The Chieftain Mouse

You're mousey kind: valorous, honorable, romantic, and loyal.

In the circus you can be ringmaster, barker & caller, planner, and overseer of work. You're always there with an observation.

You might play someone by addressing them courteously, or by sitting counsel with them. You might play a situation by seeking out the little wild things, or by summoning the Mousy Clans.

(And here's you with your stature greater than your stature, haw haw, saith the Hob.)

The Chieftain Mouse:
a playbook for
Under Hollow Hills

Large Print Version

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a lumpley game

The Chieftain Mouse

Note that while "chieftain" is a gendered word, gender is a game in fairyland, and you can play it however suits you.

To play the Chieftain Mouse, 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 mouse name, and be sure to choose one suitable for a mouse of distinction.

Examples: Clover the Fearless, Ezekiel the Deadly, Anatole the Kind, Ruby the Fierce.

Your Summer & Winter Imagery

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: Laughing brook, sunlight and leaves, wind in tall grass, the forest floor in autumn, apples, the smell of moss and water, river stones, the crisp winter morning.

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: Handsome whiskers, bright eyes, buck teeth, cute face, soft fur, sober little face, thoughtful frown, curious beauty.

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: Smoke gray, white, pale gray, chestnut, dark brown, golden brown, golden blonde, strawberry blonde, amber, rufus red.

Choose 1 for summer & 1 for winter: Fancy clothing, velvet coat, velvet cape, high boots, well-made plain clothing, worked mail, soft shoes, wool hood, felt hat, rakish cap and cockade.

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
● Sunlight and leaves	○ River stones
● Sober little face	○ Thoughtful frown
● Strawberry blonde	○ Pale gray
● Velvet cape, soft shoes	○ Wool hood
● Girlish, sexless	○ 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 Chieftain Mouse 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, though not a mouse, has sworn allegiance to me. Who? I can never lie to you or deny to sit counsel with you.
- One of you has, in the past, rendered worthy service to the Mousy Clans. Who, and what service? I can never put you off or waylay 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 Chieftain Mouse

Name: _____

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

Place

- Ringmaster;
- Barker & caller;
- Planner;
- Overseer of work;
- Always there with an observation.

Plays

- You can make your Chieftain Mouse plays. To play someone, you can address them courteously; or sit counsel with them. To play a situation, you can seek out the little wild things; or summon the Mousy Clans.
- 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 well-made painted cart with a high driver's seat, pulled by a comically small pony.
- A deft and sharp little sword.
- A heraldic shield, hung with pelts of weasel, mink, fox and owl.
- A boar spear nearly five feet long.
- Maps, histories, genealogies, and studies of flora and fauna.
- A blessed stone: place your hand on it and you cannot speak untrue.
- If you'd like to add any other prostheses, sensory aids, communication aids, or mobility aids, please do:

Bindings

- —, though not a mouse, has sworn allegiance to me. I can never lie to them or deny to sit counsel with them. Who?

- — has, in the past, rendered worthy service to the Mousy Clans. I can never put them off or waylay them. Who?

Chieftain Mouse Plays

Address Them Courteously

Your Roll: ___

When you address someone courteously, roll. On any hit, they must answer you courteously in return, no matter their intentions or animosity toward you. On a 10+ hit, furthermore, they must address everyone else courteously as well, while you are present. On a miss, while they must nevertheless answer you with courtesy, they may, if they choose, answer you with a cutting and sarcastic false courtesy that you may consider an insult or that may even wound you.

Sit Counsel with Them

Your Roll: ___

When you sit counsel with someone, roll. On any hit, hear them out, listen carefully, and ask questions to better understand. When you're ready, tell them honestly what you think their best next play might be. If they make that play, they roll it at +3. On a 7–9 hit, however, if they follow your advice, they're beholden to you, and if they decline to follow it, you may take it as an insult. On a miss, give them unthinking bad advice, and if they decline to follow it, you may take it as an insult.

Seek Out the Little Wild Things

Your Roll: ___

When you seek out the little wild things, roll. On any hit, ask questions; the MC must answer them truthfully. On a 10+ hit, ask 3. On a 7–9 hit, ask 2.

- What news from the little wild birds?
- What news from the bee clans?
- What news from the beetles and worms?
- What news from the star-chasing night winds?
- What news from the voles, the moles, the munks, and the other lesser clans?
- What news from the cousin bats?
- What news from the crows, whom I address from the safety of a brier?
- What news from the old sleepy cat, who no longer hunts?
- What news from the porcupine and the skunk, who fear none?
- What news from the bear, to whose ear I creep?

On a miss, in seeking out the little wild things, you've blundered into a hunter. Ask the MC where you are and what's doing.

Summon the Mousy Clans

Your Roll: ___

When you summon the Mousy Clans, declare who you're summoning, and roll.

- A cadre of seasoned warrior mice, armed for fighting.
- A bonny hundred of worthy mice, eager to work, brawl, sing, dance, & play.
- The beauties of the clans, soft, sweet, playful, and pretty.
- The elders of the clans in all their wisdom.
- The Clans Entire, by their thousands and thousands.

On any hit, they answer your call at once. On a 7–9 hit, though, or on any hit if you're summoning the Clans Entire, the MC chooses a complication that comes along with them:

- Their mothers.
- A rival clan's chieftain to contest your rule.
- Renegade mice recognizing no clan.
- A panther.

On a miss, they don't answer your call, or not in full or not at once, and the MC chooses a complication to explain why.

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!