

モーションミュージアムRPG リプレイ&データブック

INCALZANDO

インカルツアンド

すがのたすく
/ F.E.A.R.

ログイン
デニブルトーク
RPGシリーズ

STANDARD
S.R.P.G
SYSTEM

REPLAY: THE HAPPY KINGDOM

The curtain bell rings.

The story unfolds upon the stage of the Left Land.

From those gathered here, four Weavers shall be born...

In the autumn of the year 2011, as the air conditioning fights against the lingering heat of summer, five men and women are gathered in the conference room at the FarEast Amusement Research office.

Good day. I'm Sugano Tasuke, the designer of *Monotone Museum*. I'll be your narrator as well as the game master of this replay.

The four players that have been assembled here with me are also intimately related to *Monotone Museum*.

Mizuno Akiko (henceforth **Mizuno**)

An old acquaintance of Shinotouko and I. This is her second time participating in a replay, after having appeared in a Double Cross replay. She's an excellent roleplayer with a knack for taking center stage.

I've discussed the ideas behind *Monotone Museum* with her since its genesis, and so I felt obliged to have her participate in this replay.

Kodachi Ukyou (henceforth **Kodachi**)

The game designer of *Tenka Ryouran* and *Chaos Flare Second Chapter*, he's a veteran writer whose career began with his *Macross* novelizations, and who has since written many novels and RPG replays as a freelancer. I consider him my mentor as a game designer and am deeply in debt to him.

Without him, *Monotone Museum*—in particular, its setting—wouldn't exist at all.

Shinotouko (henceforth **Shino**)

One of the most talented illustrators of RPG books in the industry, who got her start doing the art for Double Cross. She was actually my senior in college, so I've known her for over ten years. Art aside, her real talent is sharp ripostes. It's too bad you can't see her icy gaze while she does them.

She was one of the illustrators for *Monotone Museum*, and will be drawing the art for this replay.

Inoue Jun'ichi (henceforth **Inoue**)

A veteran at F.E.A.R. The producer of several RPGs, as well as an illustrator himself, most notable outside Japan for his work on *Tenra Bansho*. He designed the Standard RPG System which *Monotone Museum* is based upon.

GM: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this replay.

Mizuno: Today is gonna be reeeeeally fun! (fist pump)

Inoue: Mizuno's fired up, isn't she. (laughs)

GM: I'll have to do my best to meet her expectations! First of all, let me explain a little about *Monotone Museum*.

Monotone Museum is an ironic fairy tale RPG. It takes place in "The Left Land," a fantasy realm like those in children's stories and fairy tales.

The people of the Left Land live according to the "Ways," instructions bestowed upon them by God. The Ways created by God inevitably lead to a happy ending.

However, while most people are content to obey the Ways and find happiness through them, there are some that refuse to follow the Ways, and in so doing, reject divine protection from that which lies beyond this world, the Void. These poor individuals, when touched by the Void, lose their color and change into monsters known as the "Strange."

Shino: So if you follow the Ways you will find happiness, but if you don't you'll become estranged.

GM: Indeed. The Strange are the main enemies of the PCs in this game.

The Strange are those who have peeled away from the world that God created. In doing so, they gain abilities known as Distortion Powers, which are not subject to the laws of the world. Among these is the ability to create what are known as "Warped Ways."

Whether because they possess weak wills, or are twisted in some other way, the Strange create Warped Ways which also warp the world, and forcibly guide innocent people towards not happiness, but unhappiness.

Among the Strange are those whose hearts and minds have been entirely consumed by the Void. They are known as Hollows, and unlike the Strange, there is no way to return them to being human. They are terrifying creatures who exist only to fulfill their base desires, no matter how many others they cause to suffer in doing so.

Mizuno: So God creates Ways that bring happiness, but the Strange create Ways that bring unhappiness.

Shino: If you disobey a warped Way, do you still become estranged?

GM: You do. If you defy any Way, regardless of its origin, you become estranged.

Inoue: That's pretty scary. You have no choice but to follow them, no matter what the end result is.

GM: But there are those who can defy Ways without becoming estranged. These are the PCs—the Weavers.

Weavers are those who are neither bound by the Ways, nor at risk of becoming estranged by defying them. They are those who stand against the tragedies woven by the Strange.

They possess the same Distortion Powers as the Strange do, with which they can warp the world in order to secure victory in battle.

However, in the same manner as the Strange, Weavers are fundamentally bereft of God's protection. They must take care lest they be touched by the Void and themselves become estranged.

Inoue: So Weavers are in-between ordinary people and the Strange.

Kodachi: Performing a balancing act, it sounds like.

Shino: Weavers oppose the Strange and their Warped Ways by using the same powers as them, then?

GM: The theme of the game is that the PCs are Weavers who save others from the misfortune that the Strange and their warped Ways threaten to cause.

Inoue: I get it now.

GM: We've covered the basics, so let's move on to the game I'm going to run!

PROLOGUE

"The Happy Kingdom."

The coming of the new year brings with it a new Way bestowed upon all the people of the kingdom.

"From this year forth, in times of sickness and of health, in times of sadness and anger and hatred and grief, unto forever, unto always, unto eternity, the people of the Happy Kingdom must live in complete happiness."

It was a Way that promises eternal happiness... whether one wished for it or not.

*Monotone Museum: The Happy Kingdom
—Thus is the story that shall be woven.*

Everyone: Wow!

GM: The setting of this story is the Happy Kingdom, a small kingdom nestled in a valley in the heart of the Verdant Mountains.

The Happy Kingdom is a small kingdom with fine weather, known for its modest, trustworthy, and kind populace.

For many years past, a very similar Way has been bestowed upon the kingdom as a whole.

"Thanks to their modest and trustworthy nature, the year passed happily for the people of the kingdom, with no major calamities. And they lived happily ever after."

As the doom that was foretold on the "Day of the Black Spot" thirteen years ago did not come to pass, the kingdom has been known as the Happy Kingdom amongst the neighboring lands.

Shino: Sounds kind of like the boondocks. (laughs)

Kodachi: So normally Ways are a case-by-case kind of thing, but in this kingdom, they've had the same Way every year.

Inoue: Ah, stability. Isn't it nice to be loved by God?

Mizuno: So, according to this kingdom's Way, aren't all merchants doomed to become estranged?

Shino: Because they're not modest or trustworthy? (laughs)

Kodachi: I'm sure they don't have to be completely trustworthy all the time. God wouldn't give people a Way that causes them to suffer.

GM: The important thing is that people live their lives with the Way constantly in mind. God does not create the Ways in order to limit Her children's free will.

Inoue: I see.

GM: Let's read the character handouts, then. Mizuno, you're going to be PC 1.

Mizuno: Okay!

PC 1 Handout

Scenario Partner: Nina / **Emotion:** Friendship

PC Partner: PC 3

You are a girl who lives in the Happy Kingdom. You're best friends with Nina, from the inn "The Briar Patch."

Each year, the kingdom itself has lived under a particular Way, and each year it has been much the same.

"Thanks to their modest and trustworthy nature, the year passed happily for the people of the kingdom, with no major calamities. And they lived happily ever after."

But, one year, that Way your kingdom enjoyed was a little different from usual...

GM: —And that's the short of it. Basically, PC 1 is a girl who lives in the Happy Kingdom. Preferably a young one.

Inoue: Forcing her to play a little girl, huh? (laughs)

GM: (in a loud voice) Yes, because I love little girls!

Mizuno: (in a loud voice) I love them too! There's nobody who hates little girls, is there? (laughs)

Shino: Well, it makes sense for the main character of a fairy tale to be a little girl. It's in theme, isn't it?

GM: I have one suggestion for you, Mizuno. Why don't you make a PC that doesn't start as a Weaver?

Kodachi: A common person, huh?

GM: Since this is an introduction to the game, I want to show how Weavers differ from other people. I'll make sure she becomes a Weaver at an appropriate time, before the big climax.

Mizuno: Sounds good to me. A commoner I shall be! Is there anything I should keep in mind while putting together my character?

GM: You won't be able to use Distortion Powers or absorb distortions. Other than that, your PC is the same as any other.

Shino: So even those who aren't Weavers can use skills.

Kodachi: They don't have a Weaver's power to defy the Ways safely, but aside from that, important NPCs have classes and stuff the same as the PCs do.

GM: Even a magician who can use powerful magic, if they're not a Weaver, can become estranged if they disobey a Way.

Mizuno: If there's a battle before my character becomes a Weaver, she might be dead weight, but I'll give it a try. It'll be fun!

GM: Thanks, I appreciate it!

PC 2 Handout

Scenario Partner: Amelia Foryan / **Emotion:** Reminiscence

PC Partner: PC 3

You are a Weaver, who lives apart from the world at large and does battle with the Strange. You once had a friend named Amelia. She was a member of the Order of God's Hand of the Holy Church, and together you waged war against the Strange.

—But that was the past. One day, your commander, the "Queen of the Night," gave you an order.

An Unraveling had appeared in a small country in the central lands. You remembered Amelia mentioning the name of that country, long ago.

With thoughts of the past on your mind, you journeyed there in order to defeat the Strange that had caused the Unraveling.

GM: Kodachi, I'd like you to play PC 2, if you don't mind.

Inoue: A Weaver, huh?

Kodachi: A Weaver in the largest organization of Weavers, who conduct research on their own power, the "power to manipulate the Law of the World."

Mizuno: Is Amelia also a Weaver?

GM: Yes. She's a woman in her mid-twenties who is a member of the Order of God's Hand—that's the Holy Church's own corps of Weavers that they use to fight against the Strange.

Kodachi: The Holy Church fundamentally believes that Weavers are evil beings who have rebelled against God, but since they're pragmatic, they have a secret army of Weavers like Amelia.

Shino: So basically, the Order of God's Hand is on the PCs' side?

Inoue: Amelia is a Weaver and was once PC 2's battle partner, then.

Kodachi: Okay, I got it.

PC 3 Handout

Scenario Partner: Pierre June Schietto / **Emotion:** Loyalty

PC Partner: PC 2

You are a servant automaton belonging to Pierre, a noble in the Happy Kingdom.

Pierre has a weak constitution and cannot often leave his mansion, yet he is a man with a gentle heart who has accepted the fact that you are a Weaver.

This year as well, the Way of the kingdom promises eternal happiness. Your master's spirits are lifted by this.

If your master can live in happiness, this too brings you the greatest joy as his loyal servant.

GM: Shino, I'd like you to play PC 3. That way we have two locals to the Happy Kingdom.

Kodachi: An automaton, huh? That's a man-made mechanical doll bestowed with a will of its own.

Shino: Awesome, I'm one of those?!

Mizuno: Shino always loves playing non-humans. (laughs)

Shino: I do! (laughs)

GM: The Scenario Handout says Pierre is in his mid-twenties.

Shino: Has he got a moustache?

GM: ...Should he? You're the illustrator, so you can draw him however you want.

Shino: Then I'll add one if I don't like how he looks. (laughs)

GM: Wow, scary. (laughs) I'll leave him to you, then.

PC 4 Handout

Scenario Partner: The Happy Kingdom / **Emotion:** Interest

PC Partner: PC 3

You are a wandering traveler who has journeyed all across the Left Land.

One day, in a city you were passing through, you heard a rumor of a certain kingdom... The Happy Kingdom, said to have been promised eternal happiness from God. Could such a place really exist?

Your interest piqued, you made your way towards that kingdom.

GM: Inoue, I'd like you to play PC 4.

Inoue: Okay. But a kingdom as my scenario partner? That's a big deal, literally. (laughs)

Shino: Well, it's because you're curious about the Happy Kingdom.

Mizuno: "Just what's so happy about it?" That sort of thing. (laughs)

GM: The handouts are fairly restrictive this time around, but you all can go ahead and make any kind of PC you think fits them.

Inoue: Okay. What should my PC be...?

The players open their rulebooks and begin thinking about what PCs they want to make.

Shino: (Scanning ther classes intently) Hmm, this... I guess wouldn't be a good combo, would it...

Mizuno: Is anyone taking any skills that help with info gathering? If not, I'll pick up a few.

GM: Oh, you're the supporter type, huh?

Shino: What Distortion Powers should I take...

Kodachi: Shino's focus is scary. (laughs)

Inoue: (Looking at the NPC list) This Liemonger guy sounds like a real upstanding fellow.

Shino: In exchange for the truth, he'll sell you a lie.

Mizuno: U, um... (fidgeting)

Kodachi: What's wrong, Mizuno?

GM: The Liemonger is actually a character she thought up a long time ago.

Inoue: Oh, so that's it. You know, I really like this guy.

Kodachi: He seems easy to use as either an ally or an enemy.

Inoue: Why don't I give my PC a connection to him. (writes it on his character sheet)

Mizuno: T, thank you... (still fidgeting)

Shino: Look, you're making her blush. (laughs)

GM: How cute. (laughs)

The players continue creating characters in this harmonious atmosphere.

A few minutes later, the four Weavers are born.

PC 1: Misha

Player: Mizuno Akiko

GM: Okay, please introduce your PC.

Mizuno (henceforth **Misha**): PC 1's name is Misha. She's a ten-year-old girl with the classes Child/Sage/Traveler.

Shino: She lives in a kingdom, but she's a Traveler?

Mizuno: A couple years ago, her wandering parents came to this kingdom from elsewhere, and they left her here while they continued their journey.

Kodachi: Makes sense for that to be her class, then.

Misha: I decided I wanted to be a Traveler first based on their skills, then made her parents that way so that it worked. (laughs)

Inoue: Thanks to your own ego, Misha's parents are awful people, abandoning their little girl like that. (laughs)

Misha: Right now she's being taken care of by an innkeeper, and she helps out to earn her keep. She's friends with their daughter, Nina. She really likes Nina. Her partner in the story is Nina, after all. (laughs)

Shino: I get the feeling Nina's kind of like an older sister that's always around.

Misha: Pretty much. She's always following Nina's lead and doesn't often do things on her own initiative.

Inoue: The timid little girl, a classic archetype.

Misha: She wants to know about the places her parents have been, so she loves hearing travelers' stories. But she's so shy it tends to be pretty awkward. (laughs)

Shino: Nina is all "Hey, let them talk!" while standing behind her.

Misha: Yeah, like that. She's timid, but she lives every day to its fullest.

GM: Got it. What's she like in game terms?

Misha: She's not an attacker. Her specialties are gathering informations and boosting her allies' damage and die rolls.

Inoue: The main character, and she's a dedicated supporter!

Kodachi: The first PC's often an attacker, but nothing's wrong with them being a supporter.

Misha: Since she's shy, she prefers to help other people do their thing. (laughs) Her Personal Partner is the "Queen of the Night", the head of the Tailors' Guild. She was very young, so she doesn't remember well, but Aria once did her parents a favor.

GM: That means... her parents were Weavers?

Misha: She herself doesn't know whether they were, so that's up to you.

PC 2: Harlequin

Player: Kodachi Ukyou

Kodachi (henceforth **Harl**): My name is Harlequin. Harlequin means 'clown' in a foreign tongue. I have the appearance of a boy wearing a mask that covers the upper half of my face. My classes are Strange/Strange/Tailor.

Misha: A Tailor and also a Strange!

Harl: Long ago, in order to protect those people dear to me, I turned against a Warped Way, and became both a Weaver and estranged. As the cost of gaining the power of a Strange, I became unable to speak the truth.

GM: Like a curse that forces you to tell only lies?

Shino: In many cases, the signs that one is a Strange are external, but there are cases when it's internal as well.

Inoue: Seems difficult to roleplay, though. (laughs)

Harl: Being unable to tell the truth does not mean one can only tell bald-faced lies. Say, if the house next door is on fire, I can say "There's a three kilometer high pillar of flame bursting out of the house next door!"

Misha: So instead of telling lies, you warp the truth.

Inoue: You can also just mime it.

Harl: Indeed. That's why I call myself Harlequin.

GM: Oh, it's a false name. (laughs)

Shino: He wouldn't be able to tell anyone his real name, would he?

Misha: I wonder what it is.

Shino: By the way, Weavers exist in the gap between humans and the Strange, so what does it mean when they take the Strange class?

GM: Among Weavers, there are some who are firmly in the realm of the Strange, and close to becoming Hollow. They generally exhibit the physical phenomena common to all of the Strange, Weavers or not.

Harl: My Base Peel Value is 7. I'm already doomed. (laughs.)

Misha: Wow, that's high!

Peel Value is a number that represents the extent to which a character has 'peeled' away from this world. A character with a high Peel Value is at risk of becoming estranged. The Distortion Powers mentioned previously, which distort the world, also distort their users and cause their Peel Values to rise, bringing them closer to the Strange.

Shino: 7 is the absolute maximum you can have at character creation, isn't it? (laughs)

GM: Strange and Tailor both have the highest Base Peel Values of any class.

Harl: In any case, I'm an attacker. I use my power as a Strange to transform my hand into a giant sewing needle, and wield that to strike down any foes nearby. I'm mainly built to buff my own attacks and use Distortion Powers.

Inoue: Man, you're pretty into this! (laughs)

Harl: I have <Waxen Wings> which lets me use my powers as a Strange to sprout wings, so during battle I'm pretty much a freak of nature. Oh, right... also, I stopped aging when I became estranged, so I'm eternally 17.

Shino: Eternally seventeen?

Harl: I'm not literally immune from the effects of aging like an Undying, it just looks like I am.

Inoue: So, you look like a kid, but one day you'll keel over and die of old age. Neat.

Misha: There's not one thing true about you, is there? (laughs)

GM: (swaying in his seat) A, awesome!

Inoue: Whoa, Sugano's moved. (laughs)

GM: ...Okay. I'd like to roleplay a memory of yours with Amelia during the opening phase. Does that sound okay with you? She'll still be a girl.

Harl: Sure, that's fine. So, that's around the time she became a Weaver, and we were battle comrades.

PC 3: Jonathan Trusso

Player: Shinotouko

GM: Next, Shinotouko, would you tell us about PC 3?

Shino: Okaaay. Can I open a candy?

GM: ...Aren't you awfully relaxed? Well, go ahead. (laughs)

Shino (henceforth Jon): Yay! (crinkle, crinkle) My Name Is Jonathan Trusso. My Classes Are Automaton/Automaton/Servant.

Misha: Servant?

Harl: Servant's one of the classes added by the expansion books. It indicates a character whose duty is to serve another.

Jon: I Am A Man-Shaped Servant Belonging To Lord Pierre Of The Happy Kingdom. I Previously Served A Noble In The Holy City, But Due To Circumstances I Was Liberated From That Duty.

Inoue: Liberated?

Misha: Was it because you awoke as a Weaver?

Jon: On That Day, When I Was Tasked With Guarding A Family Of Nobles Paying A Visit To My Master, I Was Given An Apple By Their Young Son In Gratitude.

Inoue: Oh, oh.

Jon: It Looked Quite Appetizing, So I Was Taken By The Impulse To Eat It, And So I Did. It Was Indeed Quite Appetizing. I Was Quite Moved... Ahem, This Is Most Likely Not The Event That Caused Me To Become A Weaver. (uproarious laughter all around)

Misha: Reeceeeally!?! (still laughing)

Jon: That Was The Beginning Of My Apple Addiction. If I Did Not Eat Apples Regularly, I Would Suffer Greatly. My Screws Would Come Loose, I Would Become Untuned, And I Would Not Be Able To Perform My Duty.

GM: And here I thought you were going to have some kind of grim backstory...

Jon: At Some Point After That I Realized I Was A Weaver. On The Lifepath, My Origin Is "Great Masterpiece" And My Circumstances Are "Freedom."

Misha: The freedom to be a glutton. (laughs)

Jon: Indeed. (laughs) Much Time Has Passed Since Then, And The Boy Who Gave Me My First Apple Has Grown Into Lord Pierre. I Now Live My Days In Service To Him. And In Constantly Eating Apples When No One Is Around To Scold Me For It.

GM: I imagine Pierre always having a dish of apples for you.

Jon: He Is The Finest Master I Could Wish For!

Misha: What can you do in battle?

Jon: I Can Eat Apples—But Aside From That... (laughs) I Am Fundamentally A Bodyguard. I Specialize In Shielding Others From Attacks. Using The <Suffer In Your Stead> Servant Class Skill, I Can Also Take Bad Statuses Meant For Others Upon Myself.

Harl: Oh, nice. I bet we're going to take a lot of BSeS during the boss battle.

Jon: Please Leave All The Bad Statuses And Also Apples In My Hands.

PC 4: Anne Shirley

Player: Inoue Jun'ichi

GM: Our final PC will be played by Inoue. Please do your thing.

Inoue (henceforth, **Anne**): *"To my dearest Kitty..."*

Misha: Whaaaaat?! (everyone laughs)

Anne: *"The time since I came to this world, though it has been quite a while, still feels as if it has passed in the blink of an eye."*

GM: Ah, hold, hold on!

Harl: What the heck is this introduction? (laughs)

Anne: "I do not know if they shall ever reach you, but every day I write these letters to you. For this Left Land is a truly wondrous place—"

"Were I to put the strangeness of the Left Land into words, a single sheaf of paper would be insufficient to contain them. Indeed, here I have become a swordswoman. I sought to become a caster of magic as well, but I had not the talent. There are always things one simply cannot do, are there not? Ah, but let me tell you! I have nearly forgotten the most curious thing of all. In this land, the seas are—"

GM: W, wait. Inoue, please tell us what your PC's name is. (laughs)

Jon: In Your Native Tongue, "Fancy Introducing Yourself, Lass?" (laughs)

Anne: Yes, my name is Anne Shirley!

Misha: Red-haired Anne!!

Translator's Note—In case you're unaware, Red-haired Anne is the Japanese title of *Anne of Green Gables*, a classic novella by L. M. Montgomery that is more popular in Japan than it is anywhere else except possibly its setting of Prince Edward Island, Canada. Anne Shirley is the name of the protagonist. She's a young girl with a fondness for speaking eloquently, even though she's an orphan. The Anne Shirley of the book is not happy with either her red hair or her name, and spends most of her free time daydreaming of herself as the elegant and beautiful Lady Cordelia Fitzgerald.

Harl: U, uh, so the obvious question is, did Anne come here from Canada? On Earth?

GM: U, um... The world of Monotone Museum isn't Earth, though...?

Misha: Did you come from another world?

Anne: No, I didn't. I have always been in this world... but at many times and in many places. However, no matter how much I travel, I am always eleven years old. Mysterious, isn't it? (laughs)

GM: O, oh, I see... um... (totally confused)

Harl: So Anne at least claims that she's always been in this world.

Anne: But I do rightly say I come from Green Gables, eh? (laughs)

Jon: Oh, she's even got an accent now. (laughs)

Harl: But in the original story, she's just Red-haired Anne. Nobody knows where the Green Gables part came from.

Anne: Anyway, I call myself Anne of Green Gables, and am constantly traveling the world while writing letters to my best friend, Kitty!

Jon: Huh? Wasn't Anne's best friend named Diana?

Harl: Well, that's just one more of the mysteries about our Anne Shirley.

Anne: I decided to just copy a sample character from the rulebook, the "Nameless Traveler." He's an attacker who uses a sword. On the lifepath, my origin is "Born in a Wartorn Land."

Jon: She's Anne, but she was born in a wartorn land?

Anne: I'm sure I'll be able to explain why eventually. (laughs) Her circumstances are "Yearning" and her Personal Partner is the Liemonger. She seems like she'd be a pretty steady supply of lies for him!

Misha: What kind of relationship do you have with the Liemonger?

Anne: He offered me the lie that I was Lady Cordelia Fitzgerald, but said "The truths that you possess are an inadequate payment." Since then, I have journeyed far and wide in search of greater truths, so that I might purchase another lie from him when next we meet.

GM: Y, you've got quite a character there... well then...

PC PARTNERS

GM: Now, let's choose partners among the PCs.

A Partner is essentially a person or thing towards whom a PC feels a powerful emotion.

PCs have a partner they choose at the time of character creation, a partner specified for them by the scenario, and a partner among their fellow PCs. These three partners make it easy to involve them in the story.

GM: Alright, Misha, your partner is Jonathan, who also lives in the Happy Kingdom.

Misha: Um, how about "Longing?" I wish I had someone who I knew would never leave me behind. (laughs)

Jon: How Pitiabile... (laughs)

GM: Okay, how about Jonathan and Harlequin?

Harl: Would I have known him from our time in the Holy Capital?

Jon: Oh, The Holy Capital. Did Thou Bear Witness To My Glory Days?

Harl: As fellow Weavers, we protected the Holy City from malicious Strange together. Also, I'm 57 meters tall.

Jon: No, You're Just Big-Boned. (laughs) Then, We Are Old Acquaintances, And I Feel Fondness Towards Him. I Know And Understand He Is A Liar.

Harl: Thank you for that. After all, I can't explain to other people that I cannot speak the truth. (laughs)

GM: Next, Harlequin and Anne.

Harl: I feel Protective of Anne. The poor deluded girl is going to get herself killed if no one watches out for her.

Anne: Well, I can't say you're wrong! (laughs)

Harl: Since I seem to be the veteran Weaver among us, I'll be the one keeping an eye out for danger. And I get to say things like "My name is Harlequin. I shall see you safely through the night, Anne Shirley!" (laughs)

Anne: My, but aren't you telling the truth if you say that? (laughs)

Misha: It seems like these two could certainly chatter on all night until the dawn. (laughs)

GM: Finally, Anne and Misha.

Anne: Hmm... I'm not really sure what I'd feel towards her, so why don't I roll the dice? Ah, they came up on "Pity."

Misha: What a poor little girl I am, stuck in an inn in the Happy Kingdom.

Jon (suddenly roleplaying Nina): "Hey! Scrub those floors until they're spotless!"

Misha: "Ye-yes, ma'am!"

Nina: "My, my, and it seems you haven't so much as looked at these filthy windowsills yet either."

Misha: "I-I'll be right on it!"

GM: No, Nina's a nicer person than that, isn't she?! (laughs)

Anne: Well, since I awoke as a Weaver, I can't just overlook life's misfortunes, so I feel pity for her.

GM: Okay. Time to begin the story, then. Let's have fun!

Everyone: Let's have fun!

Misha

ミーシャ

「あ、あの、い、
"U-um, w-welcome to
the Briar Patch..."
いらっしやいませ.....」

Classes Child/Traveler/Sage

Race Human

Job Girl

Sex Female

Age 10

配役 出自：流れ者

境遇：愛

パートナー：“夜の女王” アリア・B・
コロラトゥーラ／忘却

特技 《無垢なる魂》《見えざる腕》
《旅空の住人》《こんなこともあった》
《運命の糸》《阿吽の呼吸》
《賢者の知恵》《知恵袋》

逸脱 《偽りの不死》《虚構現出》

A girl who works as a helper at the inn
"The Briar Patch."

Her parents were Weavers who traveled from
kingdom to kingdom. Some years prior, they
disappeared, leaving her on her own. Firm in
the belief that her parents will some day come
back to her, she lives earnestly in the Happy
Kingdom.

Though she is timid, she is beloved by the
innkeeper's daughter Nina and the people of
the Happy Kingdom. She has a strong heart
and wisdom far beyond her years.

「愛と友情に満ちて戦い続ける限り、必ず明日はやってくるさ」

"If we fight a-brim with love and friendship, we shall surely live to see tomorrow."



ハーレクイン

Harlequin

Classes Strange/Tailor

Race Human

Job Tailor

Sex Male

Age Unknown

配役

出自：職人の家庭

境遇：自己犠牲

パートナー：“夜の女王”アリア・B・コロラトゥーラ／同情

特技

《魔術裁縫具》《滅びゆく身体》
《静かな語り部》《破壊衝動》《早縫い》
《殺戮衝動》《蠅の羽根》

逸脱

《憤怒の一撃》《俊速行動》《偽りの不死》

A Tailor who wears a mask and travels the world, exterminating malicious Strange. He wields a huge sewing needle in battle.

Once upon a time, in order to protect the people of his hometown, he turned against a Way and awoke as a Weaver. But in neutralizing the threat, he himself became estranged, and was forced to leave his hometown. He then became a traveling Tailor.

Due to his estrangement, he does not visibly age, nor is he capable of uttering anything other than lies.

Jonathan
Trussó

ヨナサン・
トルソン

「ピエール様、今日も一日、
幸せでアリマスヨウ」

"Lord Pierre, Have
We Lived In
Sufficient Happiness
Today?"

An Automaton with the appearance of a man about eight feet tall.

He was once the servant and bodyguard of a noble in the Holy Capital, but after eating one too many apples, he peeled away from the world and awoke as a Weaver.

Forced to flee the Holy Capital, he traveled long and far before meeting the boy who had given him his first apple, Pierre. He now lives as Pierre's servant in the Happy Kingdom.

Though gentle and polite, he goes a little crazy when in the vicinity of apples.

Classes Automaton/Servant

Race Automaton

Job Servant

Sex Male in appearance

Age 15

配役

出自：最高傑作

境遇：自由

パートナー：トスカ・アマービレ〈懐旧〉

特技

《王佐の才》《さあ始めましょう》

《主従の契り》《苦悩とともに》

《典雅なる笑み》《歯車仕掛けの心》

《長き両腕》《従者の使命》

逸脱

《幸福の壁》《潜在覚醒》

"The Happy Kingdom, and happy old me! What a perfect combination we make!"

「幸福の国に幸福な私!
なんて素晴らしいでしょう!」

ア
ン
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ー
Anne
Shirley



A red-haired and freckled girl who carries a sword almost as large as she is. She calls herself "Anne Shirley of Green Gables," and has a fondness for slipping into fantasies as she speaks.

In order to afford the Liemonger's offer of making her the "Lady Cordelia Fitzgerald", she has traveled many lands in search of truth, writing letters to her best friend Kitty all the while.

Classes Traveler/Warrior

Race Human

Job Traveler

Sex Female

Age 11

配役 出自：紛争地域出身

境遇：憧憬

パートナー：嘘屋（共感）

特技 《勇猛なる血》《覇者の風格》
《無双の一撃》《業物》《旅空の住人》
《以心伝心》《旅は飲む》

逸脱 《憤怒の一撃》《俊速行動》

OPENING

The curtain opens upon the story.

The stage is a small kingdom nestled in the Verdant Mountains. A peaceful, blessed land.

Everything begins in this country, where the Ways promise it eternal happiness...

SCENE 1: THIS YEAR'S WAY

Scene Player: Misha

In a deep valley in the Verdant Mountains lies the Happy Kingdom. A church bell tolls to mark the coming of the new year. To the people, this sound signifies another year of peace and happiness thanks to the Way that governs them all.

This year, Misha has gone with her friend Nina and her parents to the church in order to hear the Way being announced.

GM: The start of the opening phase is Misha's scene. It is the final night of the year, and as the snow falls gently, the city's people are gathering within the church.

Misha: Okay! I'm going to walk together with Nina in the snow, holding her hand.

GM: Nina looks a little put upon by all this. "I wish we didn't have to go out on a cold night like this. Can't we wait until the news reaches our inn? It's going to be the same Way this year anyway."

Jon: She's sick of the Ways, huh. (laughs)

Nina: "'Thanks to their modest and trustworthy nature' and so forth, right? It's always the same."

Misha: "B-but, you don't know that for sure..."

Harl: One of Nina's parents interjects, "Ahem. Five years ago, the Way began 'Thanks to their trustworthy and modest nature.'"

Nina: "That's practically the same!"

Jon: Nina's mother scolds her, "Details are of the essence!"

Misha: "Somehow, I'm more excited this year, though... that is, m-modestly and trustworthily excited..."

Nina: "Excited, huh. If the Ways came to us with a bit more flash and bang, that'd be nice."

Misha: "B-but, I'm really glad I can live happily with you and your parents, so I hope we have the same Way as always..."

GM: At those words, Nina's mother smiles gently. "Of course. After all, the Ways are the proof that God watches over us and protects us. They are God's reward for our efforts."

Anne: Ah, interesting expression.

Nina: "I'd rather have sweets as a reward."

Misha: "Maybe it'll be 'Thanks to their modest and trustworthy nature, everyone gets sweets', then?"

Nina: "That'd be awesome! Everyone should get sweets!"

Misha: "Yeah, everyone!" Now brimming with anticipation, Misha squeezes Nina's hand and continues towards the church.

GM: The people in the kingdom are gathered at the church in order to hear this year's Way.

Jon: It really is like New Year's Eve (laughs.)

GM: Finally, the church bell rings to announce the coming of the new year. Together with the bell, a grand voice fills the ears—no, the hearts—of the people.

Harl: Is it the Way?

As the church bell rings, the Way is bestowed upon the people.

The voice of God Herself fills their hearts.

"From this year forth, in times of sickness and of health, in times of sadness and anger and hatred and grief, unto forever, unto always, unto eternity, the people of the Happy Kingdom must live in complete happiness."

—And thus were the people of the Happy Kingdom given a somewhat different promise of eternal happiness.

GM: As people realize this year's Way has changed from the usual one, the church falls dead silent.

Jon: People will start whispering stuff like "What was that...?!" soon enough.

GM: And eventually all start talking over each other in loud voices.

Jon: (roleplaying the people of the Kingdom) "Did I mishear somehow?" "Oh, that's what you heard too?"

GM: Yeah, like that. Nina and her parents take each others' hands, and Nina says, "H-hey, Misha, did you hear that? That wasn't about sweets!"

Misha: "Y-yeah..." I murmur, stricken by anxiety. I reach out and tug at Nina's sleeve for reassurance, hoping it'll be okay.

Jon: (once again the people) "God has promised to watch over our happy lives!"

Misha: I don't really understand what this Way entails, but if everyone is happy, things must be alright. I optimistically think that, anyway. "...I-isn't that wonderful, Nina!"

Nina: "Yeah! We'll live happily, and that means always having sweets in hand!"

Misha: I suddenly realize that'll make them really sticky. "Oh dear..."

GM: "Indeed. Perhaps you shall not have to eat those vegetables you hate anymore, either!" That's said by the woman makes her way to your side. She is Amelia, a priestess who dwells in this kingdom. Her golden hair is done up neatly, and she has a gentle smile on her face.

Anne: Oh, that's Harlequin's partner.

Harl: Hm, hm...

Misha: I immediately rush to hide behind Nina's back. (laughs) Then I timidly whisper "G-good evening, Lady Amelia..."

Jon: She really is shy. (laughs)

GM: "Good evening," Amelia replies softly. "Is it not wonderful? God, in Her infinite love for Her children, has promised us a year of happiness yet again."

Misha: "Y-yes..."

GM: Nina turns to Misha as well, smiling. "This can only mean good things. Maybe your parents will come back this year, Misha?"



Misha: That makes my heart skip a beat. "W-will they...?"

Nina: "Because we need to live in complete happiness. Of course that means your parents need to be here!"

Misha: "D-do they?"

Nina: "Yeah."

Misha: "T-that would be so nice..." I smile a little. "Let's have lots of sweets when we get home, then!"

GM: "Yeah, lots of sweets!" Nina echoes. Her parents shrug helplessly, and say, "I suppose it's time to celebrate, isn't it?" with a smile. Meanwhile, a good portion of the kingdom's other residents are making their way to the bars.

Harl: The coming of this year's Way certainly is a reason to celebrate.

Misha: After all, they no longer need to be modest and trustworthy. It's no surprise that everyone wants to live it up. (laughs)

Jon: I guess they had a lot of immodesty held in reserve. (laughs)

Misha: Though I was anxious when I first heard the Way, after seeing everyone's happy faces and hearing that my parents might return, I hold hands with Nina and return to the inn with hope welling in my heart. And we lived happily ever after. Right?

Jon: What a nice story. (laughs)

GM: That certainly would have been a nice story. (laughs) It's the end of that Scene, in any case.

SCENE 2: AT THE CROSSROADS

Scene Player: Anne

The Crossroads is a town in the interior of the Left Land that sprung up at the meeting point of many major roads. It's a gathering place for travelers, connected by roads to a myriad of kingdoms.

As the freezing winter wind blows incessantly, a red-haired girl appears in the doorway of an inn in which travelers are waiting out the blizzard...

GM: The next scene will be Anne's opening. It takes place in a town called The Crossroads, in the interior of the Left Land.

Anne: Ah, I see it on the map in the rulebook.

GM: Yes, right there. Then, after she's arrived at the Crossroads, Anne Shirley... (Suddenly explodes in laughter.) I can't talk about your character without laughing.

Anne: What's wrong with her? She's perfect for a fairy tale.

GM: I suppose that's true. (laughs) Then, the redhead carrying a sword as large as she is, Anne Shirley—

Misha: Pfhoo!? (Suddenly slams the table.)

Harl: Looks like it just hit Misha as well.

Translator's Note—I may have understated the popularity of Anne of Green Gables in Japan. Notably, it was made into an anime broadcast on public TV which pretty much everyone of a certain age saw as a young kid. If you don't quite understand the reactions here, try mentally substituting "Anne Shirley" with "The Little Mermaid" and reading it again.

Jon: Look, let's not call her "Anne Shirley." (laughs)

GM: Good idea. (laughs) Then, red-haired Anne of Green Gables... pfhoo!!

Jon: No one can handle it. (laughs)

Misha: (Continues whacking the table) G, gosh, don't call her "Red-haired Anne", call her "Sword-bared Anne" or something. (everyone laughs)

Harl: What kind of scene is this? (laughs)

GM: I-it'll be a proper one soon. (laughs.) When Anne arrives at The Crossroads, she's forced to seek shelter at the nearest inn, which is named "The Whimsical Compass."

Anne: Then, while I'm eating, I start writing a letter to my dear friend Kitty. *"Kitty, today I came to a place called The Crossroads. This is quite a lively town indeed. There are so many travelers here..."*

GM: Indeed, and they're talking loudly all around you. Your attention is drawn by the conversation happening at the neighboring table.

Anne: Oh, my, what could it be?

GM: "Have you heard? In the Verdant Mountains, there's a small kingdom which received a Way promising everyone in it eternal happiness." "Eternal happiness, huh? That's unbelievable."

Anne: Eternal happiness?! My eyes suddenly wide and my cheeks flushed, I rush over to that table.

Jon: Stars in her eyes. (laughs)

Anne: "Mister, could you please tell me about that place?"

GM: "Oh, what's got you so excited, carrot top?"

Anne: C-carrot top!? Did... did you just call me carrot top? (laughs)

Misha: Anne never did like her hair. (laughs)

Anne: (In a sinister voice) "—And the very next moment, that man found himself bereft of his head."

Harl: That's definitely not like Anne! (everyone laughs uproariously)

Anne: Okay, let me redo that. (laughs) Can we forget the carrot top thing?

GM: Then it's "What's got you so excited, little lady?" (laughs)

Anne: I smile widely, my eyes sparkling. "The Happy Kingdom you just mentioned... could you tell me everything you know?"

GM: "Ah, that's a small kingdom about a week's travel from here. They say—"

Anne: (Interrupting) "Mister! Just think about it!"

GM: "W, what?"

Anne: "Have you ever been truly happy, mister?"

GM: "What are you saying, little lady?"

Anne: "You're eating right now, but that's just to sustain yourself, isn't it? Is eating going to bring you happiness?" I stare at the man, my eyes dead serious.

GM: "Eh, ah... no, I... we were all rather hungry..." "Yeah..."

Anne: (Ignoring them) "That's why I'm interested, mister! You heard a story like that, mister, and yet you didn't immediately set off for that kingdom at once? Let us all go find happiness!" I spread my arms wide, appealing to everyone nearby!

GM: Everyone nearby is just whispering things to each other like "What's with that girl?" (laughs)

Anne: "Listen to me, everyone! Happiness lies only a matter of days away from us! There's absolutely no reason we shouldn't go find it!"

GM: "That may be so, little lady, but—"

Anne: "I've made up my mind, mister! I'm going there right now!"

GM: "I... I see..."

Anne: "Thank you for telling me this, mister! I'm off!" And with that, I quit the town. (laughs)

Misha: W, wow... (Laughs)

GM: I barely got to do anything... (laughs)

Anne: *"Kitty, I've just heard of something wonderful. In this Left Land, there is a place called the Happy Kingdom. I am on my way there right this moment. There, unto forever, unto always, unto eternity (a beautiful phrase!) I believe I shall find the way to happiness."*

Misha: W-wait, you're writing that in a blizzard? (everyone laughs)

Jon: Got to stay true to the character. (laughs)

GM: Then, in good spirits, Anne makes her way along the harsh road towards the Happy Kingdom while talking to herself and the scene ends.

Anne: Exactly that!

SCENE 3: MEMORIES OF A RUIN

Scene Player: Harlequin

Thirteen years ago, on the Day of the Black Spot, a Way prophesied the very destruction of the world and plunged the Left Land into confusion and anxiety.

Ever since then, the entire Tailors' Guild, as well as the secret society within the Holy Church known as the Order of God's Hand, have fought in a war without end to preserve the world they live in.

Upon this day, Harlequin joined forces with Amelia Foryan of the Order of God's Hand—at the moment, no more than a young girl—to defeat one of the Strange and save a kingdom from destruction.

But that Strange had already left scars upon the land. In the ashes of the royal keep, the two partners encounter an Unraveling...

GM: The next scene is Harlequin's. It's a memory from a little more than ten years ago, just after the last battle that he and Amelia fought together.

Harl: In that case, I draw my sewing needle out of the chest of the massive Strange I've just impaled with it, my eye swollen shut and blood dripping from my face. "That was an easy victory!" (everyone laughs)

Misha: What a liar. (laughs)

GM: Should Amelia already know that Harlequin can't tell the truth?

Harl: I'd be happy if she did. Or at least that she's used to my lies. (laughs)

GM: Okay. (laughs) Amelia, who is of course still just a girl, rushes to your side with a worried exclamation of "Harl, are you okay?!"

Harl: I stand up straight. "Of course! It doesn't hurt one bit!"

Jon: That means he needs first aid, now. (laughs)

GM: "I'll patch you up!" Amelia starts using her healing magic on you.

Harl: I stay silent. I'm not going to thank her with a lie.

GM: As she's seeing to your wounds, Amelia chatters on and off. "...With our work here done, I'm sure God will once again bestow a fine Way upon this poor kingdom before long."

Harl: "Yes, surely wonderful things will come to this land. Like jellybeans the size of a mountain from the sky. No one will ever go hungry again."

Amelia: "Indeed, the ways bestowed by God are truly sweet and pleasant things. They are proof of Her love for us, and Her wish for us to live in happiness... Proof of the heart of our merciful mother." Her brows crease. "But this world that runs rampant with fear and despair... will there truly be no end to it?"

Harl: "Perhaps... but if we fight abrim with love and friendship, we shall surely live to see tomorrow."

Misha: ...Is that actually cynicism?

Harl: Yeah. Harl doesn't believe there will be an end to this either, so he's lying.

Anne: What an interesting character. (laughs)

Amelia: "I see..." Amelia lifts her eyes to Harlequin, filled with sadness. "...You know, I can't do this anymore."

Harl: "What?"

Amelia: "I'm sorry, Harl. I'm just so tired of this life filled with nothing but battle..."

Harl: (posturing, as if in a play) "Ah...! Amelia, you mustn't go! I need you here by my side!"

Misha: H-how sad...

GM: Well, he's actually encouraging her to give it a rest, right?

Harl: Yeah. "If you aren't here, there's no way I can fight!"

Misha: Yet he's going to continue fighting anyway, all alone. Will Harl ever be able to return to living a peaceful life...?

GM: ...Is that really his fate?! Wah, give me a tissue, a tissue! (everyone laughs)

Anne: The GM sure broke down fast. Crying during the opening phase... (laughs)

Harl: "Don't go, Amelia... please."

GM: Okay, she won't!

Everyone: Hey! (everyone laughs)

Harl: And thus, the curtains close... (laughs)

GM: But, but it's so sad to just have her abandon someone as considerate as Harl. Gi, give me a moment...

Anne: Obviously, Harl and Amelia get married and live peacefully together. (laughs)

Misha: You mean happily ever after. (laughs)

GM: S-sorry. (laughs) Amelia says, "I've asked my contacts in the Order of God's Hand, and they've found me a post in a small diocese in a place called the Happy Kingdom..."

Harl: Is that so? Then I take off my half-mask and stick my tongue out at her. "Sorry, everything I just said was a lie."

Jon: Huh?

Harl: "Actually, I don't need you at all. Get lost already. I'll be much happier without you."

GM: Whaaaaaat?!

Misha: ...Um, Kodachi, please don't abuse the GM like this (laughs.)

Jon: Hey, it's a scene from his memory, I'm sure they'll meet again! (laughs)

GM: Bu, but, that means he needs me! He needs me!

Jon: Are you talking as Amelia or Sugano? (laughs)

GM: (scribbling furiously on his notes) I'm rebelling against the Way known as my plans for this scene!

Jon: Quit it! (laughs)

Anne: *"—Kitty, I was positively shocked. This GM, honestly, he'll just do anything he pleases to the plot when he gets fired up!"* (everyone laughs)

Misha: A-Anne... this, this is absurd enough already...! (pounding the table with her fists as she laughs)

Jon: ...GM, GM.

GM: Uh, um...

Jon: (gently) Since this is only the opening, mustn't we stick to what's written on the scenario handouts?

GM: Y-yes... Then, Amelia wipes the tears from her eyes and smiles. "Thank you. Perhaps through this I will be able to find some small measure of happiness... and perhaps some day you will too, Harl."

Harl: "Yes, I will surely become happy. Happier than anyone!"

Suddenly, Harlequin awakens from his reverie.

From the white snow falling gently on the ashes of the keep. From Amelia's voice calling out to him.

GM: "...Yes, that Happy Kingdom. Are you listening to me, Harlequin?" Through one of the telethreads that the Tailors' Guild uses, Harlequin is being spoken to by his superior, the Queen of the Night.

Harl: "Hmm? Of course, Queen of the Night. My love for you is such that every word you speak leaves an indelible echo in my ears."

Aria: "My, I can feel the intensity of your love."

Harl: "Even when I have not received orders from you, I think of you every day, and there is no night upon which I do not dream of you."

Anne: Does he really need to go that far? (laughs)

GM: The Queen of the Night pointedly ignores him. "We've received reports of an Unraveling in the Happy Kingdom. There is no doubt one of the Strange is lurking within. If we do nothing, it is quite possible the entire kingdom will be swallowed by the Void. Kindly do something about this."

Harl: "I've never heard of that kingdom, and there's no way I'd go there even if one of the Strange has appeared."

Misha: You knew about the Happy Kingdom, but you didn't know about the Unraveling, did you?

Harl: No, you see, I can include a little truth in my sentence as long as the brunt of it is a lie. (laughs)

Anne: If not everything out of your mouth is a lie, that just makes your character even harder to understand...

Aria: "—I'm counting on you." With that, the telethread connection drops.

Harl: Then, I set off towards the Happy Kingdom, humming a tune as I walk.

GM: I guess that ends the scene.

Misha: Um, I have to admit that was exciting, but I really think you should try to keep your cool from now on, GM. (laughs)

GM: Uh, well... sorry. (laughs)

SCENE 4: A PLEASANT EVENING

Scene Player: Jonathan Trusso

The Way delivered to the people of the Happy Kingdom this year has greatly shaken all of its people.

Though he spent the evening in his mansion, his health too poor to leave, Pierre too had the Way bestowed upon him.

The scene takes place in Pierre's mansion as he awaits the coming of the new year. As always, his loyal servant Jonathan is there to support him.

GM: The final opening scene is Jonathan's. It takes place at night, in Pierre's mansion.

Jon: Understood. I Am Ready To Serve Lord Pierre As Always. Lord Pierre, Lord Pierre!

GM: When you enter your master's room, though he is usually asleep by this time, Pierre is sitting up in bed and reading a book.

Jon: "Oh, Are You Still Awake, Master?"

GM: Pierre smiles faintly. "I am feeling quite well tonight," he says.

Jon: "That Is Wonderful. It Is Just As The Way Promised."

GM: "Indeed. The Way told us that we shall live eternally in happiness. But for that to happen, of course, I must not strain myself." Pierre chuckles, but your attention is caught by the dish of apples next to him.

Jon: Oh!

Misha: A reward for your hard work every night. (laughs)

Jon: As Well As The Reason I Become Rather Restless At The End Of The Day. (laughs)

Anne: How cute. (laughs)

Jon: I Cannot Help But Glance Repeatedly At The Apples. (laughs) "Lord Pierre, You Are Earnest As Usual."

Pierre: "Although I am rarely well enough to leave this place, I am sure the people of the kingdom are delighted to know they will be happy."

Jon: "On The Morrow, Allow Me To Venture Outside In Your Stead, Lord Pierre. I Shall Inform You How The People Are Feeling."

Pierre: "Thank you. But, Jonathan, as you live in this kingdom as well, mustn't you also be happy?" With a mischievous smile on his face, Pierre offers an apple to Jon.

Jon: "Aaah, I Am Simply Ecstatic..." My Gears Are Going Wild. Apples. Apples. Apples!

Anne: Is he alright, this Automaton? (laughs)

Jon: After That, The Conversation Seems To Be Over, So I Ask One Last Question. "I Bid You Good Night, Lord Pierre. Have We Lived In Sufficient Happiness Today?"

GM: "Yes, I have been very happy today. Thanks to you, Jonathan," Pierre says with a smile. But just after that, you hear the pattering of footsteps—a maid, running.

Harlequin: What's this, what's this?

GM: "Lord Pierre! I've just received news that your friend Lord Michel has passed away!"

Anne: Whoa...

GM: "What?!" The color drains from Pierre's face in an instant. He tries to stand up. "I, I must go to him!"

Jon: "Lord Pierre, I Will Have A Carriage Prepared At Once, So Please Remain Calm!"

Pierre: "What is this? Just what happened?"

As he supports Pierre, Jonathan drops the apple in his hand, letting it roll away.

The sudden news has turned this happy, peaceful night at the mansion into one filled with anxiety and tension.

Jon: I Did Not Get To Eat Any Apples... (despondent)

GM: With that, the opening scenes are at an end. Let's roll on the Distortion Table.

The Distortion Table represents distortions in the world caused by the appearance of one of the Strange. In other words, distortions are portents of the arrival of the Strange.

In this world that should be happy and idyllic, the Warped Ways created by the Strange and the distortions they cause symbolize madness.

The GM can decide to roll on the Distortion Table whenever it best suits the scenario.

GM: I'll use the Distortion Table to give me a picture of what the next scenes are going to look like.

Misha: So can we decide to erase the distortion at any time?

GM: Yes. Also, since we're playing with the expansion book, we'll be rolling on version 2 of the table!

Everyone: Cool!

GM: There are a wide variety of Strange, and they can cause all manner of distortions, as shown by the Distortion Table. Of course, you can also still refer to version 1 of the table, as included in the main rulebook.

Harl: I see the distortions are pretty different among each. I guess you can pick which table to use based on the atmosphere of the scenario.

GM: Alright, let's have someone roll on version 2 of the table. Anne, do us the honor.

Anne: I wonder what it'll be? ...45.

GM: "Plague Outbreak." A plague that causes suffering and death begins to spread.

Misha: Is this what killed Michel? (laughs)

Harl: Anne brought her plague to the Happy Kingdom. (laughs)

Anne: I most certainly did not! (laughs)

GM: In the next scene, we'll see what kind of effect this distortion has.

THE MAIN STORY

The travelers have all arrived in the Happy Kingdom.

There, all and sundry sing the praises of happiness as they live out their days.

In times of delight, pleasure, sadness, and fear...

SCENE 1: THE KINGDOM VEILED IN HAPPINESS

Scene Player: Anne Shirley

Through the perfectly clear winter sky, a cold wind blows, freezing the air.

The beautiful, snow-covered mountain peaks cut off one's vision in every direction.

It is among these surroundings that Anne enters the Happy Kingdom.

GM: Okay, the first Scene Player in the Middle Phase is Anne. I'd like Harlequin to appear in the scene as well.

Anne: I skip excitedly on the last stretch of the road towards the Happy Kingdom. "What lovely weather. It's as if I'm blessed. The Happy Kingdom, and happy old me! What a perfect combination we make!"

Jon: She's still deluded, huh. (laughs)

Anne: "It's as if this wind is embracing me. Why don't I let it just lift me up and carry me to the Happy Kingdom! Yay~!" As I say that, I break into more of a run. (laughs)

Harl: Then why don't I show up? "Oh, if it isn't... that's right, Cordelia Fitzgerald!"

Anne: "Oh, my! It's been a long time, hasn't it, Harlequin? You're the only one who ever calls me Cordelia!"

Harl: "Yes, I remember. Your real name is Anne Shirley, and mine is Harlequin." (laughs)

Anne: "Oh, please do continue to call me Cordelia, you know I don't mind one bit. You certainly are oblivious, aren't you?"

Harl: "In any case, do you have some business in this kingdom? It's a peaceful, dreadfully boring place where nothing ever happens. Nothing's of interest to you here, is it?"

Anne: "That's not so! I mean, it's called the Happy Kingdom. There's not a person in the world who wouldn't want to come here based on the name alone!"

Misha: Especially with this year's hot new Way. (laughs)

Jon: Hot new Way, huh? (laughs)

Anne: "After all, doesn't everyone want to become happy? You understand too, don't you?"

Harl: "No, not at all. I've never once thought I'd like to happy."

Anne: "No matter the time or the place, you're always quite the buffoon, aren't you? Well, enough of that. Let us be off to the Happy Kingdom!" As we head onwards, I regale Harlequin with my delusions of what a wonderful place this kingdom must be. (laughs)

Harl: "How I enjoy listening to everything you say!" (laughs)

Anne: "You get along so well with everyone, Harlequin!" I keep on with it, then. (laughs)

Harl: Since I can't tell the truth, there's no way I can convince you to stop. (laughs)

Anne: "I'm just giving voice to the dreams in both of our hearts! Harlequin, let's be friends forever!"

Harl: "Nothing would delight me more!" (everyone laughs)

Jon: ...Hey, doesn't anyone have anything to say to that? (laughs)

Misha: Is ending their conversation actually possible? (laughs)

Jon: Not anytime soon. (laughs)

Misha: Quite the awkward atmosphere. (laughs)

GM: As the two draw near to the Happy Kingdom, they catch sight of an Unraveling—it's visible as a tear of sorts floating in space.

An Unraveling is a tear in space, a phenomenon created by the Warped Way of a Strange or their use of Distortion Powers.

On the other side of this tear lies the Void, a place in which nothing and nobody can exist. When an Unraveling appears, it means the area will eventually be swallowed by the Void.

Anne: "How odd. I was certain the Happy Kingdom was a happy place, due to its Ways. Why is there a tear in space here?"

GM: Regardless of that, you soon arrive in the Happy Kingdom. The wall isn't of the sort meant to keep people in or out, nor are there many soldiers. It's that peaceful.

Misha: Since they're happy, it feels like they'd be welcoming to travelers.

GM: Indeed, when you reach the entrance to the kingdom, the one guard there gives you a broad smile and says "Welcome to the Happy Kingdom!"

Anne: Upon hearing that, I turn to Harlequin. "Did you hear that, Harlequin? We're in the Happy Kingdom... the Happy Kingdom! Such a wonderful phrase! Even though it was just that soldier saying it!"

GM: The two of you notice something odd. Even though the soldier is smiling, he's deathly pale and cold sweat is running down his body.

Misha: ...Is this because of that roll on the Distortion Table?

GM: Indeed.

Harlequin: "He certainly looks healthy."

Anne: "What are you saying, Harlequin? He looks awful! Mister, is something the matter?"

GM: "Oh, it's nothing to worry about. Do the two of you intend to stay long?"

Anne: "Naturally. We must find out what's amiss in this country. It feels... rather unhappy indeed at the moment, and I'm not just saying that because of the way you look, Mister."

GM: "I, I beg to differ! I'm happy as can be! Travelers say such strange things, don't they..."

Anne: Well, this is interesting. (laughs)

Jon: ...Could it be that even though they're unhappy, everyone is trying their best to pretend otherwise?

GM: Isn't it logical? "We were given a way that promises us eternal happiness, so there's no way we could say we're unhappy!"

Harl: "That's right. This is a land of eternal happiness. It's like a vacation that goes on forever. Not really that wonderful a thing... no, not at all."

Anne: "A vacation that goes on forever! What a way to put it. You should become a poet, Harlequin. Or perhaps a novelist?"

GM: "Haha, what curious travelers you are. You are welcome in our Happy Kingdom. However..."

Anne: However?

GM: The guard wipes away his sweat. "It's rather cold here right now, isn't it? If you went somewhere further south, I'm sure there are much warmer places to visit. You should make your stay here brief and head south for the fine weather."

Harl: Hmm... I clap my hand on the guard's shoulder as if he were a friend and slip a coin into his breast pocket. "I see. You are indeed a happy man. But perhaps you'd be even happier with a warm, stiff drink tonight."

Misha: What a nice guy. I take it he actually means "eat something good and rest until you're better?"

Harl: Indeed. Also, I'd like to absorb that distortion.

GM: Understood.

Misha: So he'll absorb the distortion causing the plague in the country? Does that mean the guard won't be sick anymore?

GM: He's absorbing the effect listed on the table, so what that means is that the plague won't spread any further.

Jon: I see, so it's no longer contagious.

Misha: But, if it's Harl absorbing it... is that okay? He already has the highest Peel Value of any of us...

Harl: If I'm careful from now on, I'll be alright. I absorb the distortion, and my Peel Value rises by 2.

GM: Alright. Since your Peel Value is greater than 6, please roll on the Omen Table.

The Omen Table represents the effects of a character becoming detached from the world. It causes various effects indicative of becoming estranged.

Once a PC's Peel Value becomes greater than 6. they have to roll on the table when their Peel Value increases further.

Harl: Alright, rolling. ...7, "Loss of Presence." I forget about one of my Partners.

Everyone: Whoa!

GM: Alright, choose one of your Partners and mark them as forgotten.

Jon: Something pretty mean happened when he tried to be nice. (laughs)

Harl: My partners are Amelia, Anne, and the Queen of the Night. Hmm, which would cause the least havoc if I forgot them... (lost in thought)

Anne: Even if you forget me, I'll just keep talking to you as if nothing happened. (laughs)

Harl: ...Oh. (laughs) That's interesting, isn't it? Alright, Anne, I'll forget about you. "...You, I totally remember who you are!" (everyone laughs)

Anne: (with a serious face) "What are you saying, Harlequin? We've been together for a while now."

Harlequin: "Of course! You and I are best friends!"

Anne: "That's right, friends! Bosom buddies!"

Harlequin: "No, I apologize. I was just confirming that the two of us are friends forever." (laughs)

Anne: ...Is this really going to cause less havoc than the distortion? (laughs)

Misha: At least the guard will feel better.

GM: Indeed, the guard is already looking less pale, and his smile seems more genuine. "You are indeed interesting travelers. To meet such travelers on a day like this, ah, today truly is a happy day!"

Anne: Then, I continue talking as we head through the gate. "...Say, back there, did you absorb that guard's distortion?"

Anne: "You shouldn't hide it, Harlequin. If you keep doing this, you're going to turn into a Hollow, you know?"

Harl: "I'm fine. I'm not concerned about that at all."

Anne: (smiling widely) That's just like you, Harlequin. A Weaver for the ages! Come, let's go on an adventure together!"

From the people in the shops to the housewives by the well to the children to the elderly, everyone that the two encounter has a broad smile on their face, and offer their hand and words of welcome.

Anne: "Yay! Hello, hello!" I eagerly shake the offered hands.

GM: With a wide smile, a number of people tell you the same thing as the guard did. "It's awfully cold here right now. Shouldn't you go to a warmer kingdom?"

Anne: "This truly is a wonderful kingdom. But why is everyone encouraging us to leave and go somewhere else?"

Harl: "It must be because this is such a wonderful kingdom that you don't belong here."

Anne: "Hmm. That's a rather stingy way of thinking, isn't it?"

Harl: "To preserve their happiness, they can't allow a single person to intrude. That's why they don't want you to stay."

Anne: "Do you think so? I think happiness is a more mutual thing. Like if there's a chocolate or a caramel, people should share it between themselves, and they'll be even happier than if they had eaten it alone!"

Harl: "Happiness is a more precious thing than that chocolate caramel. That's why no one will allow you to have it so easily, Anne Shirley."

Anne: "Is happiness a rare thing in the Happy Kingdom? You say odd things, Harlequin."

GM: As you continue along the road, you see a graveyard by its side. There is a funeral taking place as you speak.

Anne: "My, I'm surprised. People still die in the Happy Kingdom, do they?"

GM: You notice that all the people attending the funeral are smiling broadly.

Misha: Whoa...

Harlequin: Now that's a creepy spectacle. "...What a wonderful funeral."

Anne: I ask one of the people around us, "Excuse me, who might this be the funeral of?"

GM: The man you asked turns to you with a smile. "This is the funeral of someone who died of illness yesterday."

Jon: Huh? But didn't Harlequin absorb the distortion causing the illness?

GM: Yes, he stopped the spread of the plague. But actually, this happening was part of the scenario from the start. (laughs)

Jon: Ah, I see. (laughs)

Anne: I continue speaking to the man. "Illness?! People fall ill in the Happy Kingdom?"

GM: "Indeed they do. But even though he suffered and died, he must have been happy, isn't that so?" the man says. "And I'm sure that wherever he is he's still happy now, having such a wonderful funeral ceremony. Indeed, there's no way he couldn't be happy."

Anne: (With an unimpressed look on her face) "...No, none of this seems very happy at all to me."

GM: "You're wrong! We're all happy!" shout several people who overhear Anne. One has tears welling in her eyes.

Jon: (roleplaying said person) "Ha, ha, I seem to be weeping with happiness!"

GM: "Ah, ah, yes! Those must be tears of sheer happiness!"

Anne: "Harlequin, don't you find this odd?" I ask in a loud voice.

GM: "It's not odd at all!"

Anne: "All of you keep saying you're happy, but you don't look happy at all..."

GM: "That's not true! All of us are very happy! What are you saying?"

Jon: (roleplaying a townspeople) "We are having a nice quiet funeral here, you two!"

Misha: (roleplaying a townspeople) "That's right! What rude travelers you are!"



Jon: "Just a little more, just a little more... and then we'll be happy...!" (laughs)

Harl: Well then, I end this. "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm not the slightest bit interested in continuing this conversation."

Anne: Harl's a unique one as usual. (laughs)

Harl: Only being able to tell lies is a pretty severe restriction. (laughs) "—By the way, does anyone know of a woman named Amelia Foryan? I don't believe she was in this kingdom, but..."

GM: "Ah, Lady Amelia. She is this kingdom's priestess."

Harl: "Wonderful. Anne, that woman is my..." I suddenly realize I'm dangerously close to telling the truth. "...my friend."

Misha: Aww.....!

GM: Ah, man!

Anne: That really hit the softies hard. (laughs)

Misha: Le-let me in this scene!

Anne: Bit of a sore point, huh? (laughs) "Friend? You say that, but I don't feel much warmth from it. Is she really your friend?"

GM: She definitely is! (everyone laughs)

Anne: Hey, *you* can't say that! (laughs)

GM: Sorry! (laughs)

Harl: (twirling a finger) "Anne Shirley, you'd be a fool to listen to what I say."

GM: "The evening draws near. Would you like us to give Lady Amelia a message for you?"

Jon: (roleplaying a townspeople) "A friend of Lady Amelia's has arrived! What a happy day this is!"

Misha: (roleplaying a townspeople) "Ah, how happy, how happy!"

GM: "Might I recommend you stay at 'The Briar Patch'? It has excellent food, and the innkeeper's daughters are so adorable. You will most certainly be happy there."

Harl: "Hmm. Well, I'm quite content already, but why don't we go there."

GM: The townspeople all smile at the two of you. "May you be happy!" they say.

Anne: "It makes me curious... no one looks very happy at all."

GM: Okay, the two of you head to the inn, and the scene ends.

SCENE 2: THE BRIAR PATCH

Scene Player: Misha

The country that lies beyond the doors of the inn is drenched in smiles.

Misha stands by the doorway, offering greetings to those passing along the road.

"If we see any travelers, we'll tell them to come here."

So they say to her. With a smile.

GM: Okay, the Scene Player this time is Misha, since this scene takes place at the inn. Since Anne and Harlequin were on their way here, they're also welcome to appear.

Anne, Harl: Okay!

Misha: Then, as I stand in the shade of the inn's eaves, I practice my greeting to new customers. "W... welcome..."

Jon: I can't hear you! (laughs)

GM: Nina raps on the wall to get your attention as she leans out of the window on the story above. "Hey, say it louder!"

Misha: (sounding as if she's on the verge of tears) "I-I ought to work inside the inn after all..."

Nina: "You never change, Misha. Then, until any travellers come along, you can go do the washing."

Misha: "O-okay!" I hurry into the back room and start washing dishes.

Nina: "You aren't getting any taller, are you, Misha."

Misha: "N-no..."

Nina: "Well, girls like us are just as cute when we're small, aren't we?" Nina says with a laugh. Actually, Nina was in bed with an illness that made her sweat the past few days, but now she seems to be quickly recovering.

Jon: Was it because of that roll on the Distortion Table?

GM: Yeah. (laughs)

Misha: "Um, I-I'll do your chores too, so you should rest in bed, Nina..."

Nina: "I'm fine, I'm fine. I stopped feeling bad a while ago, and I think I'm all better now!" She pumps her fists energetically.

Misha: "You weren't sick for long. Was it just a bad cold?"

Nina: "Maybe. Anyway, Misha..." She places her hands on Misha's shoulders, looking her in the eye. "Haven't you felt something is odd lately?"

Misha: "Y-yeah. The grown-ups..."

Nina: "Everyone's smiling all the time. If we ask for candy, they give it to us without hesitation... happily. Aren't we lucky?"

Anne: Is Nina not following the Way?

Harl: Well, whether anyone follows the Way or not is up to them. It's just that when you defy the Way, the risks are grave.

GM: Indeed. People's actions can distort the world itself, causing effects similar to Distortion Powers.

Harl: That's why, right now, everyone is forcing themselves to smile even though they actually feel terribly anxious.

Jon: I see. But Nina and Misha don't feel nearly that anxious themselves.

Nina: "Father and the others have been doing nothing but working lately as well. I haven't even been able to go outside. I'm so bored!"

Misha: "Somehow, even if everyone's smiling, I feel like they're less relaxed than before..."

Nina: "Yeah... To tell you the truth, I saw something really scary last night."

Misha: I suddenly stiffen up when I hear her say that, making me noticeably taller (laughs.) "S... something scary?"

Nina: "I was in bed all day yesterday, so I woke up in the middle of the night, unable to sleep any longer."

Misha: "Y-yeah...?"

Nina: "When I went downstairs, I saw my father talking to some of the other adults. They were talking about the illness, and the Strange, and that people have been dying... but... everyone was smiling."

Misha: "They, they were... smiling...?"

Nina: "Yeah, the whole while."

Misha: Without really being conscious of it, I take my hands out of the washbasin and grab tightly onto Nina's sleeve.

Nina: "Everyone must be hiding something." Nina says with a serious voice.

Anne: Around then, I rap loudly on the door of the inn. "My, are they closed?"

Misha: I startle at the sound of the knock, and let go of Nina. "S-sorry!"

Nina: "N-no, it was my fault for telling you all this. Let's go greet the customer!"

Harl: I'm showing up too. "Well, nobody cares that much when no one comes to greet visitors to the inn, do they?"

Anne: "I care! It's terribly rude!"

Nina: "I'm so sorry!" She rushes to the door and opens it, a smile on her face.

Misha: I peer out nervously from behind Nina. "U-um, w-welcome to the Briar Patch..."

Anne: "My, you really are the sort of people I expected to find in the Happy Kingdom! Happily welcoming customers to their inn!" I remark. (laughs)

Misha: I back up about three steps, clinging to Nina's skirt. "U-um, our food makes people very happy as well..." (everyone laughs)

Anne: "Perfect for the Happy Kingdom, then! What's your name?!"

Misha: "I-it's Misha..."

Anne: "Misha? What a cute name!" I look at Nina. "And yours?"

Nina: "I-I'm Nina. O, oh, that's right. Let me fetch the guestbook for you!"

Jon: She'll do anything to escape from Anne. (laughs)

Misha: Then, I'm abandoned to my fate. (laughs) If only I could go with her, Misha thinks...

Anne: "Can I call you just Misha, then?"

Misha: "I-if you would like..."

Anne: "Everyone seems so happy in this kingdom, Misha. It's because the Way makes them happy, isn't it?"

Misha: "T-that must be it..." I say, remembering how this Way's year was different.

Anne: "Then you must be very happy as well, Misha! Isn't that right?"

Misha: ...Um, if I say I'm not, am I going to be torn into a Strange? (laughs)

Jon: You aren't a Weaver yet, so it's a definite risk. (laughs)

Misha: I'm scared of that, so I try to answer differently. "Everyone is always smiling. ...U-um, will the two of you be sharing a room?"

Anne: "Certainly. Harlequin, since we've met again after so long, won't you keep me company tonight? I'm sure you have lots of fascinating stories."

Harl: "Yes, I'd have no complaints about sharing a room with you." (everyone laughs)

Misha: "Understood!"

Jon: This got pretty interesting. (laughs)

Anne: Then, I head up the staircase and look inside a room. "...Hmm. Somehow, I thought the inns in this kingdom would be more luxurious!"

Nina: "How rude! We have the height of luxury around here!" So says Nina as she appears behind you. (laughs)

Anne: "Well, it's not that I'm disappointed in this room, I was just hoping for something more! Let's say this is silver; I thought I might find a room here that was gold!"

Misha: I find myself smiling despite myself. "What a funny girl she is..."

Harl: "Yes, she's a very unique one." ...Whoops, that wasn't a lie. (everyone laughs)

Misha: I giggle at that, and take a step closer. "The two of you seem to get along well..."

Anne: "That's right! We're bosom buddies! Eternal friends! Just like the two of you, am I right?"

Misha: I steal a glance at Nina, then nod shyly.

Nina: "Ehehe..." She blushes slightly.

Misha: "Ah, um, while we wait for dinner... might I hear about your travels...?"

Anne: "Of course! Misha, why don't you and I become bosom buddies too!"

Misha: I look a little unsure, but happy. "Th-then, until we eat...!"

GM: Alright, that seems like a good point to end the scene at.

Misha: Ah, I forgot. Can I use "Threads of Fate" on Anne?

Harl: The skill that lets you acquire a new Partner, huh?

GM: Sure. Just make sure you mark the MP loss down as well.

SCENE 3: UPON A RAINY NIGHT

Scene Player: Jonathan Trusso

It's midnight, and sleet is pouring thickly.

Jonathan, together with Pierre, is in a carriage returning to the mansion.

His master's expression is even more miserable than the weather upon this night...

GM: It's finally time for you to be the Scene Player, Jonathan. You're returning along with Pierre to the mansion from Michael's funeral, in a horse-drawn carriage.

Jon: I spread a blanket over Lord Pierre. "It Is Chilly Tonight. We Must Ensure You Do Not Catch A Cold."

GM: "Sorry for always troubling you..." Pierre manages a faint smile, but his friend's sudden death seems to have been a profound shock to him. He is still pale and lethargic.

Jon: "I Shall Instruct The Others In The Mansion To Fetch Firewood. We Will Ensure You Rest Warmly Tonight."

GM: Pierre exhales softly as he hears your words. "...Hey, Jonathan."

Jon: "What May I Do For You?"

Pierre: "At the funeral, everyone there was smiling."

Jon: "...That Is Indeed So." It was peculiar enough that I took notice of it as well.

Pierre: "They spoke with smiles on their faces, insisting that Michel must have died happy. I too would be happy if I could believe that, but..."

Jon: I remain silent, listening to him.

Pierre: "I overheard someone whispering that he'd died after becoming estranged. That recently, in this kingdom, many people have been turning into the Strange..."

Jon: "That Is Surely But A Rumour."

Pierre: "Yet I had heard nothing of it within the mansion." He raises his face to you, looking into your eyes. "Tell me. Did you think Michel was happy?"

Jon: "I Never Heard Lord Michel Speak Of Such Things, But I Am Sure That He Was Happy To Be Your Friend, Lord Pierre." I certainly remember that he was a good person in the past, who seemed to live a happy life.

Pierre: "Yet, if he became estranged and died... was he not happy after all? Perhaps he was suffering. Living in misery..." Pierre's words trail off, and tears begin to flow from his eyes. You hear a strange sound, like something grinding.

Jon: I Hasten To Provide Him With A Handkerchief.

Pierre: "Thank you..."

Jon: "You Must Not Speak, Nor Think Of Such Tragic Matters Any Longer."

Pierre: "Must I then smile like all the others?" He looks into your eyes again.

Jon: "Well..."

Pierre: "The Way told us we must live in happiness... yet I cannot smile like all those others. Michel was my dearest friend..." Pierre sighs, and along with it, you hear that grinding sound again. It's not the carriage.

Anne: This must be...

Jon: "Lord Pierre!"

GM: As you look upon Pierre's face, it seems more pale than ever before; nearly white.

Jon: "Lord Pierre, I Truly Understand Your Feelings. But You Must Not Go Against The Way Any Further..."

Pierre: "And then I too will be happy, is that right? But my friend is dead... How shall I ever be happy now? I cannot be happy." As he says this, a sickening sound suddenly emanates from his body.

Misha: Is he becoming estranged?!

GM: Pierre's hands emerge from beneath the blanket. He raises them as a grinding sound emanates from them, filling the carriage.

Jon: "Lord Pierre!!!"

Harl: This isn't an effect of the Distortion Table, is it?

GM: Right, so you can't absorb it.

Misha: It's the result of Pierre turning against the Way, isn't it...

GM: Correct. When you wholly oppose a Way, you rapidly become estranged, just like this. "Jonathan, what is happening to me...?!" Pierre says as he stares at his hands in confusion. As the two of you watch, the color fades from them, leaving them pitch black.

Jon: I attempt to take his hands. "Lord Pierre... Lord Pierre!"

As Jonathan holds them, Pierre's black hands elongate, his fingers turning into claws.

In the very next moment, a tremendous shock suddenly shakes the carriage.

Thrown off balance, the carriage is tossed into a nearby building—an inn named "The Briar Patch."

Anne: Time for me to show up, then! "What?! What just happened!"

Harl: I'll show up too. "Hmm, just as I predicted..." (laughs)

Misha: And I'll show up with the two of them, having been happily listening to their stories just moments ago.

GM: The carriage has been smashed to bits after running at a brisk speed into the sturdy building. From it resounds an inhuman cry... and within the wreck, you see one of the Strange, holding Jonathan aloft.

Jon: I realize Lord Pierre's gone berserk and try to free myself from him, while shouting a warning to those nearby. "Everyone! It Is Dangerous Here! Please Escape!"

Misha: "A-a Strange...?!"

GM: Now then, let's use the Distortion Table again. Pierre becoming estranged has had an effect on the world around him. Since the table is roll or choice, I'll make the choice of "Unraveling."

Harl: A choice, huh.

GM: Yes. When as a GM I've got an idea of what distortion I want to have happen, it's wise for me to choose. Now then, the effect of "Unraveling" is that the surrounding area is suddenly swallowed by the Void. This effect instantly kills all characters in the vicinity that are not Weavers.

Misha: Not Weavers... (suddenly looks nervous) That... that includes me too, doesn't it?!

GM: Yes.

Misha: Noooo! (everyone laughs)

Anne: I think someone is going to have to absorb this distortion.

Harl: It'd be sad if Nina and the others all died, too. But first, can I roleplay a bit?

GM: Sure, go for it.

Harl: When I catch sight of Pierre, who is now Strange, I shout in a loud voice that everyone can hear. "They're still after me! The feared band of Strange... the Black Hell Gang!"

Everyone: Who the heck is that?! (laughs)

Harl: Well, I thought if people realize that if someone from their own kingdom has become Strange, that might be bad.

Misha: Ah, I get it!

Harl: "You had no business in this kingdom, Black Hellspawn! Damn you for following me here!"

Anne: "So the Black Hell Gang really exists? I've never heard of them before."

Jon: I do vaguely remember hearing about them once before... but now isn't the time. (laughs)

Misha: "Nina, where are you? Ninaaaaa...." I've backed into a corner, trembling as I stare at the Unraveling.

GM: The Unraveling yawns ever wider, approaching the terrified Misha...

Jon: This is bad, so I'll absorb the Distortion this time. My Peel Value increases by 2. I thrust my hand into the Unraveling, grasping it and pulling it away from her. "Lady Misha, Are You Unharmed?"

Misha: "Jonathan?!"

Harl: I realize that he's absorbed the Distortion, and exclaim "If it isn't Jonathan!"

Jon: "And You Must Be Mister Harlequin!"

Harl: "Yes, I am Harlequin. Did you know him?" I ask, indicating the Strange with my finger.

Jon: I cannot bring myself to answer, but my expression makes it clear I did... which is saying something when one is an Automaton.

Harl: "...I see. So the Black Hell Gang did this after all."

Anne: "Ah, an Automaton! Harlequin, is he a friend of yours?"

Harl: "That's right! He and I stood bravely in battle against the Black Hell Gang together!"

Jon: "...It Has Indeed Been A While Since I Heard Talk Of That."

GM: Well then, let's fight!

BATTLE, ROUND 1

GM: The enemy is the Strange formerly known as Pierre. The PCs are all in the same Engagement, about 5 meters away from him.

Harl: Ah, I have a question. Will Pierre die if we reduce his HP to 0?

GM: Yes. He's treated like a PC whose Peel Value is over 10—that means he has become a Strange and can no longer be returned to being human. Alright, time for the Setup Process.

Jon: I use <Let Us Begin>. Everyone who makes a Check while in the same Engagement as me gets -1 to their Critical Value.

Harl: Oh, thank you!

Jon: "Lady Misha, You Must Flee At Once!"

Misha: I stare at the Strange within the wreckage of the carriage, my feet unable to move. "But, but...!"

GM: Pierre uses <One Who Brings Death>, increasing both his Attack and Defense. No longer able to speak, he lets loose an inhuman howl as the blackness of the Void creeps over his body. Now for the Initiative Process.

Misha: Then I go first. I'm going to use the Auto Action <Bag of Tricks>, followed by the Major Action <Act in Harmony>. Everyone's Damage Roll gets an extra die.

Anne: "I feel warmer all of a sudden... what is this?"

Misha: "I-I can't do anything, but even so...!" Harlequin gets +1d6, and my Partners Anne and Jonathan get +2d6!

Jon: Even though Misha can't fight, the feeling of wanting to protect her gives me strength.

GM: Next is Pierre. He uses <Instant Action>, and then attacks!

Anne: Uwah, he's coming!

GM: He uses <Waxen Wings> as his Minor and engages the PCs. As his Major Action, he makes a Scene Attack using <Vanguard's Voice>. His Attack Roll is 13!

Anne: Alright, I rolled 13 too, so I manage to dodge!

Harl: I dodge too.

Misha: Aww, my Evasion is bad. I get hit...

Jon: Then, I'll use <Servant's Duty> to cover Misha.

GM: Ooh, a nice Damage Roll. 24 Impact damage!

Jon: Then, before taking the damage, I use <Barrier of Fortune>. ...Oh, I rolled well too. Everyone gets a +14 bonus to their Defense Checks.

Harl: Thanks!

Jon: When I factor that in... I take 6 damage.

GM: ...Drat, I forgot I could use <Frenzied Attack>! Oh well, I'll use it on my next one.

Jon: My Peel Value's gone to 6 now, so I roll on the Omen Table. ...11, "Loss of Circumstances."

GM: That means, specifically, that you lose all memory of those Circumstances, or things you gained from experiencing them. Your circumstances are Freedom.

GM: That means, specifically, that you lose all memory of those Circumstances, or things you gained from experiencing them. Your circumstances are Freedom.

Jon: I'll forget how Lord Pierre liberated me with an apple... how tragic... (marks it on his sheet) I have no memory of Pierre being my master. To me, the Strange before me is merely an enemy to be defeated.

Anne: Oh, how grim.

Jon: As my new Distortion Power, I'll take <False Immortality>. That'll make things easier.

Anne: You got another one, huh?

Harl: When your Peel Value reaches 6 or higher, you get to choose a new Distortion Power.

Anne: My turn's next. I use the Auto Action <Communion of Mind>, then <Infinite Attacks>... sweet, a Critical!

GM: What?! Ugh, and Pierre failed to dodge.

Misha: I'll use <Unseen Arm> to boost Anne's damage by 6! "Anne, you can do it!"

Anne: Yeah! I'll use <Frenzied Attack> too, and the damage is... Slashing, 69!

GM: 69?! With his defenses, that's 63 damage... Y, yeah! Somehow, he's still alive!

Anne: Wow, I thought for sure that would be a one-hit kill.

GM: It's the Initiative Process again. Pierre uses <Instant Action> a second time.

Misha: Huh? Isn't <Instant Action> one per round?

GM: Enemies have special rules when it comes to use limits. They can use skills and powers twice as much as PCs can.

Misha: Ah, I see.

GM: Thanks to that, he's going to use <Vanguard's Voice> a second time as well. He rolls 15!

Harl: Well, I failed. It hits me.

Misha: I somehow dodged!

Anne: And I rolled 2. I didn't.

Misha: No, I'll use <Sage's Wisdom> to give you an extra +1! And Anne, you can use your Circumstances too!

Anne: Ah, you're right! That gives me +2, and with that it's 15!

GM: Oh, nice work.

Anne: "—Only when Misha told her did Anne realize she could, in fact, do it." (everyone laughs)

Misha: That sounds like narration straight out of your anime! (laughs)

Jon: I'll cover Harlequin this time.

GM: Ugh, it's a scene-wide attack, but it only ever hits you... I use <Frenzied Attack> and do 49 Impact Damage!

Jon: With that doubled, I take 70 damage and am Incapacitated. "Lord Harlequin, Please Fight On..."

Anne: You can't use a Distortion Power to resurrect yourself?

Jon: I'll recover when the battle is over, and I don't really have any offensive abilities, so I think I'll just stay down.

Harl: My turn's next. "Those from the Black Hell Gang are beyond redemption... I shall deal with you myself." I reach for my hip and draw my sewing needle, with a spurt of blood as I do.

Anne: You stabbed yourself with it to store it?

Misha: Maybe he uses it to keep his Strangeness in check, then unleashes it during battle?

Harlequin: Yeah. There's nothing in the book about it, but that's how I want to roleplay using <Waxen Wings>. Blackness covers my entire body, and deformed wings sprout from my back.

Misha: "....!" I gasp at the sight.

Harl: "—You will not be forgiven." I use <Destructive Impact> as my Major... and lose HP for doing it. Ouch.

GM: The Strange class uses HP as the cost of its powers, yeah. (laughs)

Harl: My Attack Roll's 15!

GM: Ugh, and his roll to dodge is 10, so it hits.

Harl: 28 damage with a special element, "Woven"!

The sewing needle pierces through Pierre's heart.

The Strange lets out a horrifying cry that seems to plunge its surroundings into silence.

The Unraveling that is consuming the area slows, and suddenly, it vanishes.



The blackness coloring Pierre fades away like color from a drying paintbrush, returning him to his original appearance.

The most severe effects of his transformation are gone, giving him the appearance of a normal youth... but the blood staining his chest remains.

Jon: "I Have Failed You, Lord Pierre. Even As Your Servant, I Could Do Nothing..."

Misha: That's not true... I timidly step towards Jonathan and tug at his clothes as if to say that.

GM: Pierre looks as if he wishes to say something as well. His mouth moves, but no sound emerges, only the sound of his weakening breaths.

Jon: "I Shall Never Forget The Debt That I Owe You. The Happiness And Apples That You And I Shared, Lord Pierre..."

Pierre's pained expression slowly softens to one of peace.

The tears flowing from his eyes stop, and at last, he moves no longer.

Jon: "...Nothing You Believed Was Wrong. A Heart Such As Yours, Which Cared So Much For Your Friend Despite Your Own Suffering, Is An Irreplaceable Treasure..."

GM: With that eulogy, the scene comes to an end.

SCENE 4: IN THE WARPED COUNTRY

Scene Player: Misha

After the Unraveling has been dealt with, Misha and the others come together in the inn.

Something is terribly wrong in this kingdom—that much is obvious...

GM: The next Scene Player is Misha, but everyone will appear. You're in the inn after the battle has ended. Nina, who's been looking for Misha, finds you there.

Misha: Then the moment I see Nina, I run to her and hug her super tight! (laughs)

GM: Nina hugs Misha as well. "Misha, are you all right?"

Misha: "Yeah, yeah...!" I look like I'm going to cry from relief, though.

Jon: "I Am Truly Glad You Are Unharmed, Lady Nina. I Apologize For The Damage To The Inn..." The carriage crashed into it, after all.

Anne: "Just what happened here? I want an explanation."

Harl: "...From the looks of it, that young man we saw a while ago turned against the Way and became estranged. Undoubtedly a plot of the Black Hell Gang's."

GM: Nina turns to all of you. "What do you mean? Did something happen? Please tell me and Misha, I beg of you!"

Misha: I remember all that talk of the plague and the Strange and smiles. "C-could it be, that man named Lord Pierre turned against this year's Way...?!"

Nina: "...Is this what the adults were talking about earlier?"

Jon: Hmm... I wonder how much I ought to tell the kids.

GM: Nina looks really fierce. She'll probably try to get to the bottom of things herself if she thinks you're hiding something from her.

Harl: At this point, it's just a matter of time until these girls know everything. It would probably be safer to tell them the truth rather than hide anything."

Jon: I agree. "I Suspect That The Way Bestowed Upon This Kingdom Has Been Warped."

Harl: "Just as I was telling you from the start." That's a lie, of course. "The Way tells the people who live here that they must be happy. So when they cease to be happy, they become estranged."

Anne: "That means... they're cursed to be happy! How tragic! This place should be named the Cursed Kingdom!"

Misha: I continue hugging Nina tightly. "I'm scared..."

Nina: "Y-you can't be scared! Smile! Keep smiling!"

Misha: I force a smile onto my face. "...It's hard when you're scared, but..."

GM: Nina also manages a smile. "Travelers... can I ask you something? If the Strange that created this Warped Way is defeated, everything will go back to normal, right?"

Anne: "Of course! This Way is a mistaken one! God would never subject anyone to such a cruel fate!"

Misha: "T-then... what happened to the true Way...?"

Jon: "When This Foul Way Was Bestowed Upon Us, It Most Likely Prevented The True Way From Being Heard."

Misha: I continue to cling to Misha. "I-if there's anything that I can do, please tell me..." I say in a wavering voice.

Nina: "I'll help too! I have to protect Misha and my parents!"

Misha: "I don't want something so horrible to happen to the kingdom I love..."

Jon: I walk over to the two hugging girls and fold my arms around them as well. "It Is Of The Essence To Remain Together With Your Friends And Family. That Way, We Can Protect You All."

Anne: "Yes, that will put us all at ease!"

Jon: I take their hands. "Ensure That You And Those Dear To You All Remain Happy And In Good Health."

Misha: At his gentle words, my strained smile becomes a little less forced.

Harl: I'd like to learn more about what's going on. Can we do some information gathering?

GM: Sure, now's a good time. There are four topics.

- "People becoming estranged" - <Social> Difficulty 10
- "Unravelings" - <Weaving> Difficulty 10
- "The Strange" - <Social> Difficulty 12
- "Amelia" - <Spirit> Difficulty 9

GM: Now, the Amelia topic is special. If you succeed at the check, you'll get an event scene with Amelia rather than information.

Harl: Then I'm going to roll for it... and I succeed.

GM: Okay. The next scene will be between you and Amelia.

Harl: "...I understand everything that's going on, so I'm going to go and try not to learn anything more."

• **Topic:** People becoming estranged

Anne: Since my <Social> is only 4, I'll need to spend some Asset Points... okay, I totaled 11 and succeeded.

GM: You learn that everyone has been attempting to live happily in accordance with the way, wearing smiles constantly and doing their utmost to convince themselves they are happy. Rumor has it that those who do not remain happy are becoming estranged.

Anne: Just as we thought.

GM: In addition, Unravelings have been appearing throughout the country, but people have been trying to pretend they have not seen them.

Jon: Not exactly a happy thing, is it?

GM: Indeed. To acknowledge the Unravelings and their misfortune would make people unable to stay happy and result in disaster.

Anne: That makes it pretty easy to understand. I'll write a letter to Kitty about it now. (laughs)

• **Topic:** The Strange

Misha: I'm going to use <These Things Happen> to make my check using <Empathy> instead. Yay, a Critical!

GM: Oh, congratulations! You learn that recently, a large number of incidents involving the Strange have occurred in this kingdom. There is only a single reason this is not widespread knowledge. People fear that knowledge of them will make it harder to stay happy, and so tell each other about these incidents only when absolutely necessary.

Jon: I get it.

GM: As always, everyone is glad to have been promised eternal happiness this year. However, the Strange have begun appearing. Not only does this year's way promise happiness, it does not tolerate unhappiness. It seems that appearances of the Strange have been particularly common in times of mourning.

Misha: Huh...

GM: There are also rumors of a man and wife becoming estranged after they quarreled, and a little girl turning Strange after she tripped on the road, twisted her ankle and started crying.

Anne: T-that's horrible...

GM: No matter what the reason is, those who become unhappy also become estranged, and as tensions rise this number is slowly accelerating.

Jon: I wonder if it was all started by that plague we rolled on the Distortion Table earlier.

GM: Ah, yes, that would make sense! Let's have that be related then. (laughs)

Misha: I'm glad I'm together with Nina... if I learned all this on my own I'd get sad enough to become estranged myself. (laughs)

Nina: "Misha, don't cry! You have to stay happy!"

Misha: "Y-yeah, I'm sure, those people were happy in the end!" I force my mouth into a smile. (laughs)

Harl: How difficult it is to not be a Weaver.

Misha: Grinding my teeth, I scribble everything I learned in the back of the inn guestbook. As well as lots of cute flower marks and the words "Happy!" over and over again.

Jon: I think leaving reminders is just going to make you more anxious. (laughs)

Nina: "It's okay! We're happy to have learned new things!"

Misha: "And I'm happy to have made it cute...!"

Jon: I get the sense you've won that battle, anyway. (laughs)

• **Topic:** Unravelings

Jon: Then, I'll investigate the Unravelings. Difficulty 10 isn't too hard... I succeed at the check.

GM: Since the new Way arrived, Unravelings have been popping up everywhere. People have only admitted to noticing them recently, but there are more every day.

Jon: Proof that the Strange are in the vicinity, isn't it.

GM: At this rate, the entire kingdom and its surroundings are at risk of being consumed by the Void. However, people are too concerned with their own survival and not going against the Way to give much thought to it.

Anne: This year's Way is definitely a warped one, but no one can even acknowledge that, huh.

GM: With that, the scene ends. Next up is the scene between Harlequin and Amelia.

SCENE 5: YOU NEVER CHANGE

Scene Player: Harlequin

Dawn arrives. As the sun rises, Harlequin meets Amelia once again.

Last night's rain has drawn to an end, and the world glistens with dew.

Amidst these surroundings, the harlequin makes his way to the church...

GM: The Scene Player is, naturally, Harlequin. It will take place in the church, where Amelia is busy cleaning.

Misha: A reunion after ten years, huh.

Harl: I take my mask off as I enter. "How long has it been, Amelia? Three days?"

GM: Amelia looks briefly surprised to see you. "You never change, do you, Harl."

Harl: "Indeed. The power of my love for you has kept me frozen in time, you see."

GM: (looks surprised as well) ...Even though that's a lie, my heart skipped a beat. Oh, and I'm not speaking as Amelia— (everyone laughs)

Harl: Who the hell are you! Get out of my Amelia! (laughs)

Anne: This again... (laughs)

Jon: Please try to stay on track. (laughs)

GM: Sorry! (laughs) Amelia smiles faintly. "I hardly even realized it, but it seems quite a few years have passed for me."

Harl: "That's not so. You're the same as ever... no, perhaps you've gotten lovelier since back then."

Amelia: "Thank you, Harl. I'm truly happy to have met you again." Her smile broadens.

Harl: I place my mask back on, adopting a serious expression. "I came here to ask for your help, Amelia. Do you know anything about the Unravelings happening in this country?"

Amelia: "...I know that recently many people within this kingdom have become estranged, and the Unravelings are no doubt a consequence of that. It is a tragic thing."

Harl: Hmm....

GM: "But the Way we were given shall surely banish the Strange and the Unravelings, and everyone shall live in happiness. Have you not seen those wondrous souls who never forget to smile, even in the midst of these happenings?"

Harl: "I do indeed find it difficult to believe that this year's new Way and the recent spate of estrangements are related."

Amelia: "Of course. A Way bestowed upon us by God could never give rise to Unravelings."

Harl: "Indeed..." I take Amelia's hand and gaze into her eyes. "You seem truly happy, Amelia."

GM: At those words, Amelia smiles brightly, as if ecstatic. "That's right... I am truly happy now."

Misha: This is quite a change from your opening scene...

Amelia: "Through the Way, God has promised eternal happiness to this kingdom. It is regrettable that some tragedies have occurred, but through smiling even in times of sadness, we shall be able to live on until tomorrow. The people of these kingdom have such strong hearts... isn't it wonderful?"

Misha: And it's nothing to her that she finally saw Harlequin again?

Amelia: "I am truly happy..." she repeats, her words seeming to come from deep within her heart.

Anne: Even so, I can't believe her. This is fishy.

Harl: "Yet still, the Unravelings exist." I pause. "Have you not thought that you may have to once again stake your life in battle to protect that which has brought you happiness?"

Amelia: "...I have." Her eyes narrow, as if in realization or something. "But we need not worry. Because this kingdom was promised eternal happiness."

Harl: "I agree. If we merely wait and watch, these Unravelings shall surely go away on their own."

GM: "I shall do something about these Unravelings on my own. There is no need for you to concern yourself with them," says Amelia. ...Ah, no, that's not quite right.

Anne: What is it?

GM: Right now, Amelia is torn between two emotions. She doesn't want Harl to get involved, but she also wants him to stay here with her.

Misha: So that's how our GM feels... (everyone laughs)

GM: No, it's what Amelia feels, honest!

Jon: Why don't you just have her give voice to both, then?

GM: Ah, I guess that'll work. "—But Harl, you too should stay here and partake of this kingdom's happiness. Do not depart just yet..."

Harl: (smiling faintly) "Ah, but since that day I parted from you, I have been so very happy..."

Misha: Aaaaaaaah!

GM: (crumpling up his notes for the scene) That's it for you, Kodachi!

Harl: Hey, stop it!

Anne: Can I hit this guy? He needs payback for what he just did to poor Mizuno. (laughs)

Misha: (hugging herself and rocking back and forth) I was totally able to feel how fired up the GM was about this scene... but so much for that...

Jon: His fire went out because no one was putting any fuel on it.
(laughs)

Misha: I'll have you know my GM is gas-powered! (laughs)

Harlequin: Anyway, can I go on? (laughs) "Allow me to correct myself, Amelia. You have not changed. Not in your beauty, nor in any other way..." I turn away from her and begin to leave.

Anne: Ooh...

GM: Amelia gazes after you as you leave, remaining silent. The scene ends.

Anne: Good timing. Me and Jonathan have things we want to do as well.

GM: Alright. How about having the next scene be Jonathan's, then?

SCENE 6: AT THE APPLE-SCENTED GRAVE

Scene Player: Jonathan Trusso

A funeral was held for Pierre, spreading the lie that he perished when attacked by one of the Strange.

Smiling, people gathered at the church. Smiling, they offered flowers. Smiling, they attended his grave.

After the funeral ended, Jonathan stands alone at the grave. Though he is surrounded by apple trees, today, they bring him no comfort.

GM: Okay, this will be Jonathan's scene. Anne can also appear automatically.

Jon: After Lord Pierre's funeral has ended, I stand alone before his grave.

Anne: I see him there, and call out to him. "Mister Automaton?"

Jon: "You Are... From Yesterday..."

Anne: "You know, your words yesterday were truly wonderful. I was moved! 'It is of the essence to remain together with your friends and family'... did you learn that somewhere?"

Jon: "My Master Taught It To Me," I say, then realize we have not been properly introduced.

Jon: "I Am The Automaton, Jonathan Trusso. Thank You For The Timely Application Of Your Sword Yesterday."

Anne: "Not at all. That's the natural thing for a Weaver to do!"

Jon: "Even So, Thanks To You, My Master Was Released From His Suffering."

Anne: "Ah... I-I'm very sorry for doing that to your master..."
Oh dear. (laughs)

Jon: "Do Not Worry. You Saved Me, And So I Must Repay My Debt To You. It Is Presumptuous Of Me, But Might I Know Your Name?"

Anne: "I am Anne Shirley of Green Gables! Ah, that's 'Anne', not 'Ann', got it?"

Jon: "Green Gables... I Have Not Heard Of That Land Before. Thank You For Traveling All The Way From There To This Distant Kingdom, Anne."

Anne: "I have lots of friends, but you're the first Automaton I've made friends with! My first wooden bosom buddy!"

Jon: Then I'll use my 'Servant's Vow' skill on Anne. Since we're friends, I choose the 'Friendship' emotion towards her. "Bosom Buddies... A Pleasant Phrase Indeed."

"Indeed, it's most wonderful!"

A bright smile floated upon the red-haired girl's lips.

And thus it was that warmth was restored to the heart of the Automaton whose master's tragic death had left a great void within it.

Jon: "How Mysterious. I Find Your Words Evoke A Sensation In Me Similar To That Of Apples."

Anne: "Well, Green Gables does have a great many apple trees. When they bloom, the white petals of their flowers covers the road like a rug. I always called that the 'Silver Road to Happiness'! Won't you walk upon it with me sometime?"

Jon: "...I Certainly Shall," I say, while trying not to drool.
(laughs)

GM: With that, the scene ends.

SCENE 7: 'I'M FINE' AND 'I CAN HANDLE IT'

Scene Player: Misha

It's now common knowledge that "The Briar Patch" had a carriage crash into it, then was attacked by one of the Strange.

Only Nina's parents and the other children remain at the inn. Despite their misfortune, all of them go about the day with strained smiles, forcing themselves not to feel anxious or fearful.

It's as if the horrors in the country only strengthen everyone's resolve to be happy...

Misha: GM, I'd like to have a scene where I talk with Harlequin.

Harl: I'd like to talk with Misha too.

GM: Got it. Then the next Scene Player will be Misha. It will take place in a room of the inn. Exhausted by all the running about she did yesterday, Nina is still sleeping soundly in the bed there.

Misha: I wanted to stay with her... but I was scared to sleep. Not having everyone return to the inn is also making me nervous, so I'm near the open door to the room, peeking out into the hallway.

Harl: Then, I'll return at that time. "Hello," I say.

Misha: I was spacing out for a moment, but when that scary man shows up I jump in surprise. (laughs)

Anne: Well, he did turn into something pretty scary when he was fighting. (laughs)

Harl: Upon seeing her reaction, I jokingly take out my Telethread. "Here's your reward for being a good girl. A secret item, the only one of its kind that exists in the world."

Misha: "Huh...?"

Harl: "This was made for good children like you. Why don't you try it?" I give the Queen of the Night a call and then hand the Telethread to Misha. (laughs)

Misha: Without really thinking about it, I listen in. (laughs)

GM: W-what?! Th, then, you hear the Queen of the Night's voice from the Telethread. "What is it, Harlequin? Is there some

Harl: "Hello, Queen of the Night! It just happens to be time for a good girl to chat on the Telethread! After all, it's your duty to be a nice older sister who is always there to chat with all good children!" (everyone laughs)

Aria: "Ah, wh, what?! Harlequin, just what are you talking about?!"

Misha: "Um, is it okay if I talk into this...?"

Harl: I silently give her a thumbs up. (laughs)

Misha: "H, hello... This is Misha, from the Happy Kingdom..."

GM: "W, what...?" Uh, what should I do... (nervous)

Harl: "Inside this item lives the Queen of the Night. She's a hero who's there to help troubled girls like you! You can ask her anything!"

Anne: He's going wild. (laughs)

Misha: "Are you Harlequin's friend...?"

GM: U, ugh...

Misha: "U-um..."

Aria: "Ye... yes, that's right! I'm a friend to all good children! Tell me what's troubling you, Misha darling!" (everyone laughs)

Jon: So this is the Queen of the Night... (laughs)

Misha: "Um, recently a lot of really scary things have been happening in this kingdom, but Harlequin has saved me from them..."

Anne: This really does sound like a kid making a telephone call. (laughs)

Misha: "Um, miss, do you really live inside this thread?" I decide to ask her that. (laughs)

GM: Ha-Harlequin, you'll pay for this...!

Misha: Then, let's just say we talk for a while. With a cheery expression, I say "Thank you," and hand the Telethread back to Harlequin. "Somehow, talking to a nice older sister like her was... really nostalgic..."

Harlequin: "Isn't that right?"

Misha: "Um, isn't it cramped, living inside that thread?"

Harlequin: "Extremely. But she puts up with it for the sake of her duty."

Jon: And thus the heart of many a child is moved. (laughs)

Misha: Then, since I feel like there's less distance between us after this conversation, I suddenly stand up and dash over to the closet inside the room.

Harl: ?

Misha: "Mister, no one ever saw to your wounds, so..." I take the first aid kit out of the closet and return to him, carrying it. "That needle... being stabbed with it... doesn't it hurt?"

Harl: "Hahaha, this? It doesn't hurt one bit. I can handle it."

Misha: (with a serious face) "Liar!"

Anne: Ooh!

Misha: I still find him a little scary, but I meet his eyes to make sure he knows I'm angry. "The... the innkeeper's wife here taught me something. 'I'm fine' and 'I can handle it' are completely different things."

Misha continued her lecture.

"When my father and mother first left me here, I tried my best not to cry... that was me when I would have said 'I can handle it.' But then I learned how nice everyone around me was. The innkeeper, his wife, Nina, and everyone in this kingdom... they're all so kind to me. That's why it's not 'I can handle it' anymore, it's 'I'm fine.'"

Misha: "Are you saying it's not just 'I can't handle it?'"

Harl: "...No, actually, I can't handle it at all. I cry all the time." I look a little troubled. "—But, I'm happy that you're trying to help me. Thank you."

Misha: "Um, I... I don't want this country to become any stranger. That's why I'm really glad you're here, but even so, if there's anything you have to 'handle', I don't want that... Anne's stories are so interesting, and Jonathan looks so happy when you give him an apple..."

Jon: That's right, I'm an apple junkie. (laughs)

Misha: "Mister, you're a little scary, but... there are fun things about you too. Like that older sister you let me talk to... thank you for showing me that."

Misha: "That's why I don't want you to have to just handle anything. I don't want anyone in this kingdom to have to handle anything..."

Harl: "It's okay, Misha. All stories must have happy endings. We will make sure that this story has a happy ending, too. So you don't need to be afraid of anything."

Misha: (with a face that looks as if she might cry) But he's lying, isn't he?

GM: No, only one part had to be a lie.

Harl: Yes, the part where I said 'All stories must have happy endings.'

Misha: I see... "So even this is going to be 'happily ever after'?"

Harl: "Of course." I put my hand on Misha's head and rub it.

Misha: "I see...!" Even though we've been talking for a long time, I'm relieved and feel like I have more energy than before. "Um, mister, are you hungry, by any chance?"

Harl: "No, not at all." My stomach growls as I say that.

Misha: With a giggle and a smile on my face, I ask, "What would you like?"

GM: Then, if the Scene Player's going to leave, the scene comes to an end.

Harl: Ah, before that, I'll be alone for a while, right? When I'm alone, I don't have to tell lies, so I want to say one last thing.

Misha: (excited) I leave Harl alone, then.

Harl: "...That girl's a lot like she was, long ago..."

Misha & GM: Aaaaaaaah! (hands balled into fists)

Jon: Are you two okay? (laughs)

GM: M-mostly. Then, with that last whisper, the scene ends.

SCENE 8: WITHIN THE WARPED NIGHT

Master Scene

GM: The next scene is going to be a Master Scene. That means it's all narration; there is no Scene Player.

The sun sinks below the mountains as night comes.

*Within the church stands a Hollow once known as Amelia.
The dying sun illuminates her through the stained glass.
Slowly, words coming one by one, she speaks to nobody at all.*

"You Weavers, you of iron conviction..."

*"You who have forsaken God's protection, yet escaped the
curse of becoming Strange..."*

"You and I... we cannot know true happiness."

*With a soft sigh, Amelia raises her eyes to the distant
canopy of the church.*

*"I am sure that you, as well, will soon realize what must
be done."*

A voice resounds throughout the kingdom. Amelia's voice.

*It seems to cause the air to quake. It pierces the very
hearts of those who hear it. It is not truly a voice, but a Way.*

*"The cause of the many Unravelings appearing
throughout the kingdom are the traveling heretics who have
visited us and those who aid and abet them. After striking
down the heretics, the people of the kingdom were once again
able to return to their peaceful lives... happily ever after."*

GM: Every person within this Happy Kingdom hears this Way.

Jon: There's certainly no way we couldn't have.

Anne: But this means... the people of the kingdom are going to
attack us, aren't they?!

One by one, the crimson fire of torches light the kingdom.

Hand after hand grabs the closest weapon to be found.

*"Ah, of course. If we defeat the Strange, the Unravelings
will vanish... ah, happiness, happiness..."*

*"I can avenge my poor dead daughter... Happiness,
happiness..."*

"Once this is over, I'll definitely be able to feel happy..."

*Exhausted smiles float upon their faces as the people
mutter such things. Though at times tears flow from their eyes,
the kingdom is filled with cheerful voices...*

GM: Since a Warped Way was just bestowed upon the people, I'm going to choose a distortion from the Distortion Table. I choose "Heresy Trial." The effect of it, this time, is that next scene you will be confronted in battle by the people of the kingdom.

Harl: And that battle we already had was harsh enough...

Misha: I don't want to fight and hurt everyone in this kingdom...

Anne: Then I'll absorb this Distortion. I want to do it anyway.

SCENE 8: A FAMILIAR SITUATION

Scene Player: Anne

As they eat dinner, Anne and the others at the inn receive the Way created by Amelia.

Though they realize the danger, they don't have time to escape before they are surrounded by the people of the kingdom...

GM: The Scene Player is Anne, but everyone is going to appear. The place is the inn. This is a scene in which you're being attacked by the people of the kingdom. You can see countless torches blazing through the windows.

Jonathan: "Oh Dear. I Do Believe We Are Completely Surrounded."

Misha: "That Way... B, but, the Unravelings were here long before the two of you came!"

Harl: Still, they can't very well go against the Way. It's natural they came after us.

Anne: "Misha, you should go and hide. We'll do something about this!" I say, as I walk towards the doorway.

Misha: "Y, you can't! Aren't they here to capture you?!"

Anne: "We'll be okay. Don't worry about us. Times like this are why we're here."

Misha: "But...!"

Anne: "This isn't the first time I've been in this kind of situation. I know exactly what to do."

Misha: "Miss Anne!"

Anne: "We'll be fine! Don't worry!" I thump my chest reassuringly.

GM: You can tell that everyone around the inn is carrying weapons.

Anne: I face them, spread my hands and shout at them. "Everyone, please listen to me!"

GM: Still wearing wide smiles, they shout at each other as well. "It... it's them!" "Those are the travelers that caused the Unraveling!"

Anne: "On that day, long ago... I shouted at you, and all of you shouted at me, just like this! But that time you didn't listen. So please, this time, heed my words!"

Jon: Huh?

Anne: "We did not cause the Unravelings! Just the same as you, we are trying to return this kingdom and all of your lives to peace! But if you continue this, everything will be for naught!"

Harl: Whoa....

Anne: "I'm only fifteen. I know I'm still a girl who hardly knows anything. But I know this! If you allow these thoughts of yours to warp the world, you will give rise to even greater tragedies, and the world itself will suffer. The important thing is to pay heed not to anything that anyone says, but to that which you yourself believe is right!"

Misha: Is she really Anne Shirley...?

GM: The people whisper among themselves. "B-but, the Way told us that if we killed you the Unravelings would disappear!"

Jon: (roleplaying a local) "If we go against the Way, we'll all turn into the Strange!"

Misha: (roleplaying a local) "Just what can you do?!"

Anne: "God would not bestow a Way like that upon you! It is a Warped Way. We are Weavers, and we can undo it. So please calm down and listen to your hearts. They will tell you what is truly right!"

Harl: As I listen to Anne's words, tears start to flow from my eyes. "Anne, you are completely mistaken... Words like yours can never change the world. They can never sway anyone's heart..."

Jon: I offer Harlequin a handkerchief.

Anne: And now I absorb the Distortion. "Please! Heed my words!"

GM: Got it. Then, the effect of the Distortion is gone. The people mill about and whisper among themselves in confusion.

A loud voice breaks through the whispers.

"She's right! That redheaded girl is exactly right!"

Here and there amongst the crowd, voices begin to rise.

"T-that's right, there were Unravelings before the travelers even came here!"

"Then, that Way is..."

Crack.

"Something is definitely wrong..."

"If this goes on, how can any of us be happy--"

Crack, crack!

The voices disappear, replaced by horrifying, inhuman screams.

The screams of those becoming estranged--

In but a moment, the field before the Briar Patch is turned into a theatre of suffering.

Misha: Oh no...!

Harl: Those who go against a Way always become estranged, after all...

Anne: Aah! "Everyone, please calm down! Please!"

GM: "Travelers!" Inside the inn stands Nina, calling out to you. "There's a back door! Come quickly! You have to escape!"

Misha: But what about the people of the kingdom? Will they all become estranged like Lord Pierre!?

GM: The progress of estrangement depends on the individual. Right now, the people of the kingdom are at about Peel Value 8—they can still be saved from becoming estranged forever. If you defeat the Strange who created this Warped Way in a timely fashion, and thus destroy the Way, there is hope for them.

Jon: "Lady Anne, We Must Defeat The Strange. Only By Doing That Can These People Be Saved."

Anne: Then I glance one last time at the crowd. "...I understand. But, I said to them... the things I couldn't say back then."

Jon: "We Must Go, Lady Anne!"

Anne: "—That's why I, Anne Shirley, carry this with me." I place my hand on my sword as I follow the others, breaking into a run. "My power can change this world!"

GM: Then, since Anne's left the inn, the scene ends.

SCENE 10: A FRIEND'S PROMISE

Scene Player: Misha

The roars of the Strange and the screams of the people echo far and wide.

Multiple Unravelings open in the area, swallowing the world and replacing it with the Void.

At this rate, the entire kingdom will soon be consumed by nothingness...

GM: The Scene Player this time is Misha, but everyone appears. You're inside the inn, being lead out the back door by Nina.

Jon: Then, I speak to Anne as she catches up. "There Are Many People In The World Who Will Come To Trust Your Powers... And There Are Many In This Kingdom Who Were Surely Glad To Hear Your Words. If At All Possible, You Must Trust In Them As Well..."

Anne: "Thank you! You really are a good person... um, a good Automaton, that's what I meant to say!"

GM: "Hurry up!" Nina glances at the Unravelings appearing everywhere nearby. "That Way definitely was weird! Aren't Ways supposed to be a gift from God? That Way wasn't a gift at all!"

Crack... comes that sharp sound again.

Suddenly, with a snapping sound, Nina's legs give way beneath her.

Misha: "Nina!!!"

GM: Both on Nina's legs have turned porcelain white, and she's trembling. "Oh, oh no... am I...?"

Misha: "No! No, Nina!" Ugh, why her...!

Anne: "How, how horrible..."

GM: Nina stretches out her hand towards Jonathan, who happens to be the closest to her, and says in a hoarse voice, "Jonathan, please... take Misha and run!"

Misha: "Nina! We can't do that!" I grab her and cling to her tightly.

Nina: "Travelers, please take care of Misha! She's a crybaby, so if she gets left alone, she'll definitely become estranged..."

Misha: "No! No, no!" I grab a pair of scissors I have at my side and force them into Nina's hand.

GM: O, oh? What?!

Misha: "If you kill the Weavers and their allies, you'll be able to be happy, won't you? Then kill me, Nina!"

Anne: What are you having her say?!

Misha: (in a trembling voice) "I-I'm an ally of the Weavers, so even if they all escape, if I die you'll have fulfilled the Way..."

Jon: "...Lady Misha, Just What Are You Telling Her To Do?" I swat the scissors out of her hand.

Misha: I freeze in mild shock.

Jon: "Do You Understand What It Is That You Are Asking Of Her?"

Misha: I sink to my knees, right where I am. "B-but..."

Jon: "Lady Misha, You Affirmed The Feelings I Had Towards My Master. Have You Forgotten That?"

Misha: Tears flowing from my eyes, I hold Nina's hand with one hand, and search out and grab Jonathan's trouser leg with my other. Then I silently nod.

Jon: "Then You Must Understand The Meaning Of Me Stopping You."

Misha: "...Jonathan, what should I do?"

Jon: "The People Of This Kingdom Are All Wondering The Same As They Fight To Live. But No Other Person Can Tell You The Answer. That Is Something You Must Decide For Yourself."

Anne: "Don't, Jonathan! If Misha turns against the Way, she'll end up like that too!"

Misha: "I-I'll do anything! If I can make Nina, if I can make the people of this kingdom happy, anything...!"

Anne: Misha!

Sharp cracking sounds continue to echo. From Nina's body... and then Misha's.

Pale white vines sprout from the two girls and curl around their bodies.

—They are becoming estranged.

GM: Nina is muttering incoherently. "No... that's the only thing I was afraid of... don't become like me..."

Misha: "I... I would never be afraid of that!"

GM: "But you might not be able to meet your Father and Mother again..."

Misha: "Even so... even so! The thing I'm the most scared of is losing you, Nina!!!"

The girl screams. Not in terror, but in determination.

With a final tiny crack, the slow creep of darkness up Misha's arm comes to a stop.

In the next moment, as if time has been wound back, the patches of white and black disappear from her body, and the vines are gone from around her.



Everyone: Ooooooh!

Anne: The awakening of a Weaver! It's here!

Misha: Yaaay! Then, shaking as if I'm caught in a gale, I say "H-huh...?"

Jon: I reach out to steady her.

Misha: As I look at myself and the omens of Strangeness leaving my body, my mouth opens and closes. I can't say anything.

Harl: (in a grave voice) "Misha, you have escaped becoming estranged. That is proof you have been chosen by fate to become one of the legendary heroes known as Weavers."

Anne: Is the lie that they're legendary heroes? (laughs)

Harl: "You shall drive the darkness from this world. You shall be the bringer of dawn at the end of the long night. You are the hero of this story now, Misha."

Jon: "If You Were To Sacrifice Yourself, Nina Would Never Be Happy. Were Either Of You To Lose Each Other, It Would Be A Tragedy. You Must Not Give Up."

Anne: "Now, stand. On your own two feet. For Nina's sake!"

Misha: Without letting go of Nina's hands, I speak to the others. "I'll do anything if it means everyone can be happy. That is what will bring me happiness!"

Jonathan: "Now That You Have Decided That For Yourself, You Can Make It Happen."

Anne: "Don't worry. This isn't over yet!"

Harl: GM, was the Way we heard during the Master Scene obviously in Amelia's voice?

GM: Yes. It was Amelia's voice, though warped in the ways characteristic of the Strange.

Harl: Then I'll say so. "The one who created that warped Way was the former Kanradeshuu member, the evil empress Amelia Foryan."

Misha: "Miss Amelia! Would she really do such a thing...?!"

Harl: "It's the truth. She was driven mad by her selfishness and wove an evil Way to fulfill her own desires."

Jon: "But, Lady Amelia Is Your Good Friend..." I begin saying, then close my mouth.

Harl: "I never thought of her as more than an acquaintance. Someone brought together with me by duty."

Misha: "If it's Miss Amelia, she must be at the church!" But, how is Nina...?

Anne: What's Nina's Peel Value? Can she still be saved?

GM: Nina's Peel Value is 8, like the others in the country. You can save her if you defeat Amelia.

Jon: It would be dangerous to take her along to a battle, so let's leave her somewhere safe.

GM: Though the omens of Strangeness have covered Nina's entire body by now, she clings to Misha's hand. "You... you can't..."

Misha: I squeeze her hand firmly.

Nina: "Aren't you scared...? You always used to hide behind my back..."

Misha: "Y-yeah... I really am scared, but—" I smile despite myself. "This isn't 'I can handle it,' it's 'I'm fine!' Because I'm gonna make there be a happy ending for everyone!"

Nina: "Misha..."

Misha: "I'm going to try my best, so you need to try too, Nina. I know it'll be lonely and scary by yourself, but I know you can do it, too!"

Nina: "I can't say I'm okay... but I-I can handle it. Because neither of us will forgive each other if we don't both come back safe and sound..."

Misha: I hug her tightly. "I promise! No matter what!"

Jonathan: "Shall We Go, Lady Misha?"

Misha: "Yeah! To save everyone!"

GM: Then, you all head to the church and the scene ends. Next up is the final battle.

THE FINAL BATTLE

The one who created the Warped Way was the priestess, Amelia.

The girl who became a Weaver, and the Weaver who became Hollow, will confront each other.

THE BLACK AND WHITE WORLD

Scene Player: Misha

The church is eerily tranquil.

Through the stained glass, the sound of distant screams can be heard outside.

Unravelings have opened inside the church, staining its white walls with the blackness of the Void.

GM: Let's start the final battle. Everyone appears automatically. The scene takes place in the church, as the sun sets. There are Unravelings here and there, and in the midst of it all, Amelia stands alone.

Anne: I slam the door open with a bang. "So you're the Strange that's warped this kingdom!"

Misha: "Miss Amelia, why have you done this?!"

GM: Amelia exhales softly. "Ah, you've come after all. What a nuisance you people are..."

Harl: "Amelia, we came because we heard you asking for our help."

GM: At that, Amelia smiles faintly. "You never were a convincing liar, Harl. I don't want your help... because right now, I am happy."

Harl: "There's still hope for you. Come back to us, Amelia."

Misha: Harlequin's lies are sad things, aren't they...

Amelia: "Come back? Where must I come back to? I am in the place I belong... this kingdom."

Jon: "Lady Amelia. You And I Both Came To This Kingdom In Search Of Happiness. And Thanks To The Kindness Of Its People, We Found It For A Time..."

Amelia: "Indeed we did. I am very happy in this kingdom. As the days went on and on, dreadfully so, I lived every day in happiness, until..."

Misha: "Then why did you do this?!"

Amelia: "I came to realize something. Even this kingdom, filled with happiness, is home to far too much unhappiness."

Anne: "Far too much unhappiness...?"

Amelia: "Every day, people would come to this church, seeking comfort. Those who had quarrelled with another, those forced to give up upon their love or their dreams, those whose loved ones had passed away..." She looks at Misha. "...or, sometimes, abandoned them."

Misha: I pout. Clearly, I want to tell her "I wasn't abandoned!"

Amelia: "I truly love the people of the kingdom. They gave me the hope that even one such as I can live in happiness and peace..."

"—That is why I erased unhappiness from this kingdom."

Amelia speaks with an expression of ecstasy on her face, seemingly unconcerned by the blatant untruth in that which she is saying.

"No longer will there be those who weep in sadness. No longer will there be those who suffer. Everyone must live happily..."

Anne: "...Long ago, the king of a certain kingdom became estranged for much the same reason. He wanted his kingdom to be greater. His people to be richer, happier, and full of laughter. And thanks to that, there was a war."

Jon: Is this Anne's past?

Anne: "In the end, no one was happy. I shall not let you bring that fate upon this kingdom!"

Amelia: "Ah, yes... you were a traveler from a distant place, were you not? But I am not the king you speak of."

Anne: "You are the same. Using the power of the Strange, you seek to warp the world to conform to your desires!"

Amelia: "Please don't compare me to one of those monsters. Do I weave Ways that bring only suffering? Do I seek an ending that is happy for no one but myself? Though I may use the power of the Strange, I use it only for the greater good."

Anne: "You're wrong! You may think that, but it's just your ego talking! You are not God! The moment you sought to play Her role, you doomed this kingdom!"

Misha: "Miss Amelia... if you want everyone to be happy, then why is everyone in this kingdom screaming in anguish, as we speak?"

Amelia: "Why indeed? I did not expect this. For the Way to guide everyone to happiness is God's wish, and our desire. But it seems there are many fools who merely want happiness to be bestowed upon them, and will not lift a finger to work for it themselves. Those who refuse salvation cannot expect to be saved."

Jon: "Is The Reason That You Were Happy In This Kingdom Not Because Of The Kindness Of Its People? Yet If Those Very Same People Refuse Your Guidance, You Are Content To Let Them Perish. Do You Not Think That Is Rather Impolite Of You?"

Amelia: "I only wanted to make everyone happy..." There's a cracking sound from within Amelia's body, and her silhouette seems to shift in shape.

Jon: "And Yet Because Of You, Lord Pierre Was...!"

GM: "He refused the gift of happiness. Forget your fool of a master and find a new master, so that you may live happily. Is that not how a servant automaton such as you finds happiness? The happy ending that everyone wishes for is so very close to you..." The cracking sounds continue from Amelia's body as her hair turns a pale white in color.

Harl: I quietly draw my needle, and as I let my Strangeness suffuse my body, I speak. "...Amelia, I'm sorry. Back then... I should have told you that I loved you. I should have never let you part ways with me--"

Misha: Huh?

GM: W, wait! Where's the lie?!

"I was mistaken to believe that we could ever find happiness without each other by our side. I only wanted you to be safe..."

Harl: "What is the worth of a world without you in it, Amelia? (muttering) ...Of course, those were all lies."

Misha & GM: Ah, aah, aaaaaaaaah! (wailing as they grab each other's hands)

Anne: You're a mean one, Mr. Harlequin. (laughs)

Misha & GM: Harlequiiiiiiiiin!!!

For the first time, Amelia's expression changes. At first to one of confusion, then to one that seems upon the verge of tears. But soon, as if nothing had happened, the placid smile returns to her lips.

"Ah, Harl... you've never changed. You were always one of those fools who refused the happiness offered you, just like all Weavers. If unhappiness is that dear to you, I shall offer that to you instead..."

A voice heard not with the ears, but with the heart, resounds throughout the church.

As it does, Unravelings tear open in the vicinity, revealing the darkness of the Void.

"The foolish Weavers who wished to be unhappy met the tragic end that they desired, and all lived happily ever after..."

Anne: Another Warped Way?!

GM: Yes. Since a new Warped Way was created, it's time for the Distortion Table again.

Misha: Why doesn't Harl roll this time?

Harl: Okay. (rolls) ...Both 1s.

GM: "Color Drain." The entire world turns black and white. Whether living or not, everything on the stage of the Scene becomes monotone.

Jon: Oh, does that mean there's no need to absorb this one?

Misha: It just makes things look cool, and once we defeat the Strange, it'll go back to normal.

Amelia's hair sways softly. Her golden locks, her rosy skin, and her green eyes have all been dyed black and white.

As the atmosphere itself seems to quake, the stained glass windows shatter with a beautiful sound.

Amelia's shadow elongates in inhuman ways as her body becomes estranged...

GM: It's time for the last battle! The PCs are all in the same Engagement. 5m away are two groups of a pair of Strange Shadows. They have the same stats as the Dire Wolves from the rulebook.

Jon: Wow, those look pretty strong.

GM: The victory condition is to defeat Amelia. If you don't defeat her by the second Cleanup Process, Nina and the other people of the kingdom will become irreversibly estranged.

Misha: We have to beat her!

Jon: Let's focus all our attacks on Amelia.

ROUND 1

GM: The first round begins! Time for the Setup Process.

Jon: I use <Let Us Begin> to lower everyone's Critical number. I'm going to stick close to Misha, since she's new to being a Weaver.

Misha: "Jonathan..."

Jonathan: "Do Not Fear. So Long As You Do Not Give Up, You Can Save This Country And Make It Happy Again, Lady Misha. That Is Your Power As A Weaver."

Misha: "Y-yes!"

GM: Amelia and the Strange don't have Setup Process actions, so we move onto the Initiative Process. Amelia uses <Instant Action> straight away.

Misha: I'll use <Assert Reality> to erase that. Hmm, how should I roleplay it?

GM: Got it. Want to leave that to me?

Misha: Ah, sure!

GM: Then, as Amelia begins to conjure a spell to attack you, she suddenly meets Misha's eyes—and freezes stock still.

Misha: "I still don't understand why, Miss Amelia!" my expression conveys to her.

GM: "Your eyes are..." The moment Amelia's concentration is interrupted, her spell fizzles away. "...most unpleasant."

Misha: My Peel Value just went above 6, so I roll on the Omen Table... oh no, 8, 'Paralysis.'"

Jon: The reaction penalty that causes might make her get hurt, so I use <Suffer In Your Stead> to take it for myself.

Misha: Thank you! Then, my body stiffens with fear, and I look like I might collapse, but—

Jon: I place a hand on Misha's head and pat it gently. "Everything Is Fine, Lady Misha."

Misha: I look up at Jonathan, who is smiling as always, and feel the tension leave my body.

Jonathan: (gives a silent thumbs up)

Misha: Then I get to pick a new Distortion Power. I'll choose <Voice from the Depths>, which reduces the enemy's die rolls.

Jonathan: I use <Barrier of Fortune> to raise everyone's defenses. (rolls) This time I rolled 9... not quite as good as my 14 during the Middle Phase battle. (laughs)

GM: Well, that was an awfully good roll back then. (laughs)

Jonathan: Then, my roll on the Omen Table is... "Loss of Circumstances."

Anne: Didn't you already lose those, though?

GM: If you roll a Loss twice, you instead lose 1d6 HP.

Jonathan: Aww... okay, done.

GM: Next up is Misha's turn.

Misha: With my Minor Action, I move to engage Amelia. I'm trembling, but I get within a meter of her!

Amelia: "I never thought you of all people would become a Weaver, Misha..." She gazes of you with a look of pity in her eyes. "Look at how you're shaking, you weak little thing. Why don't you just give up?"

Misha: Though I am shaking, I meet her eyes and glare back at her. "I'll never give up!" I retort.

Amelia: "Truly unpleasant eyes..." Amelia's brows furrow. "You were always a naive child. You always believed there was such a thing as hope in this world. And now that you've become a Weaver, you think you can keep ahold of it with those meager hands of yours, do you?"

"But you'll understand soon enough. Even if you fight holding your hopes aloft as a banner, your war will never end. You'll stand with your hopes in tatters as the war drums of despair resound, and your foes stretch out beyond you to the very horizon!"

Misha: "That may be so, but right now... if this country is happy, like you say, I'll never accept this kind of happiness!"

Amelia: "People will never be able to find happiness without my guidance."

Misha: "Happiness isn't something you have to go looking for!"

"Even when I have to work hard, if someone praises me after that I'm happy. Even if something sad happens, when I eat dinner after that, it's still delicious. Even if I might never see my parents again, I'm living happily in this kingdom with Nina and everyone. That's how I and everyone else... we're all happy, as much as we can be!"

Misha: (while crying) "—That's why I'll never let myself lose hope or give up! I'm going to be happy together with Nina!" I use <Bag of Tricks> and <Act in Harmony> to boost everyone's damage!

Anne: Seeing Misha's determination gives us power! "That's right! None of us will ever give up!"

GM: Then before Anne's turn, Amelia is going to use <Instant Action> again!

Misha: I'll use <Voice from the Depths> on her next check, whatever it is! She loses one die! "—You should become happy with us too, Lady Amelia!"

Amelia: "This kingdom has already bestowed enough happiness upon me. That's why this time... this time everyone else must be happy too!" She uses <Warped Fortune>, cancelling it out!

Misha: Aww, and now I need to roll on the Omen Table too... 6, "Pressure."

Anne: When your Peel Value goes above 6 you need to roll on the Omen Table pretty much every time you use a Distortion Power, and half the things you can roll on the Omen Table are Bad Statuses, huh... It's going to be a Bad Status party in here.

Misha: And Pressure is especially bad... Well, I can erase it with <False Immortality> if I need to.

GM: First, Amelia attacks. As her minor action she uses <Drain Life>, and as her Major she uses <Divine Fist>. She's also using <Song of Prayer> to change its target to an area and attacking the three other than Misha!

Harl: Crap, if I get hit, it's gonna hurt. She'll probably use Frenzied Attack, too...

Misha: We have to get rid of her <Warped Fortune>, then! Grinding my teeth, with tears flowing from my eyes, I don't let myself look away from Amelia. <Assert Reality>!

GM: Then Amelia also uses <Assert Reality> to cancel that!

Misha: Well, I use <Assert Reality> once more! "I won't lose!"

GM: I-I can't cancel that anymore... "...!" Stunned by the fierceness of Misha's glare, Amelia is the first to break her gaze away.

Anne: Nice, you won!

GM: Since <Voice from the Depths> is affecting her now, her hit check's only one die... ugh, and I rolled a 2. It's a fumble. Distracted by her duel of glares with Misha, Amelia completely flubs her attack.

Everyone: Hooray!

Misha: Now, since I used <Assert Reality> twice, I need to roll on the Omen Table twice... ugh, "Poison" and "Dazed."

Jonathan: I'll use <Suffer in Your Stead> to take both of those.

Misha: Jon's practically carrying me on his back here. I'll just doze off, then... (laughs)



GM: Let's return to the normal initiative order. It's Anne's turn.

Anne: "...You really are a lonely one, aren't you." I use my Minor Action to engage Amelia. Then I use <Communion of Mind> and <Infinite Attacks>. My Critical Number's 9... and that's what I rolled! Awesome!

GM: Well then, I'm going to use <Sound of the Vulgar World> to take one of your dice away. No critical for You!

Harl: Then, I use <False Immortality> to remove Misha's Pressure! Now help Anne out!

Misha: Understood! Now that I can use Skills again, I use <Sage's Wisdom> on Anne. Her check is a Critical again!

GM: You went that far?!

Misha: This is an all-out battle!

GM: Well, before Amelia's check, I use <Warped Fortune>. She rolls three dice, and if she rolls above 12... perfect, she Criticals too!

Jon: I use <Advisor's Talent>. Please reroll it.

GM: ...Well, this time was a 6, so it hits. Even though I rolled three dice... (crying) Then before she takes damage, Amelia uses <Wall of Fortune> and increases her defense by 12.

Jon: You're really into this fortune stuff, aren't you? (laughs)

Misha: I want to make sure she takes at least a little damage. Therefore, <Assert Reality>!

GM: Ugh, understood. Then, Amelia glares at Anne as the girl slashes at her. "Don't you want to be happy? Don't you think there's far too much pain and suffering and pointless conflict in this world? You are a traveler... have you not seen too much of it already, with your own eyes?"

Anne: "It's true I have seen those things in abundance. I've watched tragedy after unthinkable tragedy unfold... but, that's why I can say this. Happiness is not something that can be given to or bestowed upon anyone. It is something they need to find for themselves."

GM: "Typical Weaver sophistry. Do the Ways not bring happiness to all those who follow them?"

Anne: "They do not. Misha is proof of that, right now. You may call it our sophistry, but everyone in this kingdom would tell you the same thing! Listen to them!"

Misha: "Miss Anne...!" I use <Invisible Arm> to boost her damage!

Anne: I use <Frenzied Attack> myself... and roll high! 73 slashing damage!

GM: Ow, that hurt!

Misha: Now it's time for us to all be Omen Table buddies. (laughs)

Anne: ...I suppose so. (laughs) ... (rolls the dice) Whoa, "Unconsciousness?"

Jon: If you can't fight, now that's gonna hurt!

Misha: Should I use <False Immortality> to get you back up?

Anne: Nah, I'll stay down for now. At least it happened after I attacked.

Harl: I rolled "Pressure." I'm in for it now.

Jon: I'll use <Suffer in Your Stead> on that. So now I'm affected by... Paralysis, Dazed, Poison, and Pressure.

Harl: Jon's like a doll that absorbs curses in our place. (laughs)

Anne: He takes away all our bad statuses, just like a vacuum cleaner. (laughs)

Misha: Only a genuine Jonathan has this much suction! (everyone laughs)

GM: It is pretty amazing. He's ruining my plans to screw you up with bad statuses. (laughs)

Misha: My Omen is... "Loss of Color."

GM: Your hair turns bone white in an instant, a classic omen of Strangeness.

Misha: "———!"

Jon: Then, even as I suffer under my myriad bad statuses, I call out to Misha. "Stay Calm, Lady Misha. Are You Okay?"

Misha: (while trembling) "I'm... all right... !"

Jon: (smiling) "You Truly Are Strong, Lady Misha."

Misha: "You're wrong... I wouldn't be able to do anything without all of you..."

Jon: "The Same Is True Of Us All."

Misha: I meet Amelia's eyes again and find her looking a little disgusted. (laughs)

Jon: Sappy conversations like that are how we bond in this kingdom. (laughs)

GM: Gross. (laughs) Anyway, next up is Amelia's actual turn.

Harl: I'd really rather not take an attack from her if possible. Let's keep going all out. "Misha, Anne, let's do this!"

Misha: "Y, yeah!" I use <False Immortality> on Anne!

Anne: "Got it! Looks like I have to try one more time, then!" The moment I'm no longer Unconscious, I use <Instant Action>!

Jon: You're all well coordinated. (laughs)

Anne: I attack with <Infinite Attacks>, and my result's 16!

GM: Amelia's Evasion Roll was 15... just barely not enough.

Anne: I use <Frenzied Attack> on the damage!

GM: I-I'm going to use <Assert Reality> on that!

Misha: My Peel Value's already high, so I can only use <Assert Reality> once more... what should I do?

GM: If you don't want to raise your Peel Value any higher, you can always use the World Distortion Table.

Anne: The World Distortion Table?

The World Distortion Table is a way to impose the cost of using a Distortion Power upon the world, rather than oneself. As the PCs' Peel Values rise during battle, they become able to roll upon this table.

Its effect is essentially the opposite of absorbing a distortion--you project the distortions within yourself onto the world, just as the Strange do.

The consequences of the table take place as soon as the current action finishes. They may result in the world being drastically changed.

They're the final trump card of the Weavers.

Misha: Hmm... (thinking for a while) I don't have to use it just yet, so I won't.

GM: Got it.

Misha: If something bad happened as a result of a world distortion, that'd be terrible. I'm going to do this with my own power!

Harl: Then, why don't you let Amelia's <Assert Reality> happen. You might need that Distortion Power more later.

Anne: My <Frenzied Attack> was negated, so I roll normally for damage... 27 Slashing.

GM: With her defenses, that goes down to 14, but... ugh, she's already pretty beaten up.

Anne: For using <Frenzied Attack> I roll on the Omen Table and take... "Paralysis."

Jon: Harl, mind using <False Immortality> on me?

Harl: Ah right, I have that too! I do that, and roll "Dazed" on the Omen Table.

Jon: That erased all my other Bad Statuses, so now I can use <Suffer in Your Stead> to take that Paralysis off Anne.

GM: Then, once again, it's time for Amelia's turn--

Harl: Not so fast, I'm using <Instant Action> too. This ends here!

GM: Then, before Harlequin's eyes, the thoroughly estranged Amelia turns to him and gazes at him sadly. "Have I not done the right thing?"

Anne: She's been saying stuff like that for a while, hasn't she.

Amelia: "Harl... you too use the power of the Strange to save people. What is the difference between you and I?"

Harl: Good question... I'll answer with a lie that I'm not really sure is a lie.

Anne: Oh?

Harl: "There is no difference. We both fight for the sake of our convictions."

"--No one is fit to decide whether we are doing the right thing. Not even God Herself knows. In the end, this fight is my beliefs against yours. Just as it is because of those beliefs that I love you... that is all. It is nothing more and nothing less than that."

GM: Hmm... Amelia's face looks troubled, as if unsure which parts of that are truth and which parts are lies.

Harl: "--The only truth is to be found within this needle of mine." I draw the needle from my body. Then, with my Minor I move to engage Amelia, and I attack her using <Self-Destructive Action>! Result 17!

GM: Amelia uses <Warped Fortune> one last time. She'll roll three dice for evasion!

Misha: I use <Assert Reality>...!

GM: Ugh, she's back to two dice... and fails.

Harl: I use <Frenzied Attack> and do 56 Weaving damage!

As she glances warily around while bracing for the attack, Amelia catches sight of something at the edge of her vision... a girl.

Her legs are shaking, and tears are flowing from her eyes... yet within those eyes is a piercing strength.

Despite all her terror, she has faith that at the end of it, happiness awaits her.

That is what is written in her eyes.

Her movements arrested by Misha's gaze, Amelia makes no sound as Harlequin's needle impales her.

GM: You defeated the undefeatable Amelia! Without the Strange Shadows even being able to take a single action, no less...

Everyone: Yaaay!

Amelia's body, dyed pitch black, begins to crack and crumble.

Her body and soul alike all but consumed by the Strangeness that invaded her, she is returning to the Void. Soon, not a trace will be left of her.

Amelia: "I only wanted everyone to be happy." She tries to find Harlequin's eyes. "Everyone means everyone... ah, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry..."

Harl: "You didn't do a single thing wrong. But even so, I shall forget you straight away. I will never think of you again, not as long as I live..."

Amelia: "...Liar."

As she whispers that in a calm voice, Amelia crumbles into nothingness.

The Strange that terrorized the Happy Kingdom, and all of her distortions, are no longer.

EPILOGUE

The curtain closes on the story.

Those who have reclaimed their kingdom, and those who continue to live out their days of wandering...

After setting the world right again, the Weavers return to their own individual stages.

PEEL CHECK

GM: Alright, before the ending, we need to make our Peel Checks. This is a check to determine if PCs, and sometimes NPCs, can avoid becoming Hollows.

Harlequin: It's basically 1d6, but the number of Distortion Powers that enemy NPCs used is added to it. Then you can lower your Peel Value by that sum.

GM: The enemies used Distortion Powers 10 times this session, so it's 1d6+10. If your peel value is 9 or lower after subtracting that, you won't become a Hollow.

Harlequin: My Peel Value's 19. I'm safe.

Jon: As am I.

Anne: Somehow I made it through, too.

Misha: My Peel Value's 24. If I roll 4 or less, I'll become a Hollow...

GM: If you're nervous, you can spend 1 XP to add another die to your Peel Check. But you have to decide before making the check. It's an all or nothing thing.

Misha: I want to be able to stay human, so I'm going to spend 2 XP to roll three dice. ...Whoa, 1, 2 and 2! I just barely made it to the safe zone!

Everyone: That was close!

Anne: Ah, what a relief... if Misha hadn't made it that'd really be a twist. (laughs)

Jon: Good thing she did. (laughs)

GM: Congratulations on staying human, everyone. Now let's move on to the endings.

SCENE 1: THE END OF "HAPPINESS"

Scene Player: Misha

The sun rises once again

Through the shattered stained glass, its light shines into the monotone world of the church.

Here and there throughout the kingdom, people sit upon the ground, exhausted.

A single boy still stands, his tears gushing out as if behind a dam newly broken.

"Waah, no more! I don't want this anymore!"

No one was able to console him.

As he wailed, on and on, his voices were joined by others crying in anguish...

But not one person became estranged.

Those who had become estranged slowly had their omens melt off of them, and fall to the ground.

"Hey..."

One person realized it at first, and slowly it spread to those around them.

Wails spread throughout the kingdom.

But they were wails of sheer happiness...

GM: Let's begin the ending. You all get to appear. From where you stand within the church, you hear a multitude of wails.

Misha: As Harlequin stands on his own, I rush towards him, but some kind of invisible pressure makes me falter.

Jon: I clap my hand gently onto Misha's shoulder. "...Lady Misha, It Was Thanks To Your Power That This Kingdom Was Saved."

Misha: I turn towards Jonathan and Anne. "No, it was everyone's power. Thank you..." Then I suddenly startle. "I have to go to Nina!"

Anne: (with a smile) "Get going. I too have a friend named Diana... I understand that bosom buddies are more important than anything else."

Misha: "Okay!" Smiling back, I turn and run to find Nina.

Anne: I watch her back as it fades into the distance. "...It's like this was all a dream."

Misha: Ah, but I remember I need to thank Harlequin, and turn back.

Harlequin: When you do, I'm no longer anywhere to be seen...

Misha: "....."

Bitterly swallowing the words she wanted to say, yet calm, Misha once more turns back and begins running.

To her beloved Nina.

As the sun rises above the mountains, the world is reborn in brilliant colors.

The houses, the people, and Misha's hair... no longer are any of them monotone.

SCENE 2: "TO MY DEAREST KITTY..."

Scene Player: Anne Shirley

After the incident in the Happy Kingdom, Anne once again sets off again upon her travels.

The winter sky rises clear above her, while the ground around her lies beneath a blanket of silver snow.

GM: Next will be the individual endings. Let's start with Anne's.

Anne: As I leave the Happy Kingdom, I'm writing a letter to my friend.

Misha: Again. (laughs)

Anne: "To my dearest Kitty... How very strange the incident I found myself this time was."

"The people of this kingdom were cursed to be happy... a fate that lead them to unhappiness. Not a single one was truly happy. But, in the end, we found the reason for their unhappiness, and when we dealt with it they were able to be happy once more. Is it not mysterious? Only when one is free to be unhappy can they be happy..."

Anne: "—Yet I lack the freedom to do anything but write you these letters. ...No, I will no longer pretend they will reach you. I can only converse with you inside my head, after all..."

Misha: Huh?

Anne: "But I shall not give up on dreaming. I shall not give up on writing to you. That is the only freedom that remains to me. In this diary I keep inside my head, I can spread my wings and fly anywhere..."

Jon: Is this still a letter? (laughs)

GM: W-wait a second!

For there is a distant kingdom.

A kingdom wrapped in barbed wire where black smoke rises like pillars into the sky.

A kingdom in which the people never smile and only the sound of footsteps can ever be heard. A kingdom in which the smell of ash chokes out all others.

Within a grey room, amongst the soot and filth, there lies a single girl.

Her cheeks pressed to the cool floor, that girl gazes with distant eyes out the small window above her, at the sky.

Anne: "And that's why, Kitty, I shall write to you again. —From your dearest friend, Anne."

Even barbed wire cannot fence the imagination in.

The girl's heart itself a Weaver, she journeys across the Left Land.

She sees distant lands, she meets all manner of people... and some day, with the Liemonger's help, she shall truly become Anne.

The rivers sparkle. The birds sing.

The world is filled with happiness.

Her red hair blowing in the wind behind her, as she skips along the road, the girl spreads her arms wide towards the sky and laughs.

Anne: "Ah, today will be a wonderful day as well! Which kingdom shall I find myself in next?"

SCENE 3: IN AN ALLEY IN A DISTANT LAND

Scene Player: Harlequin

In a valley adjacent to the Happy Kingdom, there lies a single grave.

It bears no name and is marked only by a coarse wooden marker. No one knows who is buried there.

But before that grave stands a harlequin.

GM: Let's do the travelers' endings first. Harlequin will be next.

Harl: I'm standing before the small grave... her grave. I searched for flowers within the snow to lay upon it, but I was only able to find a single petal.

GM: Amelia's flesh returned to the Void. There is nothing buried in the grave except for her few possessions as an ascetic priestess.

Harl: "Only now that you no longer exist in this world am I able to speak the truth to you."

GM: The grave does not reply.

Harl: "Goodbye, Amelia. I leave you with my true name." I whisper my name to her.

GM: There is no one to hear it. Your whisper is drowned out by the wind.

And then—

In a distant town in a distant kingdom...

Upon a pitch-black night, a boy and girl found themselves fleeing from a Strange.

Though they took alley after alley, the monster's inhuman screams never grew any less close...

Tears streaming from their eyes, their teeth chattering in fear, the two finally collapsed from exhaustion. They could do nothing but watch the Strange weave its Warped Way...

GM: "Listen. There is no such thing as hope in this world. There isn't a single person who will come to your rescue. You will die here... happily ever after."

Harl: I have something to say to that. "—Ah, but you're mistaken."

"Hope springs eternal. Even in those places where justice itself is forgotten, it will always have allies. All children have a future. And I am the light that shall lead them to it."

The harlequin who cannot speak the truth once again steps into the light.

Harlequin: "My name is Harlequin, and I am the one who shall right all wrongs!"

SCENE 4: OF APPLES AND TEARDROPS

Scene Player: Jonathan

With its master gone, the mansion feels unusually spacious.

Though the one servant within continues to keep it pristine, the gates have not been opened for some time. No one lives or visits there.

Jonathan sits in the bedroom that used to be his master's, illuminated by the rays of the setting sun.

GM: The next ending is Jonathan's.

Jon: I sit quietly in Lord Pierre's bedroom, doing nothing in particular... though there is a great deal I could be doing if I wished.

GM: As you do that, you recall something that Pierre spoke of to you on a day like this, long ago.

Jon: Did he?

Pierre: "With my health as it is... it may not be long before I am no longer here before you. When that day comes, I hope you will be able to find another master."

Jon: "Please Do Not Speak Of Such Things..."

"It Was I Who Chose You As My Master, Lord Pierre. Though I Am An Automaton Created In Order To Serve, I Have Chosen To Serve You Of My Own Free Will."

Jon: "—To Serve You And You Alone Is What Brings Me Happiness."

Pierre: "Thank you." He smiles. "...Indeed. Should I depart this world, I find myself most concerned about whether your next master will provide you with a sufficient quantity of apples."

Jon: "Indeed. To Have A Master Such As You Who Will Permit A Servant Automaton Such As Me To Eat Apples Is My Greatest Happiness."

Pierre: "That's what makes you unique." Smiling mischievously, Pierre hands you an apple. "I'll be in your care from now on."

Jon: Ah, apples, apples... "Ah, I Am Most Grateful."

As the smell of sweet fruit tickles his nose in reality as well as in his memories, Jonathan looks around to see where it is coming from.

In the corner, he sees the apple that Pierre offered him that last day, forgotten ever since.

He quietly walks over to it and picks it up.

Jon: "...I Still Remain An Automaton. I Can Eat Apples, Yet I Cannot Shed Tears."

Misha: Oh...

Jon: "Such Is Life. Instead Of Weeping, I Shall Eat This Apple." I take a bite.

The warmth of the apple spreads throughout his mouth.

A flavor which no Automaton should have ever known, in all their years... Jonathan remembers it well.

When a young boy named Pierre first handed him an apple.

That was when he first knew the happiness of being a Weaver.

Though he had no master, he wandered the road as a Weaver, overcoming countless trials and choosing his own path in life...

Jon: "...Indeed. Back Then, I Delighted In The Open Road."

"It Would Not Do To Remain Shut Up In Here."

Plucking the thorn from his heart, the Automaton closes the open window and departs his late master's bedroom.

SCENE 5: THE HAPPY KINGDOM

Scene Player: Misha

It has been several days since the incident was resolved, and the Unravelings disappeared.

With the tolling of the church bell, all the people of the kingdom hear a single Way within their hearts...

"Thanks to their modest and trustworthy nature, the year passed happily for the people of the kingdom, with no major calamities. And they lived happily ever after."

The Warped Ways have been erased, and God's Way has once more has been bestowed upon the kingdom.

Thus—

GM: The last ending is Misha's. The seasons have changed, and it is now spring. The land outside, once covered in a blanket of silver snow, is now awash in brilliant flowers. The warm sun shines gently down upon the kingdom.

Misha: What about Nina? Is she okay?

GM: After the incident, when you returned to where you'd left Nina, you found her completely recovered. There was no trace of her ever becoming estranged.

Misha: Oh, wonderful! Though, as soon as the incident is over, I get even clingier with her. (laughs)

Anne: She's totally dependent. (laughs)

GM: Then, as you enter her second floor, Nina speaks to you. "I'm sorry, has it been hard to take care of all yourself?"

Misha: "I'm fine!" I smile brightly. "You can rest as much as you need to. Jonathan's helping out too!"

Jon: I'm visible behind her, moving things to and fro. (laughs)

Misha: "I can do all the washing by myself, too!"

Nina: "You don't need to do that. Come on, let's do it together." Nina goes to start washing dishes with you.

Misha: "...It's a lot quicker with the two of us."

Nina: "Ahaha, isn't it?" Nina looks at you, a little embarrassed. "Thank you, Misha. I won't call you a crybaby anymore."

Misha: "B-but, I feel like I still cry a lot..."

Nina: "It's nothing compared to the wailing you used to do about your mom and dad."

Misha: "I-I wouldn't cry about that!"

Nina: "...You know, on that day, I spent the whole time praying to God. Asking for Her to help you..."

Misha: "The whole time, I wanted to make you and the rest of this kingdom happy again. And thanks to that, God gave us a happy ending!"

Nina: "But didn't Mother say it? The Ways are a reward for our efforts. That's why I think what really made the difference that day... was how hard you tried, Misha."

Misha: "B-but, you tried even harder than me..."

Nina: "No, you tried the hardest!"

Misha: (spreading her hands as wide as she can) "Thiiiiis is how hard you tried, Nina!"

Nina: "Hey, Misha, haven't you been getting quite some lip lately? I'm the older one here, you know!"

Misha: "....." (pouting) (but also laughing)

Nina: "...Sorry." She pats Misha's head.

*The bell at the door rang with a bright sound.
Travellers have come to the inn.*

Misha: "Ah, customers!" Lowering my hands, I run eagerly to the door.

Anne: Ooh, by herself!

Jon: She's grown up so fast.

*The girl reaches the doorway and opens the door.
Taking a deep breath, she looks up at the faces beyond.*

Misha: "Since we value modesty in this kingdom, our rooms aren't all that lavish... but our food is delicious!"

*The church bells toll warmly in the spring sky.
This is the Happy Kingdom...
A place where everyone lives in happiness.*

Misha: "Welcome to the happiest inn in the Happy Kingdom!"

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