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 might play someone by distracting them with tricks & visions, or by provoking them. You might play a situation by making yourself something else, or by shrugging it off.

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

The Boondoggle Hob:
a playbook for
Under Hollow Hills

Large Print Version

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a lumpley game

The Boondoggle Hob

To play the Boondoggle Hob, create your name, your summer & winter imagery, your place, your plays, 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.

Your Name

Choose a name that sounds like nonsense.

Examples: Ermatilla, Harebrake, Kimbledorn, Nighley Bluw.

Your Summer & Winter Imagery

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: Fish bones, humus, mushrooms, may thorn, wormy apples, beetles, churned mud, spring peepers, the bullfrog, the rooting boar, poison ivy.

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: Crooked nose, lumpy face, long jaw, pointed ears, pointed face, luminous eyes, shaggy hair, spiky hair, bristly hair, lined face, ugly face, glittering eyes.

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: Berry red, berry black, pine green, pumpkin brown, cream, periwinkle.

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: Stolen clothing, golden fillet, satin gown, heeled boots, silk shoes & pattens, working clothes, tidy apron, stained apron, shapeless felt hat.

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: 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?

Choose your pronouns for summer and winter as well.

Example:

Summer	Winter
● Mushrooms, the bullfrog	○ Fish bones
● Luminous eyes	○ Bristly hair
● Berry black	○ Pumpkin brown
● Stolen clothing, silk gown	○ Stained apron
● Mannish, forbidding	○ Womanish

Begin play in full summer: mark the summer column.

Your Place

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

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 only your plays' starting rolls; you'll have many opportunities to change them.

Mark: +2, +2, +2, +1, +1, +1, +1, +1, 0, 0, -1, -1

Trappings

You get all of the listed trappings.

Bindings

Everybody introduces themselves. On your turn, tell everyone your name, your playbook, your summer imagery, your place in the circus, your wagon, and any of your other trappings you think the others might find noteworthy.

Once everyone's introduced themselves, 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.

The Boondoggle Hob

Name: _____

Summer	&	Winter
○		○
○		○
○		○
○		○
○		○
Pronouns:		Pronouns:

Place

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

Plays

- You can make your Boondoggle Hob plays. To play someone, you can distract them with tricks & visions; or provoke them. To play a situation, you can make yourself something else; or shrug it off.
- You can make all of the obvious plays. To play someone, you can confront them; draw them out; open up to them; put them off; size them up; or waylay them. To play a situation, you can: call for a line; sniff the wind; use your trappings; or weather the storm.

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.
- If you'd like to add any other prostheses, sensory aids, communication aids, or mobility aids, please do:

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?

Boondoggle Hob Plays

Distract Them with Tricks & Visions

Your Roll: ___

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 MC what goes wrong. They might have you choose 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst. Perhaps you give the game away.

Make Yourself Something Else

Your Roll: ___

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 step to full winter.

Provoke Them

Your Roll: ___

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.

Shrug It Off

Your Roll: ___

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 Obvious Plays

To Play Someone

Confront them. Your roll: ____

Draw them out. Your roll: ____

Open up to them . Your roll: ____

Put them off. Your roll: ____

Size them up. Your roll: ____

Waylay them. Your roll: ____

To Play a Situation

Call for a line. (No roll)

Sniff the wind. Your roll: ____

Use your trappings. (No roll)

Weather the storm. Your roll: ____

Consequences

Summer & Winter

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

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

Whenever you step 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.

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.

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 step 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.

Under Hollow Hills

There is a traveling circus under the Hollow Hills.

It travels by moonlight, small wagons creaking in the night silence. It travels lost roads, where fireflies and whisps hover to watch it pass, where goblins peer down from their treebranch perches, and owls. It travels the night world and the day world, fairyland and the living earth, and places otherwise, and no border can keep it. It has mysteries to pose, drama to perform, it has music, juggling, acts of death-defying peril, pratfall comedy. It has dangerous secrets to tell.

Step up, step up. Come great, come small, come revelers all!