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 might play someone by blindfolding them, or by laying them bare. You might 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 Crooked Wand:
a playbook for
Under Hollow Hills

Large Print Version

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a lumpley game

The Crooked Wand

To play the Crooked Wand, 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 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.

Your Summer & Winter Imagery

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: Broken branches, mud, ravens, the trailing willow, torn lace, smoke from a chimney, drowned roots, vine-twisted wood.

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: Wrinkled face, hidden beauty, ageless beauty, shining eyes, hooded eyes, blinded eyes, cut out eyes, knotted hair, long beard.

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: White, gray, deep red, midnight blue, black, brown.

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: Old clothing, knit gloves, shawl, a floppy hat, a jaunty hat, a subtle brocade, elegant clothing, worn clothing, an antique breastplate or helmet.

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
● Mud, ravens	○ The trailing willow
● Wrinkled face, shining eyes	○ Hidden beauty
● Gray	○ Midnight blue
● Old clothing, knit gloves	○ A subtle brocade
● Womanish	○ Queerish

Begin play in full summer: mark 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 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 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, 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.

The Crooked Wand

Name: _____

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

Place

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

Plays

- You can make your Crooked Wand plays. To play someone, you can blindfold them; or lay them bare. To play a situation, you can sink into the mud; or throw the bones.
- 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 creaking weather-warped cart, pulled by a cheerful 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.
- If you'd like to add any other prostheses, sensory aids, communication aids, or mobility aids, please do:

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?

Crooked Wand Plays

Blindfold Them

Your Roll: ___

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

Lay Them Bare

Your Roll: ___

When you lay someone bare, roll. On any hit, you reveal something to them, about them. On a 10+ hit, choose 2. On a 7–9 hit, 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 MC chooses 1 against you, and asks you how you react in turn.

Sink Into the Mud

Your Roll: ___

When you sink into the mud, roll. On any hit, you can't be found, and any trouble that comes, passes you by without touching you. You choose when to emerge. On a 10+ hit, 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. You can bring someone else if you choose; they're trapped as well. Ask the MC what's happening.

Throw the Bones

Your Roll: ___

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

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!