

Name: _____

–Summer–

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–Trappings–

- A shell-like wagon with rippling pennants, pulled by two playful river otters.
- Silver basins that fill with moonlight and clean anything held within.
- Strings of spangles, caskets of beads, swaths of cloth, measuring tapes, pins.
- Patterns in brown paper with the names of all the other members of the circus and a few more besides.
- A pair of scissors, delicate as a wish, which can cut anything the wielder wills.
- An assortment of cups, rings, brooches, buckles, and swords, all of silver, many of human make, some with jewels.

–Bindings–

- — once changed the fate I sang for them. I still don't know how they did it. I can never *draw them out* or *sing their fate* again. Who?
- — once recalled me to myself when I was lost. I can never *waylay them* or *muddy the waters* against them. Who?

–Winter–

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–Place–

- Singer;
- Illusionist;
- Planner;
- Costumer & wardrobe keeper;
- Always there with hard truths or welcoming arms.

–Plays–

River-Wise Plays:



— *Sing their fate*



— *Take their measure*



— *Carve a channel*



— *Muddy the waters*

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*

+2, +2, +2, +1, +1, +1, +1, +1, +1, 0, 0, -1, -1

The River-Wise

When you sing someone's fate, roll. **On a 10+ hit**, consider carefully their actions, their path, their destiny and legacy, and tell them what you sing. **On a 7–9 hit**, ask the MC what you sing to them. **On a miss**, ask them, themselves, what you sing to them. **Whatever the result**, what you sing to them, must and will come true. The MC's empowered to break any and every rule in the game in order to make it so.

When you take someone's measure, roll. **On any hit**, ask questions; the MC must answer them honestly. If you are taking the measure of another player's character, the MC can confer with them. **On a 10+ hit**, ask 3 questions. **On a 7–9 hit**, ask 2.

- What forces of nature are most concerned with them?
- Where is the strongest tug of direction?
- What impulse is building in them unawares?
- How does water move in them, as tears or coldness or bubbling desire or other guises?
- Where are they connected to others?
- What do they wish they could wash away?
- How do they feel pinched or constrained or ill-fitting in their situation?

On a miss, ask 1 but be prepared for the worst. Perhaps they've taken offense at your interest and appraisal.

When you carve a channel, roll. **On a 10+ hit**, the way opens for you like a breaching dam, with possibly as dramatic an effect. **On a 7–9 hit**, it takes time and patience, drop by drop, but it is certain to give, even if none notice until it's too late to prepare. **On a miss**, you are blocked as with milled stone and stout bars. Advance toward winter.

When you muddy the waters, roll. **On a 10+ hit**, choose 2 of the following. **On a 7–9 hit**, choose 1:

- Hide something previously seen.
- Reveal something previously hidden.
- Confuse someone.
- Misdirect someone.
- Turn someone about.
- Make it seem that something is there, even though it isn't.
- Make something ordinary seem marvelous.
- Make something ordinary seem terrifying.

On a miss, choose 1, and also choose 1:

- You reveal a true and previously unknown thing about yourself in the process. Confer with the MC and the other players to figure out what.
- You become entranced by the turbulent dance, and it'll take someone else to draw you out and recall you to yourself.

The River-Wise

To play the River-Wise, 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 lyrical name with references to or sounds like water.

Examples: Rilla, Merri dew, Brooke, Clyde, Freshette, Fjorden, Ripple, Eddy, Glissade, Covettine, Nadia, Marelle, Edlin, Lynne, Lyander.

Summer & Winter:

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

- Dappled sunlight, rising mist, little trickling streams, minnows, tiny frogs, watercress, waterfalls, lilies, dewdrops, flying shadows, lowering fog, wailing wind, ice crystals, sharp rocks, scouring sand.
- Deep eyes, teasing eyes, sad eyes, full mouth, warm smile, loose flowing hair, damp hair, ribbon-twined hair, swollen hands, tender hands, wrinkled fingertips, strong arms, full body, gaunt body.
- Willow green, purple, cream, velvety brown, sunset peach, clear pale blue, blood red, ice white, mud brown, stone gray, black.
- Lace veil, damp hems, ragged cuffs, clinging gown, jacket of iridescent scales, loose shirt, velvet cloak, ribbons, canvas trousers, worn shift, wicker basket, lumpy satchel, long vest, muddy boots, glistening earrings, red belt, pearls.
- Mannish, womanish, androgynish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, charming, forbidding, enticing, unapproachable, —.

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

Example (summer / winter):

Rising mist / scouring sand
Damp hair, warm smile / swollen hands
Purple / cream, black
Canvas trousers / pearls
Charming / 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 River-Wise 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 once changed the fate I sang for you. **Who, and what fate did I sing?** I can never draw you out or sing your fate again.
- One of you once recalled me to myself when I was lost. **Who?** I can never waylay you or muddy the waters against 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.