The Lantern Jack

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 might play someone by daring them to follow you, or by greeting them with honest pleasure. You might 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 Lantern Jack:
a playbook for
Under Hollow Hills

Large Print Version

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a lumpley game

The Lantern Jack

To play the Lantern Jack, 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 short name or a really long name.

Examples: Erzabettina the Firefly Whisp, Lune, Master Revellesto of the Wire High, Tip, Zoff.

Your Summer & Winter Imagery

Choose 1 for summer & 1 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.

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: Long nose, lumpy nose, pert nose, no nose, 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.

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: Pale green, watery blue, beetle blue, iridescent black, iridescent purple, iridescent green, poison green, don't-eat-me yellow, back-off red.

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: 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.

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
● Struck sparks	○ The glowing wick after the candle's out
● Upstanding hai	○ Kindly eyes
● Don't-eat-me yellow	○ Iridescent green
● Parody-fancy clothes	○ Tatterdemalion rags
● Childish	○ Queerish, sexy

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 Lantern Jack 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 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 roll for weathering the storm. Note it on your sheet!
- One of you, I've led you into one misadventure too many. Who? I can never again open up to 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.

The Lantern Jack

Name: _____

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

Place

- Clown, juggler & tumbler;
- Novelties, trinkets, tickets & refreshments;
- Provisioner;
- Planner;
- Always there as a voice of reason.

Plays

- You can make your Lantern Jack plays. To play someone, you can dare them to follow you; or greet them with honest pleasure. To play a situation, you can trip it gaily; or vanish.
- 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 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, knifes, 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 punguents, Moxie.
- A dragon's egg.
- If you'd like to add any other prostheses, sensory aids, communication aids, or mobility aids, please do:

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 roll for weathering the storm. Anyway, who?

- I've led — into one misadventure too many. I can never again open up to them or dare them to follow me. Who?

Lantern Jack Plays

Dare Them to Follow You

Your Roll: ___

When you dare someone to follow you, if they do, roll. On any hit, 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 MC 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+ hit, 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 MC where you are now.

Greet Them with Honest Pleasure

Your Roll: ___

When you greet someone with honest pleasure, roll. On a 10+ hit, any grudge, grievance, or unfinished business between you vanishes, for real. On a 7–9 hit, 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.

Vanish

Your Roll: ___

When you vanish, roll. On a 10+ hit, you've gone. Tell the MC where you reappear. On a 7–9 hit, you're nearby, just invisible. Tell the MC what you do. On a miss, you're invisible except for your hat, your shoes, your ears, or the tip of your nose (the MC's choice which). You think you're all invisible. Tell the MC what you do..

Trip It Gaily

Your Roll: ___

When you trip it gaily, roll. All present must stop to watch you. On any hit, 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 clamber up to —.
- I fall to —.
- I dive to —.
- I strut up to —.
- I swoop to —.
- I make a show 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.

On a 7–9 hit, after you've chosen at least 4 or 5, the MC can hold up a finger: come to your finale now, or you'll lose the crowd. On a miss, choose anyway. The MC 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.

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!