# The Troll

You're stone 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 might play someone by breaking them, or by towering over them. You might 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 Troll:
a playbook for
# Under Hollow Hills

Large Print Version

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# The Troll

To play the Troll, 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 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.

# Your Summer & Winter Imagery

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: Tree stump, fallen tree, jutting stone, an icy run, a stinking underhang, porcupine, bear, walrus, boar.

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: Craggy face, smashed face, crooked face, bestial face, smoldering eyes, sunken eyes, wry smile, surprising grace, subtle beauty.

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: Smoke gray, pea green, brown, chestnut, copper green, gall green, iron black, golden brown.

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: Sturdy clothing, canvas apron, nailed boots, shawl, shaggy coat, absurd hat, impeccable clothing, stained clothing, mismatched clothing, garish clothing.

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 |
|---|---|
| ● Tree stump | ○ Porcupine |
| ● Craggy face | ○ Bestial face |
| ● Copper green, chestnut | ○ Iron black |
| ● Unfortunate hat | ○ Shaggy coat |
| ● Mannish | ○ Forbidding |

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 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 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 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 open up to you or draw you out.
- One of you once out-ate, out-drank, 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.

# The Troll

Name: _____

| Summer | & | Winter |
|---|---|---|
| ○ | | ○ |
| ○ | | ○ |
| ○ | | ○ |
| ○ | | ○ |
| ○ | | ○ |
| Pronouns: | | Pronouns: |

## Place

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

## Plays

- You can make your Troll plays. To play someone, you can break them; or tower over them. To play a situation, you can hunker down; or pick through the leavings.
- 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 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.
- If you'd like to add any other prostheses, sensory aids, communication aids, or mobility aids, please do:

## 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 open up to them or draw them out. Who?

- — once out-ate, out-drank, 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?

# Troll Plays

## Break Them

## Your Roll: ___

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 MC 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.

# Tower Over Them

## Your Roll: ___

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 MC 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.

## Hunker Down

## Your Roll: ___

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.

## Pick Through the Leavings

## Your Roll: ___

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

# The 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!