. *Direct your attention to the center ring, and ware your pockets! Haw haw!*)

The Interloper:

You're a human being who's intruding into fairyland intentionally, in disguise, to steal fairy treasure. You've joined the circus because it will provide you cover and bring you to places where treasures abound.

In the circus, you can be purveyor of novelties, trinkets, tickets & refreshments; crew; worker; and lookout. You're always there, watching and listening quietly.

You like to play a person by *passing yourself off to them as royalty incognito*, or by *touching them with iron*. You like to play a situation by *pocketing something*, or by *taking to your heels*.

(And *a mystery to me, you are, I'm certain*, saith the Hob, adding *your Majesty*, just to be careful.)

The Lostling:

You're a human being who once upon a time wandered into fairyland, or once upon a time was stolen by fairies and brought here. Now you barely remember the mortal earth. The circus is your home.

In the circus, you can be performer, crew, creative collaborator, and problem solver. You're always there with encouragement and insight.

You like to play a person by *seeing through them*, or by *touching them with iron*. You like to play a situation by *appealing to fairy law*, or by *speaking of summer or winter*.

(And *come away, come away, the waters, the wild*, sings the Hob, forgetting somewhat the words, and forgetting outright the tune.)

Playbooks & The Basics

The Nightmare Horse:

You're no "kind" of fairy, you're the Nightmare Horse, unique and yourself: beguiler, bewitcher, dweller in night sky and deep water.

In the circus you can be star, guide, opener & closer of doors, problem solver, and cook. You're always there as a dangerous friend.

You like to play a person by *dragging them under*, or by *taking their breath away*. You like to play a situation by *changing your form & seeming*, or by *disarming the situation*.

(And do not dare to speak for me, Hob, saith the Nightmare Horse.)

The Seeker:

You're a human being who's come boldly into fairyland, to win back something that the fairies stole from you. You've joined the circus because you think that it will bring you, in its course, to the thing that was stolen.

In the circus, you can be performer, crew, planner, and worker. You're always there, patient, scowling, eager to be further on the road.

You like to play a person by *declaring your wrong to them*, or by *touching them with iron*. You like to play a situation by *trusting yourself to fate*, or by *turning your hand to it*.

(And it may be that the road's open to you, saith the Hob, but look, friend, that you strayn't off it.)

The Stick Figure:

You're a made thing given life and animation by magic: curious, naive, foolish and self-aware.

In the circus, you can be clown, fortune teller, worker, and problem solver. You're always there, trying to fit in.

You like to play a person by *blurting out to them what you think is going on*, or by *expressing yourself to them in capering antics*. You like to play a situation by *falling apart*, or by *getting to work*.

(And sweep up, broomstick! Haw haw! saith the Hob, but kindly.)

The Troll:

You're troll kind: powerful, undignified, dangerous and patient.

In the circus you can be performer, spectacle, worker, and problem solver. You're always there to lend a hand.

You like to play a person by *breaking them*, or by *towering over them*. You like to play a situation by *hunkering down*, or by *picking through the leavings*.

(And great and small, revelers all, calls out the Hob. Behold the mountain's sternest boulder, uprooted to stand before you! Wonder at its stature, its power, and its appetite! Is this a bicycle before it? Troll, do you intend to ride this bicycle, or is it your lunch?)

The Winding Rose:

You're flora kind: tough, beautiful, temperamental, with no patience for fools.

In the circus you can be performer, barker & caller, worker, and problem solver. You're always there with a smile and a cutting line.

You like to play a person by *cutting them quick*, or by *laying your hand on them*. You like to play a situation by *twining danger around*, or by *withdrawing behind thorns*.

(And a fine fierce beauty, you, saith the Hob, adding quickly, and no offense meant!)

Creating Your Character:

Once you've chosen your playbook, follow its rules to create your character.

If you have questions, ask the Mistress of Ceremonies (the MC). They'll be able to help.

To finish creating your characters, follow the rules under *Bindings* to introduce yourself and create your relationships with the other players' characters.

Planning Your Tour:

After you've created and introduced your characters, plan the circus' tour.

You'll need one Tour sheet for the group. Follow the rules on it to plan four shows to anchor your tour, two in fairyland and two in the mortal world. If you have any questions, ask the MC for help.

To play the game, you don't need to commit to playing out the full tour of 13 shows, but you should at least *pretend* that you might.

Once you've planned your tour, ask the MC where you are now, at the start of it, and play begins!

Making Your Play:

In the game, you always say what your character says, does, thinks, and intends, and the MC always says where you are and what's happening there.

When you decide to figure out what's going on, react to something, change what's happening, change what someone's doing, or take control of a situation, you do it by *making a play*. You should expect the MC to ask you often: "what's your play here? How do you play them? How do you want to play this?"

You can make *obvious plays*, and you can make your *playbook's plays*. Each playbook has its own set of four unique plays. You can't make anybody else's playbook plays, only your own.

Always choose a play that makes sense to you, given the circumstances and your own goals and interests. Sometimes it'll be obvious, and sometimes it'll be a stretch, but as long as you can explain how it makes sense to you, nobody can tell you that you can't make a certain play or insist that you choose a different one.

To make a play, announce it by name and pick up two dice. Follow the procedure in the play precisely. It'll call for you to roll the dice, make decisions and judgments, and/or ask the MC or another player to make decisions and judgments too. Everyone can read along with you, or you can step through the play yourself.

When you roll, *add or subtract your modifier for that play* in your playbook. The play's outcome always depends on your roll. Rolling 10 or higher, including your modifier, gives you the best possible outcome or the best possible choices. Rolling 7-9 gives you a good outcome or good choices. Rolling 6 or less is a miss, you've "misplayed" or you've "missed your play." The play might tell you what will happen on a miss, or it might just tell you to be prepared for the worst. In this case, it's the MC's job to decide what the outcome is.

Make sure to put a couple of copies of the Obvious Plays sheet out on the table so that everyone can refer to them when they need to.

The Obvious Plays:

The obvious ways you can play a person:

<i>Confront them</i>	<i>Set a scene for them</i>
<i>Draw them out</i>	<i>Size them up</i>
<i>Put them off</i>	<i>Waylay them</i>

The obvious ways you can play a situation:

<i>Ride disaster down</i>	<i>Stand against the tide</i>
<i>Sniff the wind</i>	

If something's happening to you that you don't like, always remember that you can *ride disaster down*.

The Basics

Planning a Show:

Don't plan a show now!

Plan your show when you've figured out, collectively, where you are, what's going on here, what your audience wants, and what you hope to get out of them.

Only then, grab a Playbill and follow its rules to plan your show.

Let the MC lead you in playing your show out, using any mix of obvious plays and playbook plays. At your show's finale, make the choices that decide its outcomes.

(And *well done, well done all! Strike set and hitch wagons!* shouts the Hob. No idlers, no dawdlers, no gawkers, let's put the miles behind us!)

Violence & Death:

To fairies, violence is a potent symbol, used to express feelings and ideas. "Dying" is a metaphor, even when someone really does it.

When you, a fairy, suffer violence, be it physical, verbal, or emotional, generally you choose the effect of it for yourself. You might choose to die, to withdraw in a fury, or to make some kind of display of your injury.

Fairies can return from death more or less readily. If you die, here's what to do next:

When the circus next performs, remind them to **celebrate a change in the roster**.

If any of them bid you goodbye, you can choose to remain dead. In that case, you have three options:

- Leave the game.
- Create a new character to play, either a hitherto NPC or else a newcomer to the circus.
- With everyone's agreement, take over as MC, and let the MC now join the game as a player.

If any of them invite you to return, you can choose to return from death. You can take the opportunity to change up your summer & winter imagery and your plays' rolls, if you like.

If they don't celebrate the change at all, or if you think that they've chosen poorly and you want to defy them, you can choose to remain dead, or return, as you like. If you return from death uninvited, though, it's certain then that they've insulted you, or you've insulted them, or both.

Iron can kill a fairy for real, and any physical violence can kill a human being. If you suffer true death, you can't come back, no matter how unanimously the circus should invite you.

Summer & Winter Imagery:

When you create your character, you create two lists of images, one for Summer and one for Winter. (If you're playing a human character, one for Bold or Free, and one for Careful.) Use this imagery when you describe yourself and your trappings.

You begin play in full Summer (or Bold, or Free), but you'll shift back and forth between Summer and Winter over the course of play. As you do, you change your imagery to match

Suppose that you're this version of the Boondoggle Hob:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| • Mushrooms, the bullfrog | o Fish bones |
| • Luminous eyes | o Bristly hair |
| • Berry black | o Pumpkin brown |
| • Stolen clothing, silk gown | o Stained apron |
| • Mannish, forbidding | o Womanish |

At the beginning of the game, you're in full Summer. When you describe your stolen silk gown, you can describe it as berry black. You can describe your bullfrog-like, bulging, luminous eyes, your wiry beard, and your forbidding scowl.

But imagine that, over the course of a few sessions of play, you've proceeded several steps toward winter:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| o Mushrooms, the bullfrog | • Fish bones |
| • Luminous eyes | o Bristly hair |
| o Berry black | • Pumpkin brown |
| o Stolen clothing, silk gown | • Stained apron |
| • Mannish, forbidding | o Womanish |

Now you can say that you've put an old apron over your gown, pumpkin-brown with stains. You can say that your eyes still glow but they're sunken now, not bulging like a bullfrog's. You can even say that your teeth have sharpened until they're like translucent needles, sharp as fish bones.

As you change from Summer to Winter and back, use your imagery to signal the changes to your fellow players.

Gender:

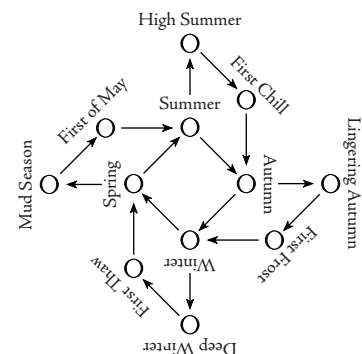
Gender is one of the games that fairies play.

You may have a true gender, innate to yourself — some fairies do, some don't; some human beings do, some don't — but whether you have one or not, you can make gender a part of the imagery you use to express yourself and your changing nature.

When you introduce yourself, you can choose to say your pronouns, or else omit to do so and keep your fellow players guessing.

This game text makes free use of *they* in its singular, gender-nondeterminate sense, and you may too.

The Fairy Seasons:



If there were a fairy year, it wouldn't have 4 seasons, it would have up to 12, varying freely one year to the next.

Each of the 4 mortal seasons is a crux:

- Spring can become summer, or else it can become mud season, and so remain, indefinitely, until the First of May heralds summer's coming after all.
- Summer can become autumn, or else it can become high summer, and so remain, indefinitely, until the first chill in the air heralds autumn's coming after all.
- Autumn can become winter, or else it can become lingering autumn, and so remain, indefinitely, until the first frost heralds winter's coming after all.
- And winter can become spring again, or else it can become deep winter, and so remain, indefinitely, until the first thaw heralds spring's return after all.

The course of the fairy seasons depends on the will and the efforts of the local fairies themselves. The circus can play a part: when you perform, you can choose whether and how the seasons progress.

In the mortal world, the year is set, of course: spring to summer to autumn to winter to spring again. This is true, except that even in the mortal world, the fairy circus can turn summer into high summer, autumn into lingering autumn, winter into deep winter, or spring into mud season.

The Worlds:

There are two worlds: the mortal world and fairyland. There's a liminal space, not a world, between them. The circus can travel from one world to the other, perhaps stopping between them. To do so, you just have to choose to, together, when you perform.



The Basics

NPC Performers:

Your characters aren't the only people in the circus. Here are some NPCs who might be in the circus with you. Feel free to add more, by name, at need.

- Fallsop the Goblin
- The Lady Rosemarie
- Butterburr & Bitterbalm, twins
- Timble the Plum
- Hattercob the Bootless
- Ochiran the Stoneswallower
- Ballybellow Bess
- Sweet Pea-bloom
- Varrus & the Family Oxbow
- Mommy Sorrel
- Annie Buckeyes
- The Hazelbrake Wind Ensemble
- Much the Tomtom
- Cobweb
- The Dandyseed Players

Fairy Coins:

Money is another game to the fairies.

There are three denominations of fairy coin: a *shaving*, a *measure*, and a *trove*.

A shaving is an annoying and reasonable amount to pay for something small. A meal or a ticket to the circus costs a shaving.

A measure is an annoying and reasonable amount to pay for something good and valuable. Your share of the circus' take is a measure. Maybe it's 20 or 50 shavings to the measure.

A trove is too much, really, to pay for anything. The entire circus, empty its stores, sell off its wagons, would be worth a trove. Maybe it's 200 or 500 measures to the trove.

Because they're a game and a symbol, you can treat anything valuable as fairy coins. Take a shaving off the applause of the crowd, receive your measure of joyful misrule, or, famously, pay a queenly tithe to hell with the trove of a stolen mortal knight's soul.

Consequences:

At need or at whim, and especially when you miss a play, the MC is allowed to do any of the following to you:

- *Have any NPC act against you that they choose, or indeed have fairyland act against you itself.*
- *Affront, shock, wound or dismay you.*
- *Tell you to proceed toward winter, or toward summer, or toward your choice which.*
- *Throw you between worlds, or all the way into the other world.*
- *Turn your play back on you, or have your counterpart play you instead, the same play or a different one.*
- *Give you +1 or -1 to your next play, or to the next time you make a certain play of their choice.*
- *Change your form, your seeming, or both.*

Also, sometimes NPCs can make obvious plays of their own, with the MC rolling dice for them.

Don't be startled!

Drama:

Or, a note for Narrativists of the old stripe.

The drama in Under Hollow Hills comes from the characters' emotional cycles, in relationship, not from explicit dramatic arcs.

In play, conflicts will certainly arise, and they'll certainly sometimes escalate to crisis and resolution. However, your job is to play your character through their emotional cycles, not to chase dramatic resolution. Let the conflicts come, don't look them out, build them up, or try to drive play toward them.

If you think you might be a Narrativist of the old stripe, it's better if you don't play the Seeker. Your instincts will lead you false.

Special Thanks:

Kay Bashe, Stephen Dewey, Scary Fairy Godmother.

The Mistress of Ceremonies

You're the Mistress of Ceremonies, the MC, Under Hollow Hills' game master. Your job is to play fairyland, the mortal world, between worlds, and all of the inhabitants of all of them, except for the players' characters.

Note that while the word "mistress" is gendered, the role of MC isn't.

Timelines of Play:

Before the first session:

- Carefully read through this sheet and the Basics.
- Look over a few of the character playbooks. Read one or two of them carefully through, so that you understand their layout and their procedures.
- Create a Place to Perform in fairyland. This will be the circus' first show. The only restriction is, make it an easy show.
- Optional: Share the Basics and the playbooks with the players. Ask them to choose their playbooks, or even to create their characters, in advance of the first session.

Bring to the first session:

- Printouts of the playbooks, if the players aren't bringing their own themselves.
- Several copies of the Obvious Plays to put out where everyone can refer to them.
- A copy each of the Tour sheet, the Playbill, and this sheet.
- Your Place to Perform.

Beginning the first session:

- Have the players create their characters, if they didn't do it beforehand.
- Have them introduce themselves and go around again for bindings. Emphasize that if no one volunteers for one, that's fine.
- Give them a Tour sheet. Tell them about the Place to Perform that you've created; this will be their first show. Have them plan four more anchoring shows, following the procedure on the Tour sheet.
- Give them a Playbill and tell them they should look it over, but not to plan their performance yet.

Launching play:

- They're arriving at the place you've prepped. Tell them what they see, hear, smell. Tell them what the place looks like as they approach.

On the MC's Reference sheet, this is "narrow down to where." Wherever the players' characters go, they're someplace specific, and one of your principles is to go there with them, and to take the players there too.

- Introduce one of your notables right away. Choose one of the obvious ones, one who has immediate business with the circus.
- This is your first play of the game, and it's a double: both "have someone arrive" and "have one of your NPCs do something sensible."
- Ask the players how they're going to play them, or how they're going to play the situation.

If they're hesitant, tell them to start off easy by *sizing your notable up* and/or by *sniffing the air*.

Answer their questions and play's underway!

The early session:

In the first part of the session, the players should accomplish what it says on the Playbill. Point it out to them: they should plan their show only once they figure out where they are, what's going on, what their audience wants, and what they want from their audience.

Tell them to take their time, see what they can figure out, and whenever they're ready, just get together to plan their show.

- Let them move freely around the place you've prepared. Let them meet its notables, have the notables rush up to meet them or hold back to draw them out.
- Let them find out what the laws here are, either by learning them in time or by learning them too late.
- You probably already told them about the audience's largesse, back when they were planning their tour. Now's your chance to show them what it means, instead of just telling them.
- You should also tell them, or at least hint, the opportunities they might have here.
- Make your plays freely, whenever you can get one in. Your early plays are to have the place reveal itself, have your notables arrive and depart, and have your notables do sensible things.
- Always ask them how they're going to play it, what's their play.
- And always remember the "two plays only" rule: you can let one of them make two plays in a row, if you want, but always cut to someone else before they make a third.

Mid-session, planning their show:

If they don't come to it themselves, you can prompt them: hey, I think you've figured the place out. Ready to plan your show?

- Tell them first to list all the performers who'll perform, then figure out their acts.
- Remind them to look through the list of acts & duties to consider and decide which ones they need to include and which ones they don't.
- Remind them that they can include any of the NPC performers they want, but tell them that when it's only NPCs alone in the ring, you probably won't pay much attention to them. Those won't be the important performances.
- Tell them that eventually they'll have to put the acts in order, but they can list them all out first, if that's easiest.
- Encourage them to think ahead about how their acts will work, in terms of their plays. If anybody's struggling with that — they won't be! but if they are — they can always fall back on *setting a scene for the audience*.
- Point out the section on choices and make sure they all understand how that process is going to go.
- Sit back and let them plan their show! You're there to answer questions if they have any, not to help with the plan.

Playing out their show:

Follow their lead, have them make their plays, and help keep the show moving.

You're their audience! Enjoy the show.

At the finale of the show, have them make their choices in private and reveal them. Tally them up and go through their outcomes. As the show ends, what's happening?

After their show, ending the session:

- Wrap up any loose ends in play.
- Before the next session, you need to create the circus' next Place to Perform, so find out whether the circus is staying here for another show, or moving on, and where to.
- At the very end of the session, go around the table one last time. Each player, ask: do you proceed toward winter, or summer, or stay where you are?

Subsequent sessions:

Play subsequent sessions just like the first, except:

- When you're creating Places to Perform, choose any kind of show, you're no longer limited to easy shows.
- Play with the form, as you feel comfortable. Open *in media res*, play with flashbacks, goof off, experiment.

The Mistress of Ceremonies



Your Job:

During play, your job is to:

- Make fairyland vivid.
- Follow the circus wherever it goes.
- Give the circus good times and bad times.

During prep, your job is to:

- Daydream fairies and fairyland.
- Daydream dangers and opportunities for the circus.
- Create places for the circus to perform.

Your Rules:

During play, your should:

- Always say what your prep demands, unless you have a genuinely better idea.
- Always say what honesty demands, unless you're playing around on purpose.
- Always say what the game's rules demand, unless nothing.
- Always take turns. Everybody gets to make their play, and so do you.
- Always say, "how do you want to play this? What's your play?"
- You can sometimes let somebody make two plays in a row, but never ever ever let them make three.

Your Principles:

During play, your should:

- Narrow down to where.
- Generalize the particular, and particularize the general.
- Literalize the metaphorical and metaphoricize the literal.
- Orbit the players' characters, but orbit them erratically.
- Play with the structure, play with the form.
- What-if yourself out of the sensible.
- Go the long way around.

Your Plays:

When it's your turn to make your play, choose:

- Have the place reveal itself. Remember the doors.
- Have the place react. Open a door or close one.
- Have someone arrive or depart, enter or exit.
- Have one of your NPCs do something sensible.
- Have one of your NPCs do something perverse.

Consequences:

At need, but especially when someone's play tells them to be prepared for the worst, choose:

- Make one of your plays.
- Affront, shock, wound or dismay them, or someone else.
- Tell them to proceed toward winter (or toward summer, or let them choose which).
- Throw them between worlds (or all the way into the other world).
- Turn their play back on them, or have their target play them instead, the same play or a different one.
- Give them +1 or -1 to their next play, or to the next time they make a certain play that you name.
- Change their form, their seeming, or both.
- Between worlds, always remember forgetting.
- In the mortal world, always remember how much iron there is.

For guidance: Remember that your job is to give them good times and bad times. Remember that their job is to take the bad with the good. Don't only do them bad, but do them bad.

When an NPC Fights:

When an NPC fights with one of the players' characters:

- If the player's character attacks the NPC, they're confronting them or waylaying them, depending. Generally don't second guess the player.
- If the NPC attacks the player's character, tell the player that they're attacking, and how, and ask how they want to play it.
- If they're meeting on equal footing to fight, though, with neither being the necessary attacker, they're drawing each other out, and you should roll dice for your NPC. Take turns with the player asking your questions and choosing your choices. You can let the player go first or go first yourself, it's entirely your choice.

For your NPC's bonus to draw the player's character out:

- +0 if they're not of much stature.
- +1 if they're of normal or good stature.
- +2 if they're huge.
- 1 if they're not in any way a fighter.
- +0 if they're ready, willing, and able to fight.
- +1 if they're a seasoned warrior.
- 1 if they're unarmed.
- +0 if they're armed.
- +1 if they're well armed and armored.

This gives you a minimum of -2 for a tiny unarmed fairy who doesn't fight, and a maximum of +4 for a war-hardened ogre armed and armored.

NPCs Making Other Plays:

Roll them! Why shouldn't you.

You're entitled to roll at +1. You can freely roll at +0 or -1 instead, if it seems correct. You can roll at +2 if you have a good reason why this NPC should make this play with a bonus.

Never let your NPCs make plays in order to dodge the consequences of the PCs' plays. But if an NPC wants to size up a PC? Sure!



Name: _____

—Summer—

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

—Winter—

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

—Trappings—

- A big, rumbling wagon pulled by a pair of surly bull-pigs.
- A polished, knotted skull-club, and a wicked little hook-shaped knife.
- A raw hide war coat, stained with old adventures, shedding wiry hairs.
- A pet snake, yellow and black like a hornet, but more wicked and not so tame.
- A traveling kitchen, jumbled, full of good smells.
- Books of children's stories, homey recipes, jovial songs, and accounts of murder.
- A knothole of wood, peer through it and you see what's invisible.

—Bindings—

- — finds himself consistently on my bad side, all undeserving. Every session, I must find some reason to **confront them**, if I can. Who?
- I've taken an absolutely unaccountable liking to —. Every session, I must **draw them out**, if at all possible. Who?

—Place—

- Ringmaster;
- Performer;
- Cook;
- Heel dragger;
- Always there to comment upon others' work.

—Plays—

Boondoggle Hob Plays:



— **Distract them with tricks & visions**



— **Provoke them**



— **Make yourself something else**



— **Shrug it off**

Obvious Plays:



— **Confront them**



— **Draw them out**



— **Put them off**



— **Set a scene for them**



— **Size them up**



— **Waylay them**



— **Ride disaster down**



— **Sniff the wind**



— **Stand against the tide**

The Boondoggle Hob

When you distract someone with tricks & visions, roll. On a 10+ hit, choose 3 of the following. On a 7–9 hit, choose 2.

- You make something appear from nowhere. What?
- You make something disappear from someone's hand, to reappear elsewhere. What and where?
- You make something disappear from someone's hand, never to reappear, except perhaps in your own pocket later. What?
- You change something into a bird and release it to fly away. What?
- You feed something to something and make it reappear in your hand. What and to what?
- You summon a vision in the air, of something beautiful, terrible, whimsical, or sentimental. What?

...And meanwhile, on any hit, no one who can watch your tricks can pay attention to anything else. On a miss, the MC might have you choose 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst. Perhaps you give the game away.

When you provoke someone, roll. On any hit, say something mild, harmless, innocuous, inoffensive, and they absolutely must consider it a terrible insult. On a 10+ hit, furthermore, without realizing it, they've taken a weapon into their hand. On a miss, say something that they rightly should consider a terrible insult, and if you can't think of any such thing, take it that they've insulted you.

When you make yourself something else, roll. On any hit, you become your choice of:

- A big old croaking raven.
- A flight of a dozen starlings.
- Thousands of centipedes, millipedes, beetles, and worms.
- A single black wasp.
- A beautiful young deer, russet red, with a first year's antlers.
- A quizzical and stubborn old mutt dog.
- A burning firebrand, pine-pitch smoky and scattering sparks.

You remain so transformed for as long as you choose. On a 10+ hit, afterward, you can vanish into nothing and reappear later. On a 7–9 hit, at the end of your transformation, you must return to your own naked self. On a miss, instead of transforming yourself, you simply proceed to full winter.

When you're wounded, shocked, affronted or dismayed, and you shrug it off, roll. On any hit, you're unhurt and unaffected and need not choose any response at all. On a 10+ hit, you don't even consider their attack to be an insult, but on a –9 hit, you may. On a miss, your attacker chooses how you must respond.

The Boondoggle Hob

To play the *Boondoggle Hob*, create your name, your summer & winter, your plays, your place, your trappings, and your bindings.

Your Job:

Your job as a player is to:

- Make your character vivid.
- Play your part in the circus.
- Take the bad with the good.

Name:

Choose a name that sounds like nonsense.

Examples: Ermatilla, Harebrake, Kimbledorn, Nighley Bluw.

Summer & Winter:

From each of the following, choose one for summer and one for winter:

- Fish bones, humus, mushrooms, may thorn, wormy apples, beetles, churned mud, spring peepers, the bullfrog, the rooting boar, poison ivy.
- Crooked nose, lumpy face, long jaw, pointed ears, pointed face, luminous eyes, shaggy hair, spiky hair, bristly hair, lined face, ugly face, glittering eyes.
- Berry red, berry black, pine green, pumpkin brown, cream, periwinkle.
- Stolen clothing, golden fillet, satin gown, heeled boots, silk shoes & pattens, working clothes, tidy apron, stained apron, shapeless felt hat.
- Mannish, womanish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, forbidding, unapproachable.

You can choose 2 sometimes if you want to, why shouldn't you?

Example (summer / winter):

Mushrooms, the bullfrog / fish bones
Luminous eyes / bristly hair
Berry black / Pumpkin brown
Stolen clothing, silk gown / stained apron
Mannish, forbidding / womanish

Begin play in full summer: mark all of the lines in the summer column.

Plays:

You can make all of the obvious plays and the Boondoggle Hob plays. Mark +2 next to your choice of three plays, +0 next to two, -1 next to two, and +1 next to all of the rest. These are your plays' rolls.

Place:

In the circus, at need, you can take any and all of the listed roles.

Trappings:

You get all of the listed trappings.

Bindings:

Everybody introduces themselves by name, summer & winter (or the corresponding), and place, including any details they like. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for bindings. On your turn, ask for volunteers:

- One of you finds yourself consistently on my bad side, all undeserving. **Who?** Every session, I must find some reason to **confront you**, if I can.
- One of you, I've taken an absolutely unaccountable liking to. **Who?** Every session, I must **draw you out**, if at all possible.

If no one volunteers, so be it and move on. If more than one volunteers, accept them all, choose one, or ask them to decide between them, as you like.

On the others' turns, volunteer as you choose.

-Consequences-

Summer & winter:

When you move toward summer, erase one of the marks in the winter column and mark the same line in the summer column.

When you move toward winter, erase one of the marks in the summer column and mark the same line in the winter column.

Whenever you move toward summer or toward winter, take 1 from one of your plays' rolls and add 1 to a different play's roll. Choose intentionally, to match your feeling about the change. Keep to a minimum of -2 and a maximum of +3.

Violence:

Violence in fairyland is considered visceral, irrevocable, and horrifying. **When you're wounded, shocked, affronted, or dismayed**, you must immediately choose 1:

- You die.
- You withdraw at once in a cold, dignified fury.
- You writhe, moan, and curse in a display of melodramatic agony.
- You proceed immediately and fully to winter.
- You consider yourself cruelly mistreated and maimed, and will long nurse your injuries and your grudge.

True death: there are only a few things that can truly kill a fairy. Cold iron is one; there are others. There's no coming back from true death.

Insults:

When someone insults you, you're allowed by fairy law and your fairy nature to answer it. It's considered to be your own unimpeachable right to weigh the insult and respond in due measure, so only you can choose what form your answer should take and how extreme it should be. Other fairies may gossip, but no fairy would rightly stand before you and assert that you've overstepped.

Beholden:

When you are beholden, fairy law and your fairy nature demand that you make good and deliver the balance. If you are recalcitrant or uneager to do so, your debtor may consider it an insult or a worse offense.

Name: _____

–Summer–

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

–Winter–

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

–Trappings–

- A well-made painted cart with a high driver's seat, pulled by a comically small pony.
- A deft and sharp little sword.
- A heraldic shield, hung with pelts of weasel, mink, fox and owl.
- A boar spear nearly five feet long.
- Maps, histories, genealogies, and studies of flora and fauna.
- A blessed stone: place your hand on it and you cannot speak untrue.

–Bindings–

- —, though not a mouse, has sworn allegiance to me. I can never lie to them or deny to *sit counsel with them*. Who?
- — has, in the past, rendered worthy service to the Mousy Clans. I can never *put them off* or *waylay them*. Who?

–Place–

- Ringmaster;
- Barker & caller;
- Planner;
- Overseer of work;
- Always there with an observation.

–Plays–

Chieftain Mouse Plays:



—Address them courteously



—Sit counsel with them



—Seek out the little wild things



—Summon the Mousy Clans

Obvious Plays:



—Confront them



—Draw them out



—Put them off



—Set a scene for them



—Size them up



—Waylay them



—Ride disaster down



—Sniff the wind



—Stand against the tide

The Chieftain Mouse

When you address someone courteously, roll. On any hit, they must answer you courteously in return, no matter their intentions or animosity toward you. On a 10+ hit, furthermore, they must address everyone else courteously as well, while you are present. On a miss, while they must nevertheless answer you with courtesy, they may, if they choose, answer you with a cutting and sarcastic false courtesy that you may consider an insult or that may even wound you.

When you sit counsel with someone, roll. On any hit, hear them out, listen carefully, and ask questions to better understand. When you're ready, tell them honestly what you think their best next play might be. If they make that play, they roll it at +3. On a 7–9 hit, however, if they follow your advice, they're beholden to you, and if they decline to follow it, you may take it as an insult. On a miss, give them unthinking bad advice, and if they decline to follow it, you may take it as an insult.

When you seek out the little wild things, roll. On any hit, ask questions; the MC must answer them truthfully. On a 10+ hit, ask 3. On a 7–9 hit, ask 2.

- What news from the little wild birds?
- What news from the bee clans?
- What news from the beetles and worms?
- What news from the star-chasing night winds?
- What news from the voles, the moles, the munks, and the other lesser clans?
- What news from the cousin bats?
- What news from the crows, that I addressed from the safety of a brier?
- What news from the old sleepy cat, who no longer hunts?
- What news from the porcupine and the skunk, who fear none?
- What news from the bear, to whose ear I crept?

On a miss, in seeking out the little wild things, you've blundered into a hunter. Ask the MC where you are and what's doing.

When you summon the Mousy Clans, declare who you're summoning and roll.

- A cadre of seasoned warrior mice, armed for fighting.
- A bonny hundred of worthy mice, eager to work, brawl, sing, dance, & play.
- The beauties of the clans, soft, sweet, playful, and pretty.
- The elders of the clans in all their wisdom.
- The Clans Entire, by their thousands and thousands.

On any hit, they answer your call at once. On a 7–9 hit, though, or on any hit if you're summoning the Clans Entire, the MC chooses a complication that comes along with them:

- Their mothers.
- A rival clan's chieftain to contest your rule.
- Renegade mice recognizing no clan.
- A panther.

On a miss, they don't answer your call, or not in full or not at once, and the MC chooses a complication to explain why.

The Chieftain Mouse

To play the *Chieftain Mouse*, create your name, your summer & winter, your plays, your place, your trappings, and your bindings.

Your Job:

Your job as a player is to:

- Make your character vivid.
- Play your part in the circus.
- Take the bad with the good.

Name:

Choose a mouse name, and be sure to choose one suitable for a mouse of distinction.

Examples: *Clover the Fearless, Ezekiel the Deadly, Anatole the Kind, Ruby the Fierce*

Summer & Winter:

From each of the following, choose one for summer and one for winter:

- Laughing brook, sunlight and leaves, wind in tall grass, the forest floor in autumn, apples, the smell of moss and water, river stones, the crisp winter morning.
- Handsome whiskers, bright eyes, buck teeth, cute face, soft fur, sober little face, thoughtful frown, curious beauty.
- Smoke gray, white, pale gray, chestnut, dark brown, golden brown, golden blonde, strawberry blonde, amber, rufus red.
- Fancy clothing, velvet coat, velvet cape, high boots, well-made plain clothing, worked mail, soft shoes, wool hood, felt hat, rakish cap and cockade.
- Mannish, womanish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, forbidding, unapproachable.

You can choose 2 sometimes if you want to, why shouldn't you?

Example (summer / winter):

Sunlight and leaves / river stones
Sober little face / thoughtful frown
Strawberry blonde / pale gray
Velvet cape, soft shoes / wool hood
Girlish, sexless / womanish

Begin play in full summer: mark all of the lines in the summer column.

Plays:

You can make all of the obvious plays and the Troll plays. Mark +2 next to your choice of three plays, +0 next to two, -1 next to two, and +1 next to all of the rest. These are your plays' rolls.

Place:

In the circus, at need, you can take any and all of the listed roles.

Trappings:

You get all of the listed trappings.

Bindings:

Everybody introduces themselves by name, summer & winter (or the corresponding), and place, including any details they like. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for bindings. On your turn, ask for volunteers:

- One of you, though not a mouse, has sworn allegiance to me. **Who? I can never lie to you or deny to sit counsel with you.**
- One of you has, in the past, rendered worthy service to the Mousy Clans. **Who, and what service? I can never put you off or waylay you.**

If no one volunteers, so be it and move on. If more than one volunteers, accept them all, choose one, or ask them to decide between them, as you like.

On the others' turns, volunteer as you choose.

-Consequences-

Summer & winter:

When you move toward summer, erase one of the marks in the winter column and mark the same line in the summer column.

When you move toward winter, erase one of the marks in the summer column and mark the same line in the winter column.

Whenever you move toward summer or toward winter, take 1 from one of your plays' rolls and add 1 to a different play's roll. Choose intentionally, to match your feeling about the change. Keep to a minimum of -2 and a maximum of +3.

Violence:

Violence in fairyland is considered visceral, irrevocable, and horrifying. **When you're wounded, shocked, affronted, or dismayed**, you must immediately choose 1:

- You die.
- You withdraw at once in a cold, dignified fury.
- You writhe, moan, and curse in a display of melodramatic agony.
- You proceed immediately and fully to winter.
- You consider yourself cruelly mistreated and maimed, and will long nurse your injuries and your grudge.

True death: there are only a few things that can truly kill a fairy. Cold iron is one; there are others. There's no coming back from true death.

Insults:

When someone insults you, you're allowed by fairy law and your fairy nature to answer it. It's considered to be your own unimpeachable right to weigh the insult and respond in due measure, so only you can choose what form your answer should take and how extreme it should be. Other fairies may gossip, but no fairy would rightly stand before you and assert that you've overstepped.

Beholden:

When you are beholden, fairy law and your fairy nature demand that you make good and deliver the balance. If you are recalcitrant or uneager to do so, your debtor may consider it an insult or a worse offense.

Name: _____

—Summer—

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

—Winter—

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

—Trappings—

- A creaking weather-warped cart, pulled by a cheerful old ox.
- An old weapon, more interesting than it first looks.
- Someone's antique bronze armor, given to you for safe keeping, you forget whose.
- Birch-bark books written with words stolen from the creation of the world.
- An annoying cat.
- A glowing hot coal that will never cool.

—Bindings—

- I once turned — into a little bird, put you in a cage, and let my cat stare at them with its yellow eyes. I can never again *waylay them* or *blindfold them*. Who?
- — once confessed to me heir heart's true love and longing. I can never *put them off*. Who?

—Place—

- Fortune teller;
- Conjurer;
- Planner;
- Problem solver;
- Always there with a secret to tell.

—Plays—

Crooked Wand Plays:

☐ — *Blindfold them*

☐ — *Lay them bare*

☐ — *Sink into the mud*

☐ — *Throw the bones*

Obvious Plays:

☐ — *Confront them*

☐ — *Draw them out*

☐ — *Put them off*

☐ — *Set a scene for them*

☐ — *Size them up*

☐ — *Waylay them*

☐ — *Ride disaster down*

☐ — *Sniff the wind*

☐ — *Stand against the tide*

The Crooked Wand

When you *blindfold someone*, roll. On any bit, you rob them of some of their sense or some of their senses. On a 10+ bit, choose 2. On a 7–9 bit, choose 1.

- They don't notice what — is doing.
- They forget —.
- They feel safe and out of all danger.
- They feel lost, disoriented, and out of all certainty.
- Tell them something. They believe it uncritically, as long as they're blindfolded.

On a miss, the MC might have you choose 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst. Perhaps by blinding them to some things, you'll awaken others.

When you *lay someone bare*, roll. On any bit, you reveal something to them, about them. On a 10+ bit, choose 2. On a 7–9 bit, choose 1.

- You reveal to them their secret heart.
- You reveal to them the hearts and natures of those nearest to them.
- You reveal to them their best way forward.
- You reveal to them their lost past.

Whichever you choose, you don't know what they learn, but ask them how they react to the revelation. However, if you have a glass, a basin, or an oracle to read, you can catch a shadow or a mirror image of their revelation for yourself. Ask them what you see.

On a miss, choose 1 anyway, but in the act, you lay yourself bare as well. The MC chooses 1 against you, and asks you how you react in turn.

When you *sink into the mud*, roll. On any bit, you can't be found, and any trouble that comes, passes you by without touching you. You choose when to emerge. On a 10+ bit, choose 1 of the following as well.

- You emerge healed of any wound, shock, resentment or grudge, with your person and your dignity intact.
- You emerge in full summer.
- You can bring someone else into and out of the mud with you.
- You forget what's come before, and emerge with your mind fresh and clear.

On a miss, any trouble that comes, finds you buried in the mud, unable to escape. Ask the MC what's happening.

When you *throw the bones*, roll. On any bit, ask the MC questions; the MC must answer them truthfully. On a 10+ bit, ask 3. On a 7–9 bit, ask 2. You must make up your own questions, and there are no limits on them. If the MC's answer is later proven wrong, you may consider it an insult or even a terrible shock. On a miss, ask 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst. Perhaps the simple act of asking will transform the answer.



The Crooked Wand

To play the *Crooked Wand*, create your name, your summer & winter, your plays, your place, your trappings, and your bindings.

Your Job:

Your job as a player is to:

- Make your character vivid.
- Play your part in the circus.
- Take the bad with the good.

Name:

Choose a common name, plus a fantastic name, a sinister image, or a comforting image, and connect them together.

Examples: Granny Jack, Jenny Undertow, Alice Alivaker, Timothy Bones

Summer & Winter:

From each of the following, choose one for summer and one for winter:

- Broken branches, mud, ravens, the trailing willow, torn lace, smoke from a chimney, drowned roots, vine-twisted wood.
- Wrinkled face, hidden beauty, ageless beauty, shining eyes, hooded eyes, blinded eyes, cut out eyes, knotted hair, long beard.
- White, gray, deep red, midnight blue, black, brown.
- Old clothing, knit gloves, shawl, a floppy hat, a jaunty hat, a subtle brocade, elegant clothing, worn clothing, an antique breastplate or helmet.
- Mannish, womanish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, forbidding, unapproachable.

You can choose 2 sometimes if you want to, why shouldn't you?

Example (summer / winter):

Mud, ravens / the trailing willow
Wrinkled face, shining eyes / hidden beauty
Gray / midnight blue
Old clothing, knit gloves / a subtle brocade
Womanish / queerish

Begin play in full summer: mark all of the lines in the summer column.

Plays:

You can make all of the obvious plays and the Crooked Wand plays. Mark +2 next to your choice of three plays, +0 next to two, -1 next to two, and +1 next to all of the rest. These are your plays' rolls.

Place:

In the circus, at need, you can take any and all of the listed roles.

Trappings:

You get all of the listed trappings.

Bindings:

Everybody introduces themselves by name, summer & winter (or the corresponding), and place, including any details they like. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for bindings. On your turn, ask for volunteers:

- One of you, I once turned into a little bird, put you in a cage, and let my cat stare at you with its yellow eyes. **Who, and why?** I can never again **waylay you** or **blindfold you**.
- One of you once confessed to me your heart's true love and longing. **Who, and what or whom?** I can never **put you off**.

If no one volunteers, so be it and move on. If more than one volunteers, accept them all, choose one, or ask them to decide between them, as you like.

On the others' turns, volunteer as you choose.

-Consequences-

Summer & winter:

When you move toward summer, erase one of the marks in the winter column and mark the same line in the summer column.

When you move toward winter, erase one of the marks in the summer column and mark the same line in the winter column.

Whenever you move toward summer or toward winter, take 1 from one of your plays' rolls and add 1 to a different play's roll. Choose intentionally, to match your feeling about the change. Keep to a minimum of -2 and a maximum of +3.

Violence:

Violence in fairyland is considered visceral, irrevocable, and horrifying. **When you're wounded, shocked, affronted, or dismayed**, you must immediately choose 1:

- You die.
- You withdraw at once in a cold, dignified fury.
- You writhe, moan, and curse in a display of melodramatic agony.
- You proceed immediately and fully to winter.
- You consider yourself cruelly mistreated and maimed, and will long nurse your injuries and your grudge.

True death: there are only a few things that can truly kill a fairy. Cold iron is one; there are others. There's no coming back from true death.

Insults:

When someone insults you, you're allowed by fairy law and your fairy nature to answer it. It's considered to be your own unimpeachable right to weigh the insult and respond in due measure, so only you can choose what form your answer should take and how extreme it should be. Other fairies may gossip, but no fairy would rightly stand before you and assert that you've overstepped.

Beholden:

When you are beholden, fairy law and your fairy nature demand that you make good and deliver the balance. If you are recalcitrant or uneager to do so, your debtor may consider it an insult or a worse offense.

Name: _____

–Summer–

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

–Winter–

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

–Trappings–

- A wagon changeably cozy and regal, pulled by a proud bull. In your wagon is the best bed in the circus, by far.
- A servant, a silent elfin boggart called Tirophene.
- Sword and armor befitting, laid out in a figured chest, under the bed.
- A musical instrument of mortal make, contrary and unmastered.
- A mirror. Look in it and in your own face you'll see your father's face, your mother's face, your past, your future, what you've lost, what you've kept, and/or what you'll yet have.

–Bindings–

- — and I have a regular thing and we're easy in one another's company. If I *confront them*, *put them off*, *waylay them*, or *stand regal before them*, they may consider it an insult. Who?
- I've treated — too casually before now. I can never again *set a scene for them*, and if I *catch eyes with them*, I make myself beholden to them, whatever they choose. Who?

–Place–

- Performer;
- Ringmaster & host;
- Planner;
- Worker;
- Always there, gorgeous and flirty.

–Plays–

Crowned Stag Plays:

☐ — *Catch eyes with them*

☐ — *Stand regal before them*

☐ — *Step into the woods*

☐ — *Summon your court*

Obvious Plays:

☐ — *Confront them*

☐ — *Draw them out*

☐ — *Put them off*

☐ — *Set a scene for them*

☐ — *Size them up*

☐ — *Waylay them*

☐ — *Ride disaster down*

☐ — *Sniff the wind*

☐ — *Stand against the tide*

The Crowned Stag

When you catch eyes with someone, and you mean it, roll. On any bit, they have to choose: you fight each other, or you fall passionately into each others' arms. On a 10+ bit, they can choose one now, then change their mind and choose the other in a little while instead, if they want to. On a miss, they can still choose if they want to, or else they can grin or scowl or look away and choose neither.

When you stand regal before someone, roll. On 10+ bit, choose 3 of the following. On a 7–9 bit, choose 2. If there are more people here than one, decide whether your choices apply to one, some, or all of them.

- They must stop and take a step back from you.
- They bend a knee, reflexively.
- They may not speak, act, or go until you give them leave.
- Invite them to come forward and address you. They must.
- Bid them welcome and to make free. Your hospitality now prevails here, for them, above any other law and custom.

On a miss, they must stop and take a step back, but then they're free to act as they choose.

When you step into the woods, roll. You can bring friends with you, if you invite them and they choose to come. On any bit, choose 1 of the following.

- You're in wild orchards, where the apples and pears grow boozy and feral. There's a fast-moving little old ciderer.
- You're in a place of comfort and leisure, with steaming hot pools and mossy bowers under the swaying, whispering trees. There are night-singing birds.
- You're in the dark woods, where the trees have turned cruel and treacherous tracks lead. There's danger.
- You're at a "hunting lodge," in fact a small woodland palace of twenty rooms. There's a staff of elfin servants, fussy, disapproving, and eager to please.
- You're at a place of high wild beauty, a wooded craig close to the stars, with an ancient stone circle and a spring of water so pure and cold that you can become drunk on it.

On a 10+ bit, in addition, look for it and you'll find the royal road to the court of your father, the King of the Forest, with white birches standing honorguard. On a miss, you're lost in the woods, and separated from your companions. Ask the MC where you are.

When you summon your court, declare who you're summoning and roll.

- Your bodyguard, 8 fearless stags, themselves royalty.
- A dozen of your courtiers, each more beautiful and gracious than the last.
- Your teachers and advisors, steadfast, loyal and wise.
- Your warrior elite: ten of wolf, ten of eagle, ten of walking blackthorn, and ten of elfin skirmishers.
- Those of the other players' characters whom you consider to be in your court.

On a 10+ bit, they answer your call at once. On a 7–9 bit, only one or two of them appear now, with the rest prepared to come, if you still indeed require them, at their best convenience. On a miss, the same as on a 7–9 hit, except that you're beholden to all who come.

The Crowned Stag

To play the Crowned Stag, create your name, your summer & winter, your plays, your place, your trappings, and your bindings.

Your Job:

Your job as a player is to:

- Make your character vivid.
- Play your part in the circus.
- Take the bad with the good.

Name:

Choose a noble name, and make your family name include a reference to the forest, the seasons, or the natural wilds.

Examples: Alinor Coldrill, Catherine Reed, Richard Springtree, Robert Alder.

Summer & Winter:

From each of the following, choose one for summer and one for winter:

- The lightning arc, thunder echoing off the hills, the morning breeze, drumbeats, the driving storm, deep pools, ripe cherries, the curling vine, antlers in velvet, antlers in bloody rags, antlers of copper, antlers of silver.
- Wide smile, big eyes, laugh lines, long braids, elaborate braids, curling hair, sweet mouth, lean, curvy, long legs, trim beard, long beard, full beard.
- Tawny gold, burnished copper, warm black, walnut black, red-brown, pine green, birch white, beech gold, sea green, sea blue, violet, cherrywood brown.
- Simple clothing, the plaid, silk blouse, tight cut pants, linen shirt, linen gown, cotton shift, cotton shirt, velvet vest, velvet corset, jewelry.
- Mannish, womanish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, forbidding, unapproachable.

You can choose 2 sometimes if you want to, why shouldn't you?

Example (summer / winter):

Thunder echoing off the hills / the driving storm

Laugh lines / full beard

Tawny gold / sea blue

Silk blouse, tight cut pants / velvet vest

Mannish, sexy / sexy, forbidding

Begin play in full summer: mark all of the lines in the summer column.

Plays:

You can make all of the obvious plays and the Crowned Stag plays. Mark +2 next to your choice of three plays, +0 next to two, -1 next to two, and +1 next to all of the rest. These are your plays' rolls.

Place:

In the circus, at need, you can take any and all of the listed roles.

Trappings:

You get all of the listed trappings.

Bindings:

Everybody introduces themselves by name, summer & winter (or the corresponding), and place, including any details they like. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for bindings. On your turn, ask for volunteers:

- One of you, you and I have a regular thing, and we're easy in each other's company. **Who?** If I should **confront you, put you off, waylay you, or stand regal before you**, you may choose to consider it an insult.
- One of you, I've treated too casually before now. **Who?** I can never again **set a scene for you**, and if I **catch eyes with you**, I make myself beholden to you, whatever you choose.

If no one volunteers, so be it and move on. If more than one volunteers, accept them all, choose one, or ask them to decide between them, as you like.

On the others' turns, volunteer as you choose.

-Consequences-

Summer & winter:

When you move toward summer, erase one of the marks in the winter column and mark the same line in the summer column.

When you move toward winter, erase one of the marks in the summer column and mark the same line in the winter column.

Whenever you move toward summer or toward winter, take 1 from one of your plays' rolls and add 1 to a different play's roll. Choose intentionally, to match your feeling about the change. Keep to a minimum of -2 and a maximum of +3.

Violence:

Violence in fairyland is considered visceral, irrevocable, and horrifying. **When you're wounded, shocked, affronted, or dismayed**, you must immediately choose 1:

- You die.
- You withdraw at once in a cold, dignified fury.
- You writhe, moan, and curse in a display of melodramatic agony.
- You proceed immediately and fully to winter.
- You consider yourself cruelly mistreated and maimed, and will long nurse your injuries and your grudge.

True death: there are only a few things that can truly kill a fairy. Cold iron is one; there are others. There's no coming back from true death.

Insults:

When someone insults you, you're allowed by fairy law and your fairy nature to answer it. It's considered to be your own unimpeachable right to weigh the insult and respond in due measure, so only you can choose what form your answer should take and how extreme it should be. Other fairies may gossip, but no fairy would rightly stand before you and assert that you've overstepped.

Beholden:

When you are beholden, fairy law and your fairy nature demand that you make good and deliver the balance. If you are recalcitrant or uneager to do so, your debtor may consider it an insult or a worse offense.

Name: _____

–Summer–

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–Winter–

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–Trappings–

- A small tidy wagon festooned with ivy, pulled by a gentle mare with a little foal gamboling alongside.
- A changeable cloak of real and embroidered feathers, warm and waterproof.
- Neat crates and bundles of useful things: buttons, buckles, ribbons, needles and thread, candles, combs, wire, scissors, sharpening stones, polish, paint, grease, and sweets.
- Teas, teacakes, teapots, cups, and saucers.
- A tiny golden crown: pin it to your cloak and you may go as a bird.

–Bindings–

- I once beat — in a challenge. I can never again *draw them out*. Who?
- — sheltered me in a time of great danger. I can never *put them off* or *hide away* from them. Who?

–Place–

- Barker & caller;
- Aerialist & tumbler;
- Lookout;
- Provisioner;
- Always there with advice and gossip.

–Plays–

Feather-Cloak Plays:



— *Make them blink*



— *Serve them tea and honeycakes*



— *Hide away*



— *Watch for your chance*

Obvious Plays:



— *Confront them*



— *Draw them out*



— *Put them off*



— *Set a scene for them*



— *Size them up*



— *Waylay them*



— *Ride disaster down*



— *Sniff the wind*



— *Stand against the tide*

The Feather-Cloak

When you make someone blink, roll. On any hit, choose 1 of the following.

- They thought you were one place, but no, you're someplace else.
- They thought they were ready, but no, you've caught them off guard.
- They thought they were paying attention, but no, their attention wandered.
- They thought they had something well in hand, but no, they've lost their grip on it.
- For a second they thought they saw something startling, and it leaves them uncertain. What?
- You really do or they really do see something startling, and it leaves them astonished. What?

On a 10+ hit, however you decide to play it now, take +1 to your roll.

On a miss, the MC might have you choose 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst. Perhaps they've been onto you all along.

When you serve someone tea and honeycakes, roll. Your magic can help them change their fate. On any hit, they may, as they wish, become invisible until the next setting of the spheres, sun or moon. On a 10+ hit, choose 1 of the following that they may, if they wish, also receive.

- Comfort, calm, and courage.
- Good fortune and increase, up to and including a coming child.
- Progress toward summer.
- Insight into the weakness of their rival or enemy.
- Some favor of the one they name, and if their intended refuses, they've insulted you, your magic, your tea, and your cakes, all.

On a miss, they choose 1 of the above to receive for themselves, but they do not become invisible.

When you hide away, roll. On any hit, no one can find you, no matter how carefully they search, and no trouble alights on you. You choose when to emerge. On a 7–9 hit, choose 1 of the following, though.

- Someone carries you off by accident. Ask the MC where they're taking you.
- The effort to keep so still chills you. Proceed toward winter.
- You're sharing your hiding place with something small and nosy. Ask the MC what or who.
- You forget what's come before, and emerge with your mind befuddled.

On a miss, you hide between worlds, and when you emerge from your hiding place, you're no longer with the circus. Ask the MC where you are now.

When you watch for your chance, roll. On any hit, choose 1 of the following to tell the MC.

- At the precise moment that — happens, I do —.
- — happens just when I predicted it, and I'm already in motion. I do —.
- Eventually — happens, right? When it does, I do —.
- If — happens, I'm going to notice it or realize it at once. Does it? If it does, I do —, but if it doesn't, I do —.

On a 10+ hit, however you decide to play it next, take +1 to your roll.

On a miss, the MC might have you choose 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst. Perhaps your very act of watching changes what will happen.

The Feather-Cloak

To play the *Feather-Cloak*, create your name, your summer & winter, your plays, your place, your trappings, and your bindings.

Your Job:

Your job as a player is to:

- Make your character vivid.
- Play your part in the circus.
- Take the bad with the good.

Name:

Choose a color and a short name, and combine them in either order.

Examples: Yellow Jo, Bob White, Sallie Blue, Periwinkle Kim.

Summer & Winter:

From each of the following, choose one for summer and one for winter:

- Nests, bracken, sunbeams, mossy stones, willow catkins, little running streams, pine cones, snow storms, red berries, fog, branches clacking in the wind.
- Bright eyes, dancing eyes, bushy eyebrows, trilling laugh, two-tone hair, soft hair, downy beard, quick body, compact body, spindly limbs, round face, sharp features.
- Soft gray, golden brown, buttercup yellow, sky blue, copper-flecked black, moss green, leaf brown, glittering black, speckled black and white.
- Long striped stockings, a velvet hood, many pockets, brass buckles, a cob-web lace gown, a fine shirt with ruffles at the neck, weather-worn rough coat, bright-colored linen vest, drab clothes, neatly cut clothes, sweet-smelling clothes.
- Mannish, womanish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, forbidding, unapproachable.

You can choose 2 sometimes if you want to, why shouldn't you?

Example (summer / winter):

Mossy stones / pine cones
Trilling laugh / compact body
Copper-flecked black / leaf brown
Many pockets / brass buckles
Womanish / girlish

Begin play in full summer: mark all of the lines in the summer column.

Plays:

You can make all of the obvious plays and the Feather-Cloak plays. Mark +2 next to your choice of three plays, +0 next to two, -1 next to two, and +1 next to all of the rest. These are your plays' rolls.

Place:

In the circus, at need, you can take any and all of the listed roles.

Trappings:

You get all of the listed trappings.

Bindings:

Everybody introduces themselves by name, summer & winter (or the corresponding), and place, including any details they like. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for bindings. On your turn, ask for volunteers:

- One of you, I once beat in a challenge. **Who?** I can never again **draw you out**.
- One of you sheltered me in a time of great danger. **Who?** I can never **put you off or hide away** from you.

If no one volunteers, so be it and move on. If more than one volunteers, accept them all, choose one, or ask them to decide between them, as you like.

On the others' turns, volunteer as you choose.

-Consequences-

Summer & winter:

When you move toward summer, erase one of the marks in the winter column and mark the same line in the summer column.

When you move toward winter, erase one of the marks in the summer column and mark the same line in the winter column.

Whenever you move toward summer or toward winter, take 1 from one of your plays' rolls and add 1 to a different play's roll. Choose intentionally, to match your feeling about the change. Keep to a minimum of -2 and a maximum of +3.

Violence:

Violence in fairyland is considered visceral, irrevocable, and horrifying. **When you're wounded, shocked, affronted, or dismayed**, you must immediately choose 1:

- You die.
- You withdraw at once in a cold, dignified fury.
- You writhe, moan, and curse in a display of melodramatic agony.
- You proceed immediately and fully to winter.
- You consider yourself cruelly mistreated and maimed, and will long nurse your injuries and your grudge.

True death: there are only a few things that can truly kill a fairy. Cold iron is one; there are others. There's no coming back from true death.

Insults:

When someone insults you, you're allowed by fairy law and your fairy nature to answer it. It's considered to be your own unimpeachable right to weigh the insult and respond in due measure, so only you can choose what form your answer should take and how extreme it should be. Other fairies may gossip, but no fairy would rightly stand before you and assert that you've overstepped.

Beholden:

When you are beholden, fairy law and your fairy nature demand that you make good and deliver the balance. If you are recalcitrant or uneager to do so, your debtor may consider it an insult or a worse offense.

Name: _____

—Summer—

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—Winter—

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—Trappings—

- A wagon more spacious than seems likely, pulled by a truly gargantuan stag- or rhinoceros beetle.
- A minor infinity of silk scarves.
- A trunk overflowing with jugglers' balls, torches, knives, candles, jugs, bunnies, slapsticks, sparklers, squibs, fans, whirligigs, rattles, whistles, and some fat complacent old parakeets.
- A shillelagh to guard you, and who's laughing now?
- Crates and bottomless barrels of unsavory foodstuffs. Turnip mead, salt-brined cheese, lentil sausages spiced with pungents, Moxie.
- A dragon's egg.

—Bindings—

- — practices and performs with me as a tumbler. We can *trip it gaily* together: I roll, and we take turns choosing. They can even *trip it gaily* without me: they roll, using their bonus for *riding disaster down*. Anyway, who?
- I've led — into one misadventure too many. I can never again *set a scene for them* or *dare them to follow me*. Who?

—Place—

- Clown, juggler & tumbler;
- Novelties, trinkets, tickets & refreshments;
- Provisioner;
- Planner;
- Always there as a voice of reason.

—Plays—

Firefly Whisp Plays:



Dare them to follow you



Greet them with honest pleasure



Trip it gaily



Vanish

Obvious Plays:



Confront them



Draw them out



Put them off



Set a scene for them



Size them up



Waylay them



Ride disaster down



Sniff the wind



Stand against the tide

The Firefly Whisp

When you dare someone to follow you, if they do, roll. On any bit, choose 1 of the following.

- Ask them where their (choose 1) greed, lust, or ambition would take them. You know a secret way there, and you take them there unchallenged.
- Ask them where their (choose 1) heart, dreams, or fate would take them. You know a secret way there, and you take them there unchallenged.
- You lead them to wonderful treasure. Ask the MC what and where.
- You lead them to a trackless place and abandon them up to their knees in cold muck-water.
- You lead them to the best seats in the circus, and later they'll find that they paid a premium to sit there.
- You lead them wherever you want to. Where?

On a 10+ bit, in addition, they're beholden to you for serving so faithfully as their guide. On a miss, you and they get lost together. Ask the MC where you are now.

When you greet someone with honest pleasure, roll. On a 10+ bit, any grudge, grievance, or unfinished business between you vanishes, for real. On a 7-9 bit, they choose: let unfinished business vanish, as for a 10+ hit, or hold onto it. If they hold onto it, though, and bring it up again, they're insulting you. On a miss, you're insulting them by pretending there's no unfinished business between you.

When you trip it gaily, roll. All present must stop to watch you. On any bit, choose as many of the following as you like, in any order, repeating freely, as quickly as you can. End with a finale.

- I leap to —.
- I tumble to —.
- I skip to —.
- I roll to —.
- I flutter daintily to —.
- I seize hold of —.
- I produce — from the air or my pockets or the air.
- I slip — into my pocket or under my hat.
- ... contorting myself fantastically all the while.
- ... juggling — all the while.
- I clamber up to —.
- I fall to —.
- I dive to —.
- I strut up to —.
- I swoop to —.
- I make a show of —.

On a 7-9 hit, after you've chosen at least 4 or 5, the MC can hold up a finger: come to your finale now, or you'll lose the crowd. On a miss, choose anyway. The MC counts out a 1-2-3 1-2-3 measure, and when you miss your beat, you misstep, and you end with a stumble instead of a finale.

When you vanish, roll. On a 10+ bit, you've gone. Tell the MC where you reappear. On a 7-9 hit, you're nearby, just invisible. Tell the MC what you do. On a miss, you're invisible except for your hat, your shoes, your ears, or the tip of your nose (the MC's choice which). You think you're all invisible. Tell the MC what you do.

The Firefly Whisp

To play the *Firefly Whisp*, create your name, your summer & winter, your plays, your place, your trappings, and your bindings.

Your Job:

Your job as a player is to:

- Make your character vivid.
- Play your part in the circus.
- Take the bad with the good.

Name:

Choose a short name or a really long name.

Examples: *Erzabettina the Flashing Scarves, Master Revellesto of the Wire High, Tip, Zoff.*

Summer & Winter:

From each of the following, choose one for summer and one for winter:

- Heat lightning, twinkling stars, ghost lights, the glowing wick after the candle's out, struck sparks, lightning bugs, mossy boles, fresh new shoots.
- Long nose, lumpy nose, pert nose, no nose, big bug eyes, four arms instead of two, beetle wings under your jacket, feelers, a crooked grin, a secret grin, wide eyes, kindly eyes, wild hair, upstanding hair, curly hair, bald as an egg.
- Pale green, watery blue, beetle blue, iridescent black, iridescent purple, iridescent green, poison green, don't-eat-me yellow, back-off red.
- Particolor clothing, counterchanged clothing, motley clothing, harlequin clothing, vagabond's rags, mummer's rags, tatterdemalion rags, work clothes, fancy clothes, parody-fancy clothes, outlandishly fancy clothes.
- Mannish, womanish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, forbidding, unapproachable.

You can choose 2 sometimes if you want to, why shouldn't you?

Example (summer / winter):

Struck sparks / the glowing wick after the candle's out
Upstanding hair / kindly eyes
Don't-eat-me yellow / iridescent green
Parody-fancy clothes / tatterdemalion rags
Childish / queerish, sexy

Begin play in full summer: mark all of the lines in the summer column.

Plays:

You can make all of the obvious plays and the *Firefly Whisp* plays. Mark +2 next to your choice of three plays, +0 next to two, -1 next to two, and +1 next to all of the rest. These are your plays' rolls.

Place:

In the circus, at need, you can take any and all of the listed roles.

Trappings:

You get all of the listed trappings.

Bindings:

Everybody introduces themselves by name, summer & winter (or the corresponding), and place, including any details they like. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for bindings. On your turn, ask for volunteers:

- One of you practices and performs with me as a tumbler. **Who?** We can **trip it gaily together**: I roll, and we take turns choosing. You can even **trip it gaily** without me: you roll, using your bonus for **riding disaster down**. Note it on your sheet!
- One of you, I've led you into one misadventure too many. **Who?** I can never again **set a scene for you** or **dare you to follow me**.

If no one volunteers, so be it and move on. If more than one volunteers, accept them all, choose one, or ask them to decide between them, as you like.

On the others' turns, volunteer as you choose.

-Consequences-

Summer & winter:

When you move toward summer, erase one of the marks in the winter column and mark the same line in the summer column.

When you move toward winter, erase one of the marks in the summer column and mark the same line in the winter column.

Whenever you move toward summer or toward winter, take 1 from one of your plays' rolls and add 1 to a different play's roll. Choose intentionally, to match your feeling about the change. Keep to a minimum of -2 and a maximum of +3.

Violence:

Violence in fairyland is considered visceral, irrevocable, and horrifying. **When you're wounded, shocked, affronted, or dismayed**, you must immediately choose 1:

- You die.
- You withdraw at once in a cold, dignified fury.
- You writhe, moan, and curse in a display of melodramatic agony.
- You proceed immediately and fully to winter.
- You consider yourself cruelly mistreated and maimed, and will long nurse your injuries and your grudge.

True death: there are only a few things that can truly kill a fairy. Cold iron is one; there are others. There's no coming back from true death.

Insults:

When someone insults you, you're allowed by fairy law and your fairy nature to answer it. It's considered to be your own unimpeachable right to weigh the insult and respond in due measure, so only you can choose what form your answer should take and how extreme it should be. Other fairies may gossip, but no fairy would rightly stand before you and assert that you've overstepped.

Beholden:

When you are beholden, fairy law and your fairy nature demand that you make good and deliver the balance. If you are recalcitrant or uneager to do so, your debtor may consider it an insult or a worse offense.

Name: _____

—Summer—

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—Winter—

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—Place—

- Novelties, trinkets, tickets & refreshments;
- Crew;
- Worker;
- Lookout;
- Always there, watching and listening quietly.

—Plays—

Interloper Plays:



— *Pass yourself off to them as royalty incognito*



— *Touch them with iron*



— *Pocket something*



— *Take to your heels*

Obvious Plays:



— *Confront them*



— *Draw them out*



— *Put them off*



— *Set a scene for them*



— *Size them up*



— *Waylay them*



— *Ride disaster down*



— *Sniff the wind*



— *Stand against the tide*

The Interloper

You are a human being who's intruding into fairyland intentionally, in disguise, to steal fairy treasure.

When you pass yourself off to a fairy as royalty incognito, roll. *On any hit*, they must defer to you without acknowledging you in any way. *On a 7–9 hit*, they may gossip about it afterward, but *on a 10+ hit*, they may not even do that. *On a miss*, perhaps they defer to you as on a hit, or perhaps they swear incognito allegiance to you and become your most loyal incognito servant, and perhaps you'll never know which.

You can pass yourself off to other mortals as well. Since they aren't so innately bound by fairy laws, they may choose to behave as fairies, according to your roll, but they may also squint skeptically at you and wonder what and who you really are.

When you touch a fairy with cold iron, roll. *On any hit*, choose 1 of the following. If the fairy you touch is another player's character, they choose, not you.

- *They will promise you anything you ask to be free of the iron's touch. What do you make them promise?*
- *They are so genuinely frightened of you that they immediately and truly abandon their interests and concerns, flee, and come near you never again.*
- *You press the iron to them cruelly and they die. Other fairies, not understanding that this is true death, might look for them to return someday, but they never will.*

On a 10+ hit, you can keep them quiet while all this goes on. *On a 7–9 hit*, everyone nearby realizes that something's wrong, and can act to investigate or defend themselves. *On a miss*, or should a 7–9 hit go poorly for you, be prepared for the worst. You've stolen uninvited into fairyland, and threatened a fairy with true death, and the consequences might be severe.

Touching another mortal with iron has no consequence.

When you pocket something, name it and roll. *On any hit*, you have it, unnoticed. *On a 10+ hit*, you *have* it, and its erstwhile owner's erstwhile claim to it is already fading from everyone's minds. *On a 7–9 hit*, it's true that you're holding it in your pocket, but it's not true that you *have* it, and neither it nor anyone else will believe that it belongs to you. *On a miss*, it signals its owner somehow that it's been taken or misplaced, though it can't reveal itself or finger you.

Think metaphorically too, mortal kind.

When you take to your heels, roll. *On any hit*, you flee to safety. *On a 10+ hit*, you reach a place of genuine security where you can regroup, gather your thoughts, and decide on your next play. *On a 7–9 hit*, you're out of immediate danger, but not yet secure. *Either way*, ask the MC where you are. *On a miss*, be prepared for the worst. Perhaps you'll flee straight into worse danger than you left.

The Interloper

To play the *Interloper*, create your name, your free & careful, your plays, your place, your trappings, and your bindings.

Your Job:

Your job as a player is to:

- Make your character vivid.
- Play your part in the circus.
- Take the bad with the good.

Nature:

You are a human being who's intruding into fairyland intentionally, in disguise, to steal fairy treasure. You've joined the circus because it will provide you cover and bring you to places where treasures abound.

I don't know what it is that you seek, but you've certainly heard of such things as a purse that never empties of coins, potions of true love or immortality, coats of invisibility, rings of good luck, flying boots, harps that play themselves and sing with beautiful maidens' voices, swords that can carve through armor or stone, and bullets that never miss their mark.

Name:

Choose a human name.

Free & Careful:

From each of the following, choose one:

- Sky, field, cloud, sun, moon, wind.
- Jaw, eyes, hands, hair, face, lips.
- Blue, red, green, orange, brown, gray.
- Mask, shoes, boots, coat, clothing, gown, hat, vest, cloak, hood, gloves, scarf.
- Mannish, womanish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, forbidding, unapproachable.

You can choose 2 sometimes if you want to, why shouldn't you?

For each thing that you've chosen, characterize it differently to list a free version and a careful version.

Example (free / careful):

A low, golden full moon / a hard, cold, high full moon
Laughing eyes / guarded eyes
Warm earth-red / deep bloody red
Brocade vest / brigandine vest, silk mask
Womanish / womanish, sexless

Begin play fully free: mark all of the lines in the free column.



Plays:

You can make all of the obvious plays and the Interloper plays. Mark +2 next to your choice of three plays, +0 next to two, -1 next to two, and +1 next to all of the rest. These are your plays' rolls.

Place:

In the circus, at need, you can take any and all of the listed roles.

Trappings:

You get all of the listed trappings.

Bindings:

Everybody introduces themselves by name, summer & winter (or the corresponding), and place, including any details they like. Take your turn. List the other characters' names.

Go around again for bindings. On your turn, ask for volunteers:

- One of you knows what I am, but keeps confidence for your own reasons. **Who?** I can never **confront you** or **pass myself off to you as royalty incognito**.
- One of you is my honest friend, though you don't know what I am. **Who?** I can never **put you off**, but if I ever **touch you with iron** you must choose to die.

If no one volunteers, so be it and move on. If more than one volunteers, accept them all, choose one, or ask them to decide between them, as you like.

On the others' turns, volunteer as you choose.

-Consequences-

Free & Careful:

When the fairies around you move toward winter, you move toward careful. When they move toward summer, you move toward free. When they have their choice whether to move toward summer or winter, you have your choice whether to move toward free or careful.

When you move toward free, erase one of the marks in the careful column and mark the same line in the free column.

When you move toward careful, erase one of the marks in the free column and mark the same line in the careful column.

Whenever you move toward free or toward careful, take 1 from one of your plays' rolls and add 1 to a different play's roll. Choose intentionally, to match your feeling about the change. Keep to a minimum of -2 and a maximum of +3.

Violence:

For human beings in fairyland, like you, violence is no game.

You can shrug off a verbal assault that would murder any fairy dead, but a sword thrust through you, however playfully, will end your life forever.

Most fairies won't kill you on purpose — it wouldn't occur to them — but they might kill you at any moment by pure whimsical mischance.

Consequently, you must play violence in two different ways.

When you're verbally assaulted, shocked, affronted, or dismayed, choose 1:

- You withdraw in as much fury, and with as much dignity, as your human nature allows.
- You lash out in return, with that distinctive impulsive human passion.
- You consider yourself offended, and will nurse your fleeting human grudge as long as you're able.

When you're physically assaulted or wounded, roll a single die:

- On a 4, 5, or 6, you're wounded and must nurse your injury until it heals.
- On a 2 or 3, you're wounded dangerously, and you need to get skilled help quickly or the wound will kill you. (Any problem solver in the circus will know what to do.)
- On a 1, you're fatally wounded. Die now or die in a few painful minutes.

As a matter of curiosity, not of consequence, when you die, one of two things will happen, entirely outside of your control. The first possibility is that you will plainly and simply die. The second is that you will die, but not plainly: something of your nature will remain in fairyland forever, not alive but animate, some fairy's truly kept thing.

Insults:

When someone insults you, you're allowed by fairy law to answer it. It's considered to be your own unimpeachable right to weigh the insult and respond in due measure, so only you can choose what form your answer should take and how extreme it should be. Lenience is a human trait, not a fairy trait, so if you're moderate in your response, you can set fairy tongues wagging.

Beholden:

When you are beholden, fairy law demands that you make good and deliver the balance. Human honor might compel you too, but it's a lax taskmaster compared to fairy nature. In any event, if you are recalcitrant or uneager, your debtor may consider it an insult or a worse offense.

Name: _____

—Free—

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

—Careful—

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

—Place—

- Performer;
- Crew;
- Creative collaborator;
- Problem solver;
- Always there with encouragement and insight.

—Plays—

Lostling Plays:

- ☐ — See through them
- ☐ — Touch them with iron
- ☐ — Appeal to fairy law
- ☐ — Speak of summer or winter

Obvious Plays:

- ☐ — Confront them
- ☐ — Draw them out
- ☐ — Put them off
- ☐ — Set a scene for them
- ☐ — Size them up
- ☐ — Waylay them
- ☐ — Ride disaster down
- ☐ — Sniff the wind
- ☐ — Stand against the tide

—Trappings—

- A comfortable wagon, remarkable among fairy things for its human touches: its shaped wooden doorhandles, the warmth of its colors, the simple beauty of its trucks and wheels well cared for, the soft-brushed coats and well-fed contentment of its two oxen, the chicken that rides along on its ridge beam.
- Comfortable work clothing, a flashy costume, a subdued costume, and well kept and well mended dress-up clothing. Also, stilts.
- Something of iron that you wear around your neck, by right, token of who you are.
- Memories of the human world, not whole, snatches of song and incomplete vignettes, that come to you in dreams and unbidden.
- A book where you keep your sketches, your journal, your notes and memories.

—Bindings—

- — has been traveling with me for a long time. We joined the circus together. I can never *put them off*. Who?
- Normally I'm the one who sees through people, but — has seen through me. I can never *waylay them* or *see through them*. Who?

The Lostling

You are a human being who once upon a time wandered into fairyland, or once upon a time you were stolen by fairies and carried away here. Now you barely remember the mortal earth. The circus is your home.

When you see through someone, roll. *On any bit*, call a quick break in play and talk them over with the MC and your fellow players. See if you can collectively figure them out in symbolic or metaphoric terms: not only who are they really are, but what do they represent, what do they *mean* in the game. Take these insights back into play with you. *On a 7–9 bit*, they realize that you've seen through them, and can react accordingly; *On a 10+ bit*, they don't. *On a miss*, be prepared for the worst. Perhaps they've drawn you in somehow instead.

When you touch a fairy with cold iron, roll. *On any bit*, choose 1 of the following. If the fairy you touch is another player's character, they choose, not you.

- They will promise you anything you ask to be free of the iron's touch. What do you make them promise?
- They are so genuinely frightened of you that they immediately and truly abandon their interests and concerns, flee, and come near you never again.
- You press the iron to them cruelly and they die. Other fairies, not understanding that this is true death, might look for them to return someday, but they never will.

On a 10+ bit, you can keep them quiet while all this goes on. *On a 7–9 bit*, everyone nearby realizes that something's wrong, and can act to investigate or defend themselves. *On a miss*, or should a 7–9 hit go poorly for you, be prepared for the worst. You've threatened a fairy with true death, and the consequences might be severe.

Touching another mortal with iron has no consequence.

When you appeal to fairy law, roll. *On any bit*, fairyland itself judges in your favor, and you choose 1 of the following.

- Whatever or whoever is threatening you, it or they may not physically harm you, only affront, shock, startle, or dismay you.
- Whatever or whoever is constraining you, it or they must accept a gift or tribute from you, then release you and let you pass.
- Whatever or whoever is endangering you, must offer you a bargain, a test, or a trial to undertake, and may proceed only if you break or fail it.

On a 7–9 bit, though, you're beholden to fairyland for its verdict. *On a miss*, the MC might have you choose 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst. Perhaps fairyland not only judges against you, but takes your appeal as an insult in the first place.

Outside of fairyland, appealing to fairy customs has no effect.

When you sing of summer or winter, roll. *On a 10+ bit*, the place where you are, and all the players' fairies in it, advance toward the season you sing of. Remind the MC to reflect the season's change in the NPCs here. *On a 7–9 bit*, the place doesn't advance, but any players' fairies who can hear your voice do, and any NPCs who hear you also feel the warmth or the chill. *On a miss*, some imperceptible warning shuts you up, you sing about something frivolous instead, and you advance toward careful. You may make this play at most once per session.

The Lostling

To play the *Lostling*, create your name, your bold & careful, your plays, your place, your trappings, and your bindings.

Your Job:

Your job as a player is to:

- Make your character vivid.
- Play your part in the circus.
- Take the bad with the good.

Nature:

You are a human being who once upon a time wandered into fairyland, or once upon a time was stolen by fairies and brought here. Now you barely remember the mortal earth. The circus is your home.

I don't know whether you want to return to your old life, your old family and home. If you do, I don't know whether you ever can.

Name:

Choose a human name.

Free & Careful:

From each of the following, choose one:

- Sky, field, cloud, sun, moon, wind.
- Jaw, eyes, hands, hair, face, lips.
- Blue, red, green, orange, brown, gray.
- Shoes, boots, coat, clothing, gown, hat, vest, cloak, hood, jacket, gloves, scarf.
- Mannish, womanish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, forbidding, unapproachable.

You can choose 2 sometimes if you want to, why shouldn't you?

For each thing that you've chosen, characterize it differently to list a free version and a careful version.

Example (free / careful):

A berry bramble in fruit / a berry bramble grown wild
Shaggy hair / tidy braid
Burnished coppery orange / dull rusty orange
Bare feet / soft soled shoes
Womanish, queerish / womanish

Begin play fully free: mark all of the lines in the free column.

Plays:

You can make all of the obvious plays and the *Lostling* plays. Mark +2 next to your choice of three plays, +0 next to two, -1 next to two, and +1 next to all of the rest. These are your plays' rolls.

Place:

In the circus, at need, you can take any and all of the listed roles.

Trappings:

You get all of the listed trappings.

Bindings:

Everybody introduces themselves by name, summer & winter (or the corresponding), and place, including any details they like. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for bindings. On your turn, ask for volunteers:

- One of you has been traveling with me for a long time. We joined the circus together. **Who?** I can never **put you off**.
- Normally I'm the one who sees through people, but one of you has seen through me. **Who?** I can never **waylay you** or **see through you**.

If no one volunteers, so be it and move on. If more than one volunteers, accept them all, choose one, or ask them to decide between them, as you like.

On the others' turns, volunteer as you choose.

-Consequences-

Free & Careful:

When the fairies around you move toward winter, you move toward careful. When they move toward summer, you move toward free. When they have their choice whether to move toward summer or winter, you have your choice whether to move toward free or careful.

When you move toward free, erase one of the marks in the careful column and mark the same line in the free column.

When you move toward careful, erase one of the marks in the free column and mark the same line in the careful column.

Whenever you move toward free or toward careful, take 1 from one of your plays' rolls and add 1 to a different play's roll. Choose intentionally, to match your feeling about the change. Keep to a minimum of -2 and a maximum of +3.

Violence:

For human beings in fairyland, like you, violence is no game.

You can shrug off a verbal assault that would murder any fairy dead, but a sword thrust through you, however playfully, will end your life forever.

Most fairies won't kill you on purpose — it wouldn't occur to them — but they might kill you at any moment by pure whimsical mischance.

Consequently, you must play violence in two different ways.

When you're verbally assaulted, shocked, affronted, or dismayed, choose 1:

- You withdraw in as much fury, and with as much dignity, as your human nature allows.
- You lash out in return, with that distinctive impulsive human passion.
- You consider yourself offended, and will nurse your fleeting human grudge as long as you're able.

When you're physically assaulted or wounded, roll a single die:

- On a 4, 5, or 6, you're wounded and must nurse your injury until it heals.
- On a 2 or 3, you're wounded dangerously, and you need to get skilled help quickly or the wound will kill you. (Any problem solver in the circus will know what to do.)
- On a 1, you're fatally wounded. Die now or die in a few painful minutes.

As a matter of curiosity, not of consequence, when you die, one of two things will happen, entirely outside of your control. The first possibility is that you will plainly and simply die. The second is that you will die, but not plainly: something of your nature will remain in fairyland forever, not alive but animate, some fairy's truly kept thing.

Insults:

When someone insults you, you're allowed by fairy law to answer it. It's considered to be your own unimpeachable right to weigh the insult and respond in due measure, so only you can choose what form your answer should take and how extreme it should be. Lenience is a human trait, not a fairy trait, so if you're moderate in your response, you can set fairy tongues wagging.

Beholden:

When you are beholden, fairy law demands that you make good and deliver the balance. Human honor might compel you too, but it's a lax taskmaster compared to fairy nature. In any event, if you are recalcitrant or uneager, your debtor may consider it an insult or a worse offense.



Name: _____

—Summer—

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

—Winter—

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

—Place—

- Star;
- Guide, opener & closer of doors;
- Problem solver;
- Cook;
- Always there as a dangerous friend.

—Plays—

Nightmare Horse Plays:



—Drag them under



—Take their breath away



—Change your form & seeming



—Disarm the situation

Obvious Plays:



—Confront them



—Draw them out



—Put them off



—Set a scene for them



—Size them up



—Waylay them



—Ride disaster down



—Sniff the wind



—Stand against the tide

The Nightmare Horse

When you drag someone under, roll. On any bit, choose 1 of the following.

- You seize physical hold of them and drown them. Choose this only if you're near water, and in a position to put your hands bodily on them. They can't stop you.
- They forget utterly who they are.
- Their thoughts fill with paranoid, undeniable, commanding nonsense, creating enemies and dangers from air.
- They feel a terrible weight pressing on them, a terrible cold filling their mouth and nose, a terrible silence engulfing them and they can't seem to get free.

On a 10+ bit, you can choose to release and spare them at any time. On a 7–9 bit, though, you can't, and they must somehow find their own way back. On a miss, they realize the danger they're in and they're able to get away, if they flee right now.

When you take someone's breath away, roll. On any bit, your eyes meet and they catch their breath. They can't proceed with what they were doing until they've answered you. On a 10+ bit, choose 2 of the following to say, and you're telling them the truth. On a 7–9 bit, choose 1.

- At this moment, for me the moon rises and sets in your eyes. Will you close them against me?
- At this moment, at any other soul's approach but yours, I would flee. Will you come closer?
- At this moment, no one but you may touch me in safety. Will you?
- At this moment, I will bear no one on my back but you. Will you ride me?
- At this moment, I'm wearing my silver necklace, and if you place your hand on it, I'm yours. Will you?
- This moment is fleeting and there is no other like it. Another instant and I may never be yours. Will you come to my arms?

On a miss, they take your breath away instead, and choose 1 against you, if they like, or else they may dismiss you, which you may take as a cruel insult.

When you change your form & seeming, roll. On any bit, you take the form of a beautiful person; a beautiful horse, with or without a horn; or your true form, the Nightmare Horse, terrible, bloody-fanged and -hooved, drenched in icy water. You remain in this form until you change it again. On a 10+ bit, you can also change any one element of your summer & winter, if you want to. On a miss, choose: take your true form, or take the form of your choice and proceed at once to full winter.

When you disarm a situation, first disarm yourself, and then roll. On a 10+ bit, everyone else present must disarm themselves as well. On a 7–9 bit, everyone else present must individually choose: disarm themselves, or else insult you and everyone else here and declare themselves enemy to all. On a miss, after a moment's hesitation you take your arms back up again.

The Nightmare Horse

To play the *Nightmare Horse*, create your name, your summer & winter, your plays, your place, your trappings, and your bindings.

Your Job:

Your job as a player is to:

- Make your character vivid.
- Play your part in the circus.
- Take the bad with the good.

Name:

You don't have a name. You are the Nightmare Horse.

Choose a title that you've adopted for others' convenience.

Examples: Lord Blue, Her Serene Majesty, Chef, Captain.

Summer & Winter:

From each of the following, choose one for summer and one for winter:

- Still water, the drowned moon, the crescent moon, rushing falls, salt spray, a thunderstorm, a wild orchard, hyacinths, irises, a chill wind, a twisting horn.
- Long hair, striking face, sharp teeth, shaggy hair, sleek hair, long legs, shapely legs, long neck, tossing head, mesmerizing eyes, beauty, poise, grace, control.
- Glossy black, velvet black, iron black, salt-and-pepper, russet, spruce blue, midnight blue, twilight blue, sea green, moss green, bone pale, smoky gray.
- Rich clothing, elegant clothing, rare jewels, silk mask, silk robes, understated clothing, tasteful clothing, high boots, brass-soled shoes, bare feet.
- Mannish, womanish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, forbidding, unapproachable.

You can choose 2 sometimes if you want to, why shouldn't you?

Example (summer / winter):

A twisting horn / the crescent moon
Long hair, beauty / long hair, control
Twilight blue / glossy black
Rich clothing / understated clothing
Queerish, sexy / queerish, forbidding

Begin play in full summer: mark all of the lines in the summer column.

Plays:

You can make all of the obvious plays and the Nightmare Horse plays. Mark +2 next to your choice of three plays, +0 next to two, -1 next to two, and +1 next to all of the rest. These are your plays' rolls.

Place:

In the circus, at need, you can take any and all of the listed roles.

Trappings:

You get all of the listed trappings.

Bindings:

Everybody introduces themselves by name, summer & winter (or the corresponding), and place, including any details they like. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for bindings. On your turn, ask for volunteers:

- One of you, I've fallen in love with you, though naturally I keep the fact from myself. **Who?** I can never **put you off**.
- One of you, I've caught you opening a door you had no business opening. **Who, and what door?** I can never again **draw you out**, nor **disarm any situation** that you're a part of.

If no one volunteers, so be it and move on. If more than one volunteers, accept them all, choose one, or ask them to decide between them, as you like.

On the others' turns, volunteer as you choose.

-Consequences-

Summer & winter:

When you move toward summer, erase one of the marks in the winter column and mark the same line in the summer column.

When you move toward winter, erase one of the marks in the summer column and mark the same line in the winter column.

Whenever you move toward summer or toward winter, take 1 from one of your plays' rolls and add 1 to a different play's roll. Choose intentionally, to match your feeling about the change. Keep to a minimum of -2 and a maximum of +3.

Violence:

Violence in fairyland is considered visceral, irrevocable, and horrifying. **When you're wounded, shocked, affronted, or dismayed**, you must immediately choose 1:

- You die.
- You withdraw at once in a cold, dignified fury.
- You writhe, moan, and curse in a display of melodramatic agony.
- You proceed immediately and fully to winter.
- You consider yourself cruelly mistreated and maimed, and will long nurse your injuries and your grudge.

True death: there are only a few things that can truly kill a fairy. Cold iron is one; there are others. There's no coming back from true death.

Insults:

When someone insults you, you're allowed by fairy law and your fairy nature to answer it. It's considered to be your own unimpeachable right to weigh the insult and respond in due measure, so only you can choose what form your answer should take and how extreme it should be. Other fairies may gossip, but no fairy would rightly stand before you and assert that you've overstepped.

Beholden:

When you are beholden, fairy law and your fairy nature demand that you make good and deliver the balance. If you are recalcitrant or uneager to do so, your debtor may consider it an insult or a worse offense.

Name: _____

—Summer—

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

—Winter—

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

—Place—

- Performer;
- Crew;
- Planner;
- Worker;
- Always there, patient, scowling, eager to be further on the road.

—Plays—

Seeker Plays:



—Declare your wrong to them



—Touch them with iron



—Trust yourself to fate



—Turn your hand to it

Obvious Plays:



—Confront them



—Draw them out



—Put them off



—Set a scene for them



—Size them up



—Waylay them



—Ride disaster down



—Sniff the wind



—Stand against the tide

The Seeker

You are a human being who's come boldly into fairyland, to win back something that the fairies stole from you.

When you declare your wrong to someone, roll. *On any hit*, they must stop and hear you out. *On a 7–9 hit*, they are moved by the injustice you've suffered, and may, if they choose, consider themselves to be insulted on your behalf. *On a 10+ hit*, they must. *On a miss*, perhaps they hear you out, but they don't have to, and they're indifferent: if fairies stole something from you, well, it's probably because they wanted it for some reason.

If you haven't already decided what the fairies stole from you, decide before you make this play.

When you touch a fairy with cold iron, roll. *On any hit*, choose 1 of the following. If the fairy you touch is another player's character, they choose, not you.

- They will promise you anything you ask to be free of the iron's touch. What do you make them promise?
- They are so genuinely frightened of you that they immediately and truly abandon their interests and concerns, flee, and come near you never again.
- You press the iron to them cruelly and they die. Other fairies, not understanding that this is true death, might look for them to return someday, but they never will.

On a 10+ hit, you can keep them quiet while all this goes on. *On a 7–9 hit*, everyone nearby realizes that something's wrong, and can act to investigate or defend themselves. *On a miss*, or should a 7–9 hit go poorly for you, be prepared for the worst. You've trespassed brashly into fairyland, and threatened a fairy with true death, and the consequences might be severe.

Touching another mortal with iron has no consequence.

When you trust yourself to fate, let go of your instincts and roll. *On any hit*, your fate, in good luck's disguise, will: lead you through, lead you on, lead you back, turn your enemy aside, reveal your enemy's weakness, put your enemy in your power, bring a friend to your side, open a door for you, or put a tool in your hand, in any combination. Ask the MC what happens and where you are now. *On a 7–9 hit*, though, your fate or luck includes some cost, some loss, some injury. Ask the MC what it is. *On a miss*, you should have trusted your own will, not chance. Ask the MC how far you fall, and where to, and it's up to you to recover yourself.

When you turn your hand to a task or endeavor, roll. *On any hit*, you accomplish it: you have a patience born of deep impatience, a cool and artful surety born of deep panic, and the true magic of the justice of your cause. *On a 10+ hit*, furthermore, you add to the accomplishment a distinct human quality, a liveliness, inventiveness, or passion that fairies cannot duplicate or ignore. *On a miss*, no one could deny your courage or willingness, but now you cannot accomplish it without help, and you cannot abandon it undone. You need a friend to draw you out or to help you finish.

The Seeker

To play the Seeker, create your name, your bold & careful, your plays, your place, your trappings, and your bindings.

Your Job:

Your job as a player is to:

- Make your character vivid.
- Play your part in the circus.
- Take the bad with the good.

Nature:

You are a human being who's come boldly into fairyland, to win back something that the fairies stole from you. You've joined the circus because you think that it will bring you, in its course, to the thing that was stolen.

I don't know what it is that you seek, but it could certainly be your baby brother or sister, your own child, your true love, your crown, your fate, or your family's good fortune. You should decide what it is, now or soon.

Name:

Choose a human name.

Bold & Careful:

From each of the following, choose one:

- Sky, field, cloud, sun, moon, wind.
- Jaw, eyes, hands, hair, face, lips.
- Blue, red, green, orange, brown, gray.
- Shoes, boots, coat, clothing, gown, hat, vest, cloak, hood, jacket, gloves, scarf.
- Mannish, womanish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, forbidding, unapproachable.

You can choose 2 sometimes if you want to, why shouldn't you?

For each thing that you've chosen, characterize it differently to list a free version and a careful version.

Example (bold / careful):

A lashing storm / a lowering gray sky
Expressive hands / ready fists
Bright sky blue / smoky blue
Open leather jacket / buckled leather jacket, collar turned up
Girlish / girlish, boyish

Begin play fully bold: mark all of the lines in the bold column.

Plays:

You can make all of the obvious plays and the Seeker plays. Mark +2 next to your choice of three plays, +0 next to two, -1 next to two, and +1 next to all of the rest. These are your plays' rolls.

Place:

In the circus, at need, you can take any and all of the listed roles.

Trappings:

You get all of the listed trappings.

Bindings:

Everybody introduces themselves by name, summer & winter (or the corresponding), and place, including any details they like. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for bindings. On your turn, ask for volunteers:

- One of you met me first when I stepped into fairyland, and recognized the justice of my claim. **Who?** I can never **put you off**, **waylay you**, or **touch you with iron**.
- One of you is the most amazingly beautiful person I've ever seen, and you make me blush and babble. **Who?** I can never **confront you** or **size you up**.

If no one volunteers, so be it and move on. If more than one volunteers, accept them all, choose one, or ask them to decide between them, as you like.

On the others' turns, volunteer as you choose.

-Consequences-

Bold & Careful:

When the fairies around you move toward winter, you move toward careful. When they move toward summer, you move toward bold. When they have their choice whether to move toward summer or winter, you have your choice whether to move toward bold or careful.

When you move toward bold, erase one of the marks in the careful column and mark the same line in the bold column.

When you move toward careful, erase one of the marks in the bold column and mark the same line in the careful column.

Whenever you move toward bold or toward careful, take 1 from one of your plays' rolls and add 1 to a different play's roll. Choose intentionally, to match your feeling about the change. Keep to a minimum of -2 and a maximum of +3.

Violence:

For human beings in fairyland, like you, violence is no game.

You can shrug off a verbal assault that would murder any fairy dead, but a sword thrust through you, however playfully, will end your life forever.

Most fairies won't kill you on purpose — it wouldn't occur to them — but they might kill you at any moment by pure whimsical mischance.

Consequently, you must play violence in two different ways.

When you're verbally assaulted, shocked, affronted, or dismayed, choose 1:

- You withdraw in as much fury, and with as much dignity, as your human nature allows.
- You lash out in return, with that distinctive impulsive human passion.
- You consider yourself offended, and will nurse your fleeting human grudge as long as you're able.

When you're physically assaulted or wounded, roll a single die:

- On a 4, 5, or 6, you're wounded and must nurse your injury until it heals.
- On a 2 or 3, you're wounded dangerously, and you need to get skilled help quickly or the wound will kill you. (Any problem solver in the circus will know what to do.)
- On a 1, you're fatally wounded. Die now or die in a few painful minutes.

As a matter of curiosity, not of consequence, when you die, one of two things will happen, entirely outside of your control. The first possibility is that you will plainly and simply die. The second is that you will die, but not plainly: something of your nature will remain in fairyland forever, not alive but animate, some fairy's truly kept thing.

Insults:

When someone insults you, you're allowed by fairy law to answer it. It's considered to be your own unimpeachable right to weigh the insult and respond in due measure, so only you can choose what form your answer should take and how extreme it should be. Lenience is a human trait, not a fairy trait, so if you're moderate in your response, you can set fairy tongues wagging.

Beholden:

When you are beholden, fairy law demands that you make good and deliver the balance. Human honor might compel you too, but it's a lax taskmaster compared to fairy nature. In any event, if you are recalcitrant or uneager, your debtor may consider it an insult or a worse offense.



Name: _____

—Summer—

○

○

○

○

○

—Trappings—

- A comfortable place in someone else's wagon: a crate, a trunk, maybe just a hook on a post to hang yourself up on.
- A friendly yellow jacket who makes her nest in your elbow.
- A birch branch broom, bold and steadfast, an excellent listener and a fine dancer.
- An assortment of parts: spare, castoff, scavenged, kept. They're not as fine as your own but they'll serve in a pinch.
- A strong chestplate, a thick skull cap, and heavy solid fists that you can attach at need in place of your hands.

—Bindings—

- — knows where I came from or who made me, but won't tell me. If I *blurt out to them what I think is going on*, *express myself to them in capering antics*, or choose an option that affects them when I *get to work*, they can freely ignore me, no matter what I roll or what I choose. Who?
- I've taken — to be my especial role model, following them around and trying to match their style and aplomb. I can never *confront them* or *waylay them*. Who?

Note: you can change your role model whenever you advance toward summer or winter. Simply choose another character. Now you can't confront or waylay them, but you can confront or waylay your old role model.

Under
Hollow
Hills



—Winter—

○

○

○

○

○

—Place—

- Clown;
- Fortune teller;
- Worker;
- Problem solver;
- Always there, trying to fit in.

—Plays—

Stick Figure Plays:



Blurt out to them what you think is going on



Express yourself to them in capering antics



Fall apart



Get to work

Obvious Plays:



Confront them



Draw them out



Put them off



Set a scene for them



Size them up



Waylay them



Ride disaster down



Sniff the wind



Stand against the tide

The Stick Figure

When you *blurt out to someone what you think is going on*, roll. On 10+ hit, if they know better, they have to reveal to you where you're right and where you're wrong, either by answering outright or else by revealing it in their body language, accidental gestures, and tells. On a 7–9 hit, they only have to reveal whether you're right or wrong, or broadly right or broadly wrong. On a miss, they can still choose to reveal whether you're right or wrong, but if they do, you're beholden to them. They can also decide that you've insulted them by being too blunt, too tacky, too indiscreet, too right, or too wrong.

When you *express yourself to someone in capering antics*, roll. You can do impossible things with your joints and other body parts and you command their attention. On a 10+ hit, choose 2 of the following. On a 7–9 hit, choose 1. On any hit, briefly describe your antics, and...

- It's surprisingly beautiful.
- It's surprisingly sad.
- It's surprisingly funny.
- It's surprisingly graceful.
- It reveals that I —.
- It's surprisingly poignant.
- It's surprisingly dramatic.
- It's surprisingly frightening.
- It's surprisingly unpleasant.
- It reminds you of —.

Ask the MC and/or the other players how they respond. On a miss, choose 1, but ask the MC and/or the other players who notices, and who doesn't notice.

When you *fall apart*, roll. On a 10+ hit, choose 3 of the following. On a 7–9 hit, choose 2.

- You burst into tears.
- You lose your head.
- You lose your voice.
- You lose your senses.
- You shriek and bellow.
- Your arms fall off.
- You collapse into a heap.
- You lose your feet.
- You spill your guts.
- You break and run.

On any hit, no enemy or circumstance can do any worse to you. Wait until it's over and then pull yourself together again. On a miss, choose 3, and some of the others happen as well, you can't tell and don't know which. You can't recover by yourself, you'll need a friend who can draw you out to help you pick up the pieces.

When you *get to work*, roll. On a 10+ hit, choose 2 of the following. On a 7–9 hit, choose 1.

- No matter how long or how hard you work, you never tire.
- You make it into a dance and a song that gets stuck in everyone's head.
- You never complain, not even once, not even when — messes up the work you've done so far and you have to redo it.
- People can't help but joining in. Name a person or two who really can't help it, then ask if anyone else joins in too.
- Your work is so exacting and careful that, though it will be perfect, you'll never finish it, not if you work a hundred years.
- No matter who else joins in, you work faster, better, and more cheerfully than they do.

On a miss, choose 1, and in addition, you can't stop working even after the work is done. To stop, you'll need a friend to draw you out.

The Stick Figure

To play the *Stick Figure*, create your name, your summer & winter, your plays, your place, your trappings, and your bindings.

Your Job:

Your job as a player is to:

- Make your character vivid.
- Play your part in the circus.
- Take the bad with the good.

Name:

Choose a made up name that someone else once gave you.

Examples: Cobbles, Grampy Pillbutton, The Bronze Man, Moot.

Summer & Winter:

From each of the following, choose one for summer and one for winter:

- Water wheel, bellows, oil lamp, teakettle, grinding stone, sled runners, hinges, leaf spring, coil spring, pocketwatch, smoldering brazier, bone ribbing, stays, turnbuckles, clasps, cranks, wicker withes, paste, daub, marbles, mannikin, dressmaker's form, knotted string, ribbons.
- Broad smile, painted lips, mirror eyes, gemstone eyes, painted eyes, pearl eyes, glass lens eyes, mismatched limbs, visible construction, fake face, elegant mask, carefully painted mask, crude mask, doll-like face, porcelain hands, wicker hands, mitten hands, hewn body, lumpy body, powerful body, turnip head.
- Tin gray, bronze, copper, plaster white, inky black, oil black, garish tempera paint primaries, straw yellow, willow green, walnut black, oak tawny, canvas white, muslin brown.
- Mismatched clothing, castoff clothing, an old costume, one boot and one shoe, a ratty scarf, a pretty dress, a borrowed coat from you forget who, wooden shoes, felt mitts, a ragpatch cape, a battered top hat, a felt hood, eyeglasses with a broken lens, a straw hat with a hole chewed out of it.
- Mannish, womanish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, forbidding, unapproachable.

You can choose 2 sometimes if you want to, why shouldn't you?

Example (summer / winter):

Teakettle / smoldering brazier
Painted lips / crude mask, porcelain hands
Garish tempera paint primaries / tin gray
A pretty dress / one boot and one shoe
Girlish / sexless

Begin play in full summer: mark all of the lines in the summer column.

Plays:

You can make all of the obvious plays and the *Stick Figure* plays. Mark +2 next to your choice of three plays, +0 next to two, -1 next to two, and +1 next to all of the rest. These are your plays' rolls.

Place:

In the circus, at need, you can take any and all of the listed roles.

Trappings:

You get all of the listed trappings.

Bindings:

Everybody introduces themselves by name, summer & winter (or the corresponding), and place, including any details they like. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for bindings. On your turn, ask for volunteers:

- One of you knows where I came from or who made me, but won't tell me. **Who?** I can never ask you to explain or tell you what I think is true, until you decide to tell me after all.
- One of you, I've taken to be my especial role model, following you around and trying to match your style and aplomb. **Who?** I can never confront you or waylay you.

Note: you can change your role model whenever you advance toward summer or toward winter. Simply choose another character. Now you can't confront or waylay them, but you can confront or waylay your old role model.

If no one volunteers, so be it and move on. If more than one volunteers, accept them all, choose one, or ask them to decide between them, as you like.

On the others' turns, volunteer as you choose.

-Consequences-

Summer & winter:

When you move toward summer, erase one of the marks in the winter column and mark the same line in the summer column.

When you move toward winter, erase one of the marks in the summer column and mark the same line in the winter column.

Whenever you move toward summer or toward winter, take 1 from one of your plays' rolls and add 1 to a different play's roll. Choose intentionally, to match your feeling about the change. Keep to a minimum of -2 and a maximum of +3.

Violence:

Violence in fairyland is considered visceral, irrevocable, and horrifying. **When you're wounded, shocked, affronted, or dismayed**, you must immediately choose 1:

- You die.
- You withdraw at once in a cold, dignified fury.
- You writhe, moan, and curse in a display of melodramatic agony.
- You proceed immediately and fully to winter.
- You consider yourself cruelly mistreated and maimed, and will long nurse your injuries and your grudge.

True death: there are only a few things that can truly kill a fairy. Cold iron is one; there are others. There's no coming back from true death.

Insults:

When someone insults you, you're allowed by fairy law and your fairy nature to answer it. It's considered to be your own unimpeachable right to weigh the insult and respond in due measure, so only you can choose what form your answer should take and how extreme it should be. Other fairies may gossip, but no fairy would rightly stand before you and assert that you've overstepped.

Beholden:

When you are beholden, fairy law and your fairy nature demand that you make good and deliver the balance. If you are recalcitrant or uneager to do so, your debtor may consider it an insult or a worse offense.

As a Made Thing:

Fairy customs prevail upon you, but in your nature you're far more inclined to lenience when insulted, and far more eager to make good when beholden, than other fairies.



Name: _____

–Summer–

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–Winter–

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–Trappings–

- A jaunty, colorful roofed cart, pulled by a big old angry goat.
- A stone hammer as old as the living world.
- A helmet made for someone whose head was smaller than yours.
- Any number of little songbirds who perch on your shoulders and eat seeds from your fingers.
- A crooked bow and splintery arrows, with which you never miss.
- A glass bottle in which is caught the blowing winter gale.

–Bindings–

- I once took hold of — in a rage, and threw them so high into the air that they like to cracked their head on the moon. I can never again *set a scene for them* or *draw them out*. Who?
- — once out-ate, out-drunk, out-sang, out-worked, or out-farted me. (They cheated, but I don't know it.) I can never *break them* or *tower over them*. Who?

–Place–

- Performer;
- Spectacle;
- Worker;
- Problem solver;
- Always there to lend a hand.

–Plays–

Troll Plays:



—Break them



—Tower over them



—Hunker down



—Pick through the leavings

Obvious Plays:



—Confront them



—Draw them out



—Put them off



—Set a scene for them



—Size them up



—Waylay them



—Ride disaster down



—Sniff the wind



—Stand against the tide

The Troll

When you break someone, roll. On a 10+ hit, choose 1:

- You break them bodily into pieces.
- You throw them bodily out of this world into another.
- You pound them bodily into the earth.
- You cow them so utterly that you change them bodily into something meek and retiring, perhaps yes a cow, perhaps a mole, a rabbit, a skittish little quail, a big-eyed frightened gasping fish.

On a 7–9 hit, you merely wound, crush, and thoroughly dismay them. On a miss, the MC might have you choose 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst. Perhaps you'll find that they have a core of unbreakable strength after all.

When you tower over someone, roll. On any hit, choose 1:

- No harm or danger can reach them, except through you.
- No friend or ally can come to their aid, except through you.

On a 10+ hit, you so tower over them that you are free to act without any risk of losing them or leaving them unguarded. On a 7–9 hit, you must keep one eye on them whatever you do, so take -1 to any rolls you make while you are towering over them. On a miss, the MC might have you choose 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst. Perhaps you're missing something you should have caught.

When you hunker down, roll. On any hit, you can shrug off any blows that should land upon you. On a 10+ hit, shrug off as many as 3 solid blows before you suffer the consequences of the next. On a 7–9, shrug off as many as 2. On a miss, you become partly stone, and while you can shrug off as many blows as come, you'll need a friend to draw you out again.

When you pick through the leavings, roll. On any hit, you find something interesting. Ask the MC what it is. On a 10+ hit, it's treasure. On a 7–9 hit, it's a clue, a curiosity, or something that's still perfectly delicious, you don't know why they didn't finish this. On a miss, you lose something of your own here instead. Tell the MC to decide what, and to let you know when you notice that it's missing.

The Troll

To play the Troll, create your name, your summer & winter, your plays, your place, your trappings, and your bindings.

Your Job:

Your job as a player is to:

- Make your character vivid.
- Play your part in the circus.
- Take the bad with the good.

Name:

Choose a common or old-fashioned name and a gruesome or comical image and connect them together.

Examples: Bonestew Annie, Isabella the Toad, Boiled Bald Pol, Umbrella Richard

Summer & Winter:

From each of the following, choose one for summer and one for winter:

- Tree stump, fallen tree, jutting stone, an icy run, a stinking underhang, porcupine, bear, walrus, boar.
- Craggy face, smashed face, crooked face, bestial face, smoldering eyes, sunken eyes, wry smile, surprising grace, subtle beauty.
- Smoke gray, pea green, brown, chestnut, copper green, gall green, iron black, golden brown.
- Sturdy clothing, canvas apron, nailed boots, shawl, shaggy coat, stupid hat, impeccable clothing, stained clothing, mismatched clothing, garish clothing.
- Mannish, womanish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, forbidding, unapproachable.

You can choose 2 sometimes if you want to, why shouldn't you?

Example (summer / winter):

Tree stump / porcupine
Craggy face / bestial face
Copper green, chestnut / iron black
Mismatched clothing, stupid hat / shaggy coat
Mannish / forbidding

Begin play in full summer: mark all of the lines in the summer column.

Plays:

You can make all of the obvious plays and the Troll plays. Mark +2 next to your choice of three plays, +0 next to two, -1 next to two, and +1 next to all of the rest. These are your plays' rolls.

Place:

In the circus, at need, you can take any and all of the listed roles.

Trappings:

You get all of the listed trappings.

Bindings:

Everybody introduces themselves by name, summer & winter (or the corresponding), and place, including any details they like. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for bindings. On your turn, ask for volunteers:

- One of you I once took hold of you in a rage and threw you so high into the air that you like to cracked your head on the moon. **Who, and for what?** I can never again set a scene for you or draw you out.
- One of you once out-ate, out-drunk, out-sang, out-worked, or out-farted me. **Who and which?** You cheated, but I don't know it, and don't tell me how. I can never break you or tower over you.

If no one volunteers, so be it and move on. If more than one volunteers, accept them all, choose one, or ask them to decide between them, as you like.

On the others' turns, volunteer as you choose.

-Consequences-

Summer & winter:

When you move toward summer, erase one of the marks in the winter column and mark the same line in the summer column.

When you move toward winter, erase one of the marks in the summer column and mark the same line in the winter column.

Whenever you move toward summer or toward winter, take 1 from one of your plays' rolls and add 1 to a different play's roll. Choose intentionally, to match your feeling about the change. Keep to a minimum of -2 and a maximum of +3.

Violence:

Violence in fairyland is considered visceral, irrevocable, and horrifying. **When you're wounded, shocked, affronted, or dismayed**, you must immediately choose 1:

- You die.
- You withdraw at once in a cold, dignified fury.
- You writhe, moan, and curse in a display of melodramatic agony.
- You proceed immediately and fully to winter.
- You consider yourself cruelly mistreated and maimed, and will long nurse your injuries and your grudge.

True death: there are only a few things that can truly kill a fairy. Cold iron is one; there are others. There's no coming back from true death.

Insults:

When someone insults you, you're allowed by fairy law and your fairy nature to answer it. It's considered to be your own unimpeachable right to weigh the insult and respond in due measure, so only you can choose what form your answer should take and how extreme it should be. Other fairies may gossip, but no fairy would rightly stand before you and assert that you've overstepped.

Beholden:

When you are beholden, fairy law and your fairy nature demand that you make good and deliver the balance. If you are recalcitrant or uneager to do so, your debtor may consider it an insult or a worse offense.

Name: _____

—Summer—

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—Winter—

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—Place—

- Performer;
- Barker & caller;
- Worker;
- Problem solver;
- Always there with a smile and a cutting line.

—Plays—

Winding Rose Plays:



—Cut them quick



—Lay your hand on them



—Twine danger around



—Withdraw behind thorns

Obvious Plays:



—Confront them



—Draw them out



—Put them off



—Set a scene for them



—Size them up



—Waylay them



—Ride disaster down



—Sniff the wind



—Stand against the tide

The Winding Rose

When you cut someone quick, roll. On any hit, you cut them deep, wounding and dismaying them. On a 10+ hit, choose 1 of the following as well.

- They don't realize until later that you've cut them so.
- They must suffer your cut in silence, without melodrama or display.
- Though you've cut them deep, they must suffer it as their due. If they offer any recrimination, grudge, or answer, you may consider it an insult.

On a miss, they catch your hand or warn you off before your cut lands.

When you lay your hand on someone, roll. On a 10+ hit, choose 2 of the following. On a 7–9 hit, choose 1.

- They will go with you where you lead.
- They forget what they were thinking about before.
- Their heart races, their breath comes ragged, and their head swims.
- They cannot remove your hand themselves, but must wait for you to remove it.
- They trust you with what comes next, even after you've removed your hand, until you give them reason not to.

On a miss, choose 1 anyway, but you are beholden to them.

When you twine danger around, roll. On a 10+ hit, choose 2 of the following. On a 7–9 hit, choose 1.

- You arrest the danger here, with you. It can't get past you.
- You suffer no injury or misfortune from the danger yourself.
- You make yourself, in some measure, dangerous. Ask the MC what your next play might be, and if you make it, roll it at +3.

On a miss, the MC might have you choose 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst. You have taken the danger into your very arms, and perhaps it will not go well for you.

When you withdraw behind thorns, roll. On any hit, any enemy or danger who tries to reach you is torn, wounded, and dismayed by the deadly tangle of thorns protecting you. On a 10+ hit, only three or more enemies working together can overcome them, suffering the loss to two of their number. On a 7–9 hit, only two or more enemies can, suffering the loss of one. On a miss, you're safe from enemies, but you're trapped behind your thorns, and you'll need a friend who'll brave them to draw you out.

The Winding Rose

To play the *Winding Rose*, create your name, your summer & winter, your plays, your place, your trappings, and your bindings.

Your Job:

Your job as a player is to:

- Make your character vivid.
- Play your part in the circus.
- Take the bad with the good.

Name:

Choose the name of a bird, a flower, a tree, and/or something in the sky, and combine them.

Examples: Lilygull, Moonburr, Willowcloud, Chickadee Rose

Summer & Winter:

From each of the following, choose one for summer and one for winter:

- The racing moon, a brier bramble, wildflowers in a field, a track through the woods, twilight, dawn.
- Radiant beauty, crooked smile, parted lips, shining eyes, youthful beauty, ripe beauty, tangled hair, short hair.
- Rose red, electric blue, spring green, yellow, copper, gold, nut brown, blush rose.
- Sprightly clothing, cocked hat, short skirts, bare feet, kickass boots, whimsical clothing, feathers, flowers, a studded jacket or vest.
- Mannish, womanish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, forbidding, unapproachable.

You can choose 2 sometimes if you want to, why shouldn't you?

Example (summer / winter):

Wildflowers in a field / a track through the woods
Youthful beauty, tangled hair / crooked smile
Yellow, spring green / copper
Short skirts, bare feet / kickass boots
Queerish, sexy / womanish, unapproachable

Begin play in full summer: mark all of the lines in the summer column.

Plays:

You can make all of the obvious plays and the *Winding Rose* plays. Mark +2 next to your choice of three plays, +0 next to two, -1 next to two, and +1 next to all of the rest. These are your plays' rolls.

Place:

In the circus, at need, you can take any and all of the listed roles.

Trappings:

You get all of the listed trappings.

Bindings:

Everybody introduces themselves by name, summer & winter (or the corresponding), and place, including any details they like. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for bindings. On your turn, ask for volunteers:

- One of you has fallen in love with me for real. **Who?** I can never confront you or lay my hand on you.
- One of you has guessed the secret I keep so safe. **Who?** But quick, don't tell me what it is, I'm keeping it from myself too. I can never confront you or waylay you.

If no one volunteers, so be it and move on. If more than one volunteers, accept them all, choose one, or ask them to decide between them, as you like.

On the others' turns, volunteer as you choose.

-Consequences-

Summer & winter:

When you move toward summer, erase one of the marks in the winter column and mark the same line in the summer column.

When you move toward winter, erase one of the marks in the summer column and mark the same line in the winter column.

Whenever you move toward summer or toward winter, take 1 from one of your plays' rolls and add 1 to a different play's roll. Choose intentionally, to match your feeling about the change. Keep to a minimum of -2 and a maximum of +3.

Violence:

Violence in fairyland is considered visceral, irrevocable, and horrifying. **When you're wounded, shocked, affronted, or dismayed**, you must immediately choose 1:

- You die.
- You withdraw at once in a cold, dignified fury.
- You writhe, moan, and curse in a display of melodramatic agony.
- You proceed immediately and fully to winter.
- You consider yourself cruelly mistreated and maimed, and will long nurse your injuries and your grudge.

True death: there are only a few things that can truly kill a fairy. Cold iron is one; there are others. There's no coming back from true death.

Insults:

When someone insults you, you're allowed by fairy law and your fairy nature to answer it. It's considered to be your own unimpeachable right to weigh the insult and respond in due measure, so only you can choose what form your answer should take and how extreme it should be. Other fairies may gossip, but no fairy would rightly stand before you and assert that you've overstepped.

Beholden:

When you are beholden, fairy law and your fairy nature demand that you make good and deliver the balance. If you are recalcitrant or uneager to do so, your debtor may consider it an insult or a worse offense.