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 might play someone by declaring your wrong to them, or by touching them with iron. You might 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 Seeker:
a playbook for
Under Hollow Hills

Large Print Version

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a lumpley game

The Seeker

To play the Seeker, create your name, your bold & careful 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 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.

Your Name

Choose a human name.

Your Bold & Careful Imagery

Choose 1: Sky, field, cloud, sun, moon, wind.

Choose 1: Jaw, eyes, hands, hair, face, lips.

Choose 1: Blue, red, green, orange, brown, gray.

Choose 1: Shoes, boots, coat, suit, gown, hat, vest, cloak, hood, jacket, gloves, scarf.

Choose 1: Mannish, womanish, androgynish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, charming, forbidding, enticing, unapproachable, —.

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

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

Choose your pronouns for bold and for careful as well.

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 the bold 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 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 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 bold 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 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.

The Seeker

Name: _____

Bold	&	Careful
○		○
○		○
○		○
○		○
○		○
Pronouns:		Pronouns:

Place

- Performer;
- Crew;
- Planner;
- Worker;
- Always there, patient, eager to be further on the road.

Plays

- You cacan make your Seeker plays. To play someone, you can declare your wrong to them; or touch them with iron. To play a situation, you can trust yourself to fate; or turn your hand to it.
- 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 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.
- If you'd like to add any other prostheses, sensory aids, communication aids, or mobility aids, please do:

Bindings

- — has been traveling with me for a long time. We joined the circus together. I can never put them off. Who?

- Normally I'm the one who sees through people, but — has seen through me. I can never waylay them or see through them. Who?

Seeker Plays

Declare Your Wrong to Them

Your Roll: ___

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.

Touch Them with Iron

Your Roll: ___

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 MC 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.

Trust Yourself to Fate

Your Roll: ___

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 MC 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 MC what it is. On a miss, you should have trusted your own will, not chance. Ask the MC how far you fall, and where to, and it's up to you to recover yourself.

Turn Your Hand to It

Your Roll: ___

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 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

Bold & Careful

Instead of stepping toward summer, you step toward bold; insteadof stepping toward winter, you step toward careful. When you step toward bold, erase one of the marks in the careful column and mark the same line in the bold column. When you step toward careful, erase one of the marks in the bold column and mark the same line in the careful column.

Whenever you step 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.

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. Regardless, if you are recalcitrant or uneager, your debtor may consider it an insult or worse.

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 2 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.

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!