

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 *Minister of Revels*. Your job isn't to play a fairy in the circus, but to give the circus places to perform and audiences to perform for. You get to run ahead of the circus planting thorn bushes, you get to make one audience member bored and another eager, and you get to shout helpful suggestions whenever you have one. Someone should volunteer now!

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 *servicing 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.)

Under Hollow Hills: Playbooks

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Playbooks



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!)



Name: _____

—Summer—

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Pronouns:

—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 themself 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?

—Winter—

-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

—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**

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

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**, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. They 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 7-9 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 Imagery:

From each of the following lists of images, 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, 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

- Mushrooms, the bullfrog
- Luminous eyes
- Berry black
- Stolen clothing, silk gown
- Mannish, forbidding

Winter

- Fish bones
- Bristly hair
- Pumpkin brown
- Stained apron
- 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–

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Pronouns:

–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?

–Winter–

-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

–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*

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

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.

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 Minister of Revels 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, whom I address 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 creep?

On a miss, in seeking out the little wild things, you've blundered into a hunter. Ask the Minister of Revels 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 Minister of Revels 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 Minister of Revels 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 Imagery:

From each of the following lists of images, 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, 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 |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| ● 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 Chieftain Mouse 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:

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- 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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-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

—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.
- A shimmering golden thimble. Rap someone sharply with it and you transform them into a bird, in which form they stay until you release them or they sing the correct song; or a potted plant, in which form they stay until you release them or they bloom flowers; or a hen's egg, in which form they stay until someone cracks the egg or they hatch themselves.
- An annoying cat.
- A glowing hot coal that will never cool.

—Bindings—

- I once turned — into a little bird, put them 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 their heart's true love and longing. I can never *put them off*. Who?

—Winter—

-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

—Place—

- Fortune teller;
- Conjuror;
- 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*

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

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, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. They might have you choose 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst. Perhaps by blinding them to some things, you'll awaken their awareness to 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. Ask them what you see.

On a miss, choose 1 anyway, but in the act, you lay yourself bare as well. The Minister of Revels 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 Minister of Revels what's happening.

When you *throw the bones*, roll. On any bit, ask the Minister of Revels questions; the Minister of Revels 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 laid on them. If the Minister of Revels's answer is later proven wrong, you may consider it an insult or even a terrible shock. On a miss, ask 1 anyway, but then ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. 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 Imagery:

From each of the following lists of images, 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, 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

- Mud, ravens
- Wrinkled face, shining eyes
- Gray
- Old clothing, knit gloves
- Womanish

Winter

- The trailing willow
- Hidden beauty
- Midnight blue
- A subtle brocade
- 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-

-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

-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?

-Winter-

-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

-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**

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

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.

When you catch eyes with someone, and you mean it, roll. On any hit, they have to choose: you fight each other, or you fall passionately into each others' arms. On a 10+ hit, 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 one if they want to, but if they want neither, they can grin or scowl or look away instead.

When you stand regal before someone, roll. On a 10+ hit, choose 3 of the following. On a 7-9 hit, 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 depart 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 hit, 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 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+ hit, 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 Minister of Revels 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+ hit, they answer your call at once. On a 7-9 hit, 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 Imagery:

From each of the following lists of images, 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, 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

- Thunder echoing off the hills
- Laugh lines
- Tawny gold
- Silk blouse, tight cut pants
- Mannish, sexy

Winter

- The driving storm
- Full beard
- Sea blue
- Velvet vest
- 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—

-
-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

—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?

—Winter—

-
-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

—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*

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

The Feather-Cloak

When you make someone blink, roll. On any bit, 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 something or they really see something startling, and it leaves them astonished. What?

On a 10+ bit, however you decide to play it now, take +1 to your roll. On a miss, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. They 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 bit, they may, as they wish, become invisible until the next setting of the spheres, sun or moon. On a 10+ bit, 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, it's an insult to 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 bit, 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 bit, choose 1 of the following, though.

- Someone carries you off by accident. Ask the Minister of Revels 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 Minister of Revels 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 Minister of Revels where you are now.

When you watch for your chance, roll. On any bit, choose 1 of the following to tell the Minister of Revels.

- 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+ bit, however you decide to play it next, take +1 to your roll. On a miss, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. They 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 Imagery:

From each of the following lists of images, 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, 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
● 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—

-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

—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?

—Winter—

-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

—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

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

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 Minister of Revels 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 Minister of Revels 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 a 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 bit, after you've chosen at least 4 or 5, the Minister of Revels can hold up a finger: come to your finale now, or you'll lose the crowd. On a miss, choose anyway. The Minister of Revels 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 Minister of Revels where you reappear. On a 7-9 bit, you're nearby, just invisible. Tell the Minister of Revels what you do. On a miss, you're invisible except for your hat, your shoes, your ears, or the tip of your nose (the Minister of Revels's choice which). You think you're all invisible. Tell the Minister of Revels 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 Imagery:

From each of the following lists of images, 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, 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

- Struck sparks
- Upstanding hai
- Don't-eat-me yellow
- Parody-fancy clothes
- Childish

Winter

- The glowing wick after the candle's out
- Kindly eyes
- Iridescent green
- Tatterdemalion rags
- 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: _____

The Interloper

-Free-

-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

-Trappings-

- ♦ A corner in a friendly wagon where you can ride and sleep, curled up in your blanket. You don't need much.
- ♦ A human memory: a loved one's face, a farm on a hillside, warm evenings by firelight, a job in a town with neighbors and employer.
- ♦ Fairy poison you've dropped into your eyes. Weep, and you'll wash it out and return to mortal life.
- ♦ A key, a nail, or some other piece of cold iron. No fairy can bear its touch, so it'll betray you to any who see it.

-Bindings-

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

-Careful-

-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

-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*

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

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*, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong, 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 profoundly, 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 Minister of Revels where you are. *On a miss*, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. Perhaps you'll flee straight into danger even worse 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 Imagery:

From each of the following lists, 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, androgynish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, charming, forbidding, enticing, unapproachable, —.

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

For each that you've chosen, customize it. Characterize it differently for free and for careful.

Example:

Free

- A low, golden full moon
- Laughing eyes
- Warm earth-red
- Brocade vest
- Womanish

Careful

- A hard, cold, high full moon
- Guarded eyes
- Deep bloody red
- Brigandine vest, silk mask
- 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: _____

The Lostling

-Free-

-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

-Careful-

-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

-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

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

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 Minister of Revels 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*, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. 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*, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong, 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*, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. They 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 law 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 Minister of Revels 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 Imagery:

From each of the following lists, 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, androgynish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, charming, forbidding, enticing, unapproachable, —.

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

For each that you've chosen, customize it. Characterize it differently for free and for careful.

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–

-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

–Trappings–

- ♦ A glamorous wagon, pulled by dancing matched geldings.
- ♦ A magical cabinet: reach into it and it will deliver an outfit marvelously well-suited to the occasion at hand.
- ♦ A sharp sword of mortal bronze, stolen from some drowned warrior of ages past.
- ♦ A silver necklace, or bridle, but who dares place it around your neck?
- ♦ A traveling kitchen, tidy and spare, with labeled jars of delicate spices and many fresh, novel things.
- ♦ A polished lake stone, always icy cold, that remembers the secrets of past worlds.

–Bindings–

- ♦ I've fallen in love with —, though naturally I keep the fact from myself. I can never *put them off*. Who?

- ♦ I caught — opening a door they had no business opening. I can never again *draw them out*, nor *disarm any situation* they're a part of. Who?

–Winter–

-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

–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*

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

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, the Nightmare Horse, or else 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 Imagery:

From each of the following lists of images, 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, 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 |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| ● 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: _____

The Seeker

-Bold-

Pronouns:

-Trappings-

- A cart you inherited somehow from its previous owner, small, splintery, drafty in the wind, and the pissy little donkey that pulls it.
- Unmistakeable human clothing: fur and leather, which fairies rarely use; a big oilcloth coat, where fairies rarely mind the rain.
- A token of what the fairies stole from you. Examine it and it'll point the way forward. You followed it here to fairyland and to the circus, and now you're following it on.
- A knife of cold iron. No fairy can bear its touch.

-Bindings-

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

-Careful-

Pronouns:

-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*

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

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**, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong, 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 Minister of Revels 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 Minister of Revels what it is. **On a miss**, you should have trusted your own will, not chance. Ask the Minister of Revels 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 Imagery:

From each of the following lists, 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, androgynish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, charming, forbidding, enticing, unapproachable, —.

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

For each that you've chosen, customize it. Characterize it differently for bold and for careful.

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—

-
-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

—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.

—Winter—

-
-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

—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**

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

The Stick Figure

When you **blurt out to someone what you think is going on**, roll. On a **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 Minister of Revels and/or the other players how they respond. On a **miss**, choose 1, but ask the Minister of Revels 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 Imagery:

From each of the following lists of images, 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, 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

- Teakettle
- Painted lips
- Garish tempera paint primaries
- A pretty dress
- Girlish

Winter

- Smoldering brazier
- Porcelain hands
- Tin gray
- One boot and one shoe
- Sexless

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

Under
Hollow
Hills



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: _____

The Troll

-Summer-

-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

-Winter-

-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

-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

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

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, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. They 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, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. They 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 Minister of Revels 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 Minister of Revels 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 Imagery:

From each of the following lists of images, 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, 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

- Tree stump
- Craggy face
- Copper green, chestnut
- Mismatched clothing, stupid hat
- Mannish

Winter

- Porcupine
- Bestial face
- Iron black
- Shaggy coat
- 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–

-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

–Trappings–

- A bed in someone's wagon, soft, warm, and private.
- A sharp, useful, plain little knife.
- A fine sword, named, stashed thoughtlessly somewhere.
- Music and wildflower perfume wherever you walk.
- Tokens of love and memory, your own and others'.
- A sea shell in which speaks the voice of the moon.

–Bindings–

- — has fallen in love with me, for real. I can never *confront them* or *lay my hand on them*. Who?
- — has guessed the secret I keep so safe. (They didn't tell me, and even I don't know what it is.) But I can never again *confront them* or *waylay them*. Who?

–Winter–

-
-
-
-
-

Pronouns:

–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*

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

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 you 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 Minister of Revels what your next play might be, and if you make it, roll it at +3.

On a miss, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. They 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 of 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 Imagery:

From each of the following lists of images, 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, 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

- Wildflowers in a field
- Youthful beauty, tangled hair
- Yellow, spring green
- Short skirts, bare feet
- Queerish, sexy

Winter

- A track through the woods
- Crooked smile
- Copper
- Kickass boots
- 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.

The Obvious Plays

When you confront someone, roll. **On any hit**, you interrupt them and they can't proceed without dealing with you. **On a 10+ hit**, they have to choose whether to back down and give you your way, or defy you and force your hand. **On a 7–9 hit**, if they don't want to back down or force your hand, they can try to prevaricate, mollify you, explain, bargain, or justify themselves instead. **On a miss**, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. Perhaps you've tipped your hand.

When you draw someone out, roll. **On any hit**, you seize their attention and they open up to you. **On a 10+ hit**, ask them 2 of the following; they must answer honestly. **On a 7–9 hit**, ask 1.

- What are you considering?
- Where are you open to me, where are you vulnerable, and where are you guarded?
- What are you forgetting, ignoring, or keeping from yourself?
- What do you hope I'll do?
- What are you afraid I'll do?
- What do you expect, and how do you feel about it?

On a miss, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. They might have you choose 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst. Perhaps you've revealed yourself to them instead.

In circumstances where you can help someone, endanger them, or strike them by drawing them out, add this question:

- I do indeed draw you out, by doing —. What's the effect?

When you put someone off, roll. **On any hit**, they must back off and give you time and space. **On a 10+ hit**, they have to physically leave or let you leave yourself. **On a 7–9 hit**, they can remain nearby, if they choose, and follow along behind you if you leave. **On a miss**, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. Perhaps you've insulted them.

When you set a scene for someone, roll. **On any hit**, you capture their attention and they must hear you out. **On a 10+ hit**, choose 2 of the following. **On a 7–9 hit**, choose 1.

- Reveal to them what you'd like them to do. If they accede, offer them a reward or a favor, but if they refuse, you may consider it an insult.
- Reveal to them something you're considering, and judge their reaction to it. Ask their player what they think; they have to tell you. This can be implicit or explicit, and they may or may not realize what they've revealed.
- Offer them something, explicitly or implicitly. If they accept it, they're beholden to you, in proportion, as you judge it, but if they refuse, you may consider it an insult.
- Confide in them or explain something to them. Tell them what you reveal and ask them how they take it. They must answer honestly.

On a miss, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. They might have you choose 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst. Perhaps you've made yourself beholden to them.

When you size someone up, roll. **On any hit**, ask them questions; they must answer honestly. These are things that you realize about them from just a quick look; you need not speak or interact in any way. **On a 10+ hit**, ask them 2 questions. **On a 7–9 hit**, ask them 1.

- What do you intend to do?
- How far are you prepared to go?
- Where are you confident, and where are you uncertain?
- What do you hope will happen, what do you fear, and how prepared are you for each?

On a miss, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. They might have you choose 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst. Perhaps you've revealed your attention or your intentions to them.

When you waylay someone, roll. **On any hit**, they must drop everything and deal with your attack. **On a 10+ hit**, choose 2 of the following. **On a 7–9 hit**, choose 1.

- You drive them scrambling back.
- You strike them violently, wounding and dismaying them.
- You seize bodily hold of them.
- You throw them off-balance and they stumble or fall.
- You shock and startle them and they panic or freeze.

On a miss, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. They might have you choose 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst. Perhaps you've overplayed your position and given them the upper hand.

When you ride disaster down, roll. **On any hit**, you keep your head or keep your feet all the way to the bottom. **On a 10+ hit**, you carry it off with aplomb. Your person, your dignity, and your fortunes are all somehow intact; ask the Minister of Revels where you are now. **On a 7–9 hit**, you're battered and the worse for wear. Ask the Minister of Revels where you are now, and whether you've suffered a shock or an injury, or only indignity and misfortune. **On a miss**, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. Perhaps you haven't managed to keep your feet or your head at all.

When you sniff the wind, roll. **On any hit**, ask the Minister of Revels questions, which they must answer truthfully. **On a 10+ hit**, ask 2. **On a 7–9 hit**, ask 1.

- What's coming this way?
- What's here that I haven't yet seen?
- Whose territory is this? Whose doing?
- If I trust my feet to carry me to safety, where will they take me?
- How could I make myself invisible here, how could I go unnoticed?
- If I trust my nose to lead me to the heart of this, where would it take me next?

On a miss, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. They might have you choose 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst. Perhaps you've disturbed something or someone without realizing.

When you stand against the tide, roll. **On a 10+ hit**, whatever the tide is, it can neither overcome you nor sweep past you. It breaks upon you and rises no further. **On a 7–9 hit**, the tide washes past you, but you're a promontory against it. While you can't stop it from rising and overcoming those around you, it can't move you, and perhaps you can offer strength or shelter to those who can reach you. **On a miss**, ask the Minister of Revels what goes wrong. Perhaps the tide drowns you after all.

Fighting:

When you fight with someone, you do it by confronting them, in which case you can strike and injure them if they force your hand; by drawing them out, in which case you can strike and injure them by choosing to draw them out to that effect; or by waylaying them, in which case you strike and injure them if you choose the option to do so.

For a fight on equal footing between ready opponents, they each roll to draw the other out. For NPCs, the Minister of Revels rolls.

Should an NPC waylay you, the Minister of Revels doesn't roll for them. Instead, generally speaking, you should ride disaster down. Under some circumstances you might be able to play it differently, but as a rule, ride disaster down.

The consequences of striking and injuring someone depend on their nature, fairy or mortal.

For details, look under "Violence" on the reverse of the players' character sheets, and under "Fighting" on the Minister of Revels' reference sheet.