The Interloper

You're a human being who's intruding into fairyland intentionally, in disguise, to steal fairy treasure. You've joined the circus because it will provide you cover and bring you to places where treasures abound.

In the circus, you can be purveyor of novelties, trinkets, tickets & refreshments; crew; worker; and lookout. You're always there, watching and listening quietly.

You might play someone by passing yourself off to them as royalty incognito, or by touching them with iron. You might play a situation by pocketing something, or by taking to your heels.

(And a mystery to me, you are, I'm certain, saith the Hob, adding your Majesty, just to be careful.)

The Interloper:
a playbook for
Under Hollow Hills

Large Print Version

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a lumpley game

The Interloper

To play the Interloper, create your name, your free & 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 intruding into fairyland intentionally, in disguise, to steal fairy treasure. You've joined the circus because it will provide you cover and bring you to places where treasures abound.

I don't know what it is that you seek, but you've certainly heard of such things as a purse that never empties of coins, potions of true love or immortality, coats of invisibility, rings of good luck, flying boots, harps that play themselves and sing with beautiful maidens' voices, swords that can carve through armor or stone, and bullets that never miss their mark.

Your Name

Choose a human name.

Your Free & 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: Mask, shoes, boots, coat, suit, gown, hat, vest, cloak, hood, 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 free and for careful.

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

Choose your pronouns for free and for careful as well.

Example:

Free	Careful
● A low, golden full moon	○ A hard, cold, high full moon
● Laughing eyes	○ Guarded eyes
● Warm earth-red	○ Deep bloody red
● Brocade vest	○ Brigandine vest, silk mask
● Womanish	○ Womanish, sexless

Begin play fully free: mark the free 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 Interloper 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 free 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 knows what I am, but keeps confidence for your own reasons. Who? I can never confront you or pass myself off to you as royalty incognito.
- One of you is my honest friend, though you don't know what I am. Who? I can never put you off, but if I ever touch you with iron you must choose to die.

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 Interloper

Name: _____

Free	&	Careful
○		○
○		○
○		○
○		○
○		○
Pronouns:		Pronouns:

Place

- Novelties, trinkets, tickets & refreshments;
- Crew;
- Worker;
- Lookout;
- Always there, watching and listening quietly.

Plays

- You can make your Interloper plays. To play someone, you can pass yourself off to them as royalty incognito; or touch them with iron. To play a situation, you can pocket something; or take to your heels.
- 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 corner in a friendly wagon where you can ride and sleep, curled up in your blanket. You don't need much.
- A human memory: a loved one's face, a farm on a hillside, warm evenings by firelight, a job in a town with neighbors and employer.
- Fairy poison you've dropped into your eyes. Weep, and you'll wash it out and return to mortal life.
- A key, a nail, or some other piece of cold iron. No fairy can bear its touch, so it'll betray you to any who see it.
- If you'd like to add any other prostheses, sensory aids, communication aids, or mobility aids, please do:

Bindings

- — knows what I am, but keeps confidence for their own reasons. I can never confront them or pass myself off to them as royalty incognito. Who?

- — is my honest friend, though they don't know what I am. I can never put them off, and if I ever touch them with iron they must choose to die. Who?

Interloper Plays

Pass Yourself Off to Them as Royalty Incognito

Your Roll: ___

When you pass yourself off to a fairy as royalty incognito, roll. On any hit, they must defer to you without acknowledging you in any way. On a 7–9 hit, they may gossip about it afterward, but on a 10+ hit, they may not even do that. On a miss, perhaps they defer to you as on a hit, or perhaps they swear incognito allegiance to you and become your most loyal incognito servant, and perhaps you'll never know which.

You can pass yourself off to other mortals as well. Since they aren't so innately bound by fairy laws, they may choose to behave as fairies, according to your roll, but they may also squint skeptically at you and wonder what and who you really are.

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 stolen uninvited into fairyland, and threatened a fairy with true death, and the consequences might be severe.

Touching another mortal with iron has no consequence.

Pocket Something

Your Roll: ___

When you pocket something, name it and roll. On any hit, you have it, unnoticed. On a 10+ hit, you have it profoundly, and its erstwhile owner's erstwhile claim to it is already fading from everyone's minds. On a 7–9 hit, it's true that you're holding it in your pocket, but it's not true that you have it, and neither it nor anyone else will believe that it belongs to you. On a miss, it signals its owner somehow that it's been taken or misplaced, though it can't reveal itself or finger you.

Think metaphorically too, mortal kind.

Take to Your Heels

Your Roll: ___

When you take to your heels, roll. On any hit, you flee to safety. On a 10+ hit, you reach a place of genuine security where you can regroup, gather your thoughts, and decide on your next play. On a 7–9 hit, you're out of immediate danger, but not yet secure. Either way, ask the MC where you are. On a miss, ask the MC what goes wrong. Perhaps you'll flee straight into danger even worse than you left.

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

Free & Careful

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

Whenever you step toward free 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!