

Alright!” Jack speaks into a microphone, his voice broadcast through speakers. “Everyone, return to your rooms! You’ll be sent upstairs one by one, and after that, your goal is to find the path to the third floor!” You return to your room, and wait. Through the speakers crackles Jack’s voice: “Today’s fights are sponsored by: The NatBis Company! Hungry for our fights? Grab some NatBis popcorn and enjoy the show! Find their products in most grocery stores near you!”

Some time after that ad, the door unlocks, and you face the empty common room. There are lights above the three doors on the south side of the room, identifying each. You step forward, and make your choice, before the door opens and you climb up a dimly lit stairwell to the second floor.

You step into **The Radio Studio**, a bundle of electronic devices. Yellowed fluorescent lighting fills your vision as you stand in the main recording booth. A massive panel of glass separates the headquarters from the main empty recording zone, but all the clutter make this an annoyance to navigate, needing to step around huge speakers, teetering stacks of loose-leaf papers, and bulky recording players. On the main desk, the huge broadcast panels, hundreds of switches, and dozens of gauges give the studio an imposing aura. It’s almost like the musty air transports you to a whole different world.

Meanwhile, the backrooms are a winding series of hallways leading to individual recording booths, cramped in their utilitarian usefulness. No better than a broom closet and totally empty, save for headphones and microphones. But surely there’s a few secret paths and shortcuts you could discover...?

You take a hit of the Wizard’s Drugs, and put the Razorback on, well, your back, and start looking around.

There’s a good amount of stuff to be found, such as a **Scouter**, and even better a **Witch’s Elixir**. **\$9** is in a stack of papers. Also, just sitting in a corner, **Death’s Scythe**, perfect for a guy like you. It’s not an actual scythe (yet), so it’s easy to stash.

You hear someone talking to no one, and glance into a room through a glass window to see Nicolas in front of a microphone. Interesting.

You look into another nearby room, to see your new friend Kogi rooting underneath a desk, looking for items.

“Hey,” you announce yourself, twirling your red knife. She looks up at you startled. “Let’s get down to business,” you say, pointing a thumb towards where Nicolas was. Kogi stands up, following you out of the room.

Nicolas is standing in the middle of a little studio, talking into an old-fashioned microphone. The only furniture is a table and two chairs. He glances towards the two of you. You’ve hidden the

red knife against your arm, keeping it out of sight from the man, but you're primed and ready at a moment's notice.

"Ahh, our first two guest speakers!" he smiles. "So, Mr. Hachizaki, Ms. Hoshino, what's it like being here tonight?" He holds the microphone out towards you for your answer.

You can tell he's wide open. "Well Nick, to be honest..." you say, stepping closer. "I'm seeing red."

With a lightning dash and swift jab, you aim to finish Nicolas in a swift blow, the knife shooting upwards, pointed straight towards his throat.

Nic, however, has great reaction speed. As your blade shoots forward, so too does Nic's microphone hand, and Nic has longer arms than you.

CRAK

The microphone bashes against your head before you can close the distance, sending you backwards, falling on his butt as you briefly see double. Nic seems just as surprised as you, glancing between your face and his knife. It seems he didn't trust you as much as you hoped.

Still, the hit to the head wasn't too hard, only stunning you for a moment, and you immediately spring to your feet, while Kogi sweeps around to block the only door out of here.

Nicolas looks between the two of you, "I have big plans for tonight, and you are RUINING THEM!"

No need for any more clever one liners, you've got to go for the kill. You swing your red knife forward at Nicolas. Nicolas tries to block with the microphone, but this time you go low with a flick of the wrist, ducking under his guard, slashing upwards across the man's chest! Blood spurts out. Nicolas grunts, as he reflexively kicks at you, trying to push you out of the knife's range.

Kogi picks up one of the chairs, throwing it at Nicolas as a distraction. *WHAM!* It hits him, careening him off-balance, creating an opening as you dart in again, sensing the opportunity. But with a quick move, Nicolas whips his microphone down, hitting your hand, causing your grip to loosen, and dropping the knife.

Seeing an opening, Nicolas dashes past you and Kogi, shoving her aside with immense brute force, running out of the room.

"Stop him!" you shout at Kogi, but he's already disappeared into the gloom. You would expect to be able to see him, but he's already gone. But where?

“How did he...” Kogi mumbles.

Well, even if he got away this time, it isn't the first time you've had to track someone down to confirm a kill. “Blood trail,” you respond, after picking up your knife and rubbing your forehead. It might be bruised. You point down at the ground with your knife. While it didn't go quite to plan, there were some solid hits, and he's leaving behind a speckled blood trail. It seems he snuck into a tight space between two bookshelves of records, which looked like a wall at first glance.

You and Kogi track him. You walk into a more open room, yet full of wires. Inside are Amy and Rob. “Kogi!” Amy says, happy to see her, she bounces over to her to grab her hands. Rob is more reserved, nodding appreciatively at her appearance.

A noise heralds the sound of Pollyanna. “See, I told you this was a pathway big guy!”

“ahaaaa, what good eyes you have”, the unique voice of Verdan comes from behind her, and soon Pollyanna and Verdan squeeze in through yet another hole in the wall.

The room is starting to feel pretty cramped. Kogi is looking down at the ground for the blood trail, seeming to have a hard time seeing in the yellow light and gloom.

You glance over at the giant Verdan, as he's raising his arms... Wait, what is he— you have to think fast...!

BANG

Clink

The sound of the gun firing is followed by the sound of your knife, which you threw at his hand. You meant to stab him, but you don't throw it often, so you hit him with the hilt, only knocking the aim of his gigantic handgun slightly off target as your knife clatters to the ground. But unfortunately, he still hit his target – blood spurts both from the entry and exit wound in Kogi's shoulder, and she stumbles to the ground. Better her shoulder than her head.

“tch,” you hear Verdan say, as Kogi takes one wobbly step to turn around. Verdan stands imposingly with a huge smoking handgun. It seems he decided to do some backstabbing tonight himself.

“Kogi!” Amy shouts, running forward towards Verdan at the same time as you do, trying to stop him from firing again.

Pollyanna and Rob back far away to the walls, both having a confused expression on their faces, uncertain who to help here.

Kogi brandishes your red knife at the now-unarmed (but still very large) man, seeming a little confident now that he's lost his weapon.

WHUMP, with a dash Verdan throws a punch into Kogi's midsection, sending her flying into a wall. The knife clatters to the ground.

Well, maybe you have a chance now. You rush in, picking up your old weapon and standing between the big blue man and Kogi. You're ready to fight, when suddenly, the lights shut off.

There's the shuffling of everyone moving in the dark, and in an instant you make the decision to collect your allies and run instead of fighting a much bigger opponent in the dark. Skillfully, you dash out towards the main entrance of the room. Amy pulled Kogi out before you got there, and Rob and Pollyanna soon follow, as Amy slams the door shut, into Verdan's face.

"coooooome baaaack we werent finished!" The door muffles his voice, and he slams against it, but it seems to hold him. You know there are passageways through the area he might be able to get through, so it seems like a good idea to get moving.

"Pressure, on the wound" Kogi mumbles, and you and Amy help.

A worried and confused Rob and Polly do what they can to help her, Rob taking out a handkerchief to try and soak up some blood, while Polly looks for a first aid kit.

Kogi leans back, still breathing, regaining her wits. "Come on, let's move before he finds a way through." You still aren't done with tonight.

You all look for another room to hide in, and find what seems to be more of a fuel station, with a generator, controls, and whirring motors.

The lot of you are shepherded inside, all five of you, and you sit on a chair.

Then you realize there's a 6th person, Nicolas, who has been leaning against a wall. Must've been here first. He grimaces as he looks at you, wordlessly.

Right, you were supposed to be killing this mook. Kogi manages to struggle to her feet.

"Kogi?" Amy and Polly ask in unison.

Nicolas grimaces. "Any chance of changing the channel?" he asks.

“Sorry Nic-san, it’s time for the grand finale.” Kogi steels her pained expression, looking at you and her other allies. “This show ends in a tragedy. Gomen.”

Nic’s eyes flicker towards a nearby table. A hammer! A deadly weapon lying there on the table. Kogi lunges at the weapon the same time Nic darts for it, but Nic is faster, taking the hammer first.

Nicolas isn’t as bad off as Kogi is right now, but it’s five on one, and he knows it. You know it too.

He tries to run, but you’re ready for him as you get in his way, slashing with your knife and cutting up one sleeve. Polly swings a rod at him, hitting another arm. Amy looks unsure of herself, but is helping too. Rob tries to grab onto one of Nicolas’ arms. Nicolas is wildly swinging his hammer in wide arcs as all of you are forced to back off, respecting the damage he could potentially cause. It’s still a dangerous situation.

In what seems like a rash move, you watch as Kogi dashes in – will she get her brains bashed out!? Nic swings his hammer from the side straight at her eye-level, but Kogi shoots a targeted palm strike to his wrist. Her other hand instantly follows through to grab the hammer from his weakened grip, and she steps back as the new proud wielder, leaving the panting man defenseless.

“No, no, this isn’t in the script!” Nicolas shouts. Even as he’s closed in by all sides, the tall man stumbles towards a massive control machine.

“The line is, ‘et tu, Kogi?’” she responds, advancing, kicking him in the back of the knee, knocking him down as he tumbles onto the panel. She waves Amy and Polly away, as Nicolas clutches at switches and dials which do nothing.

“Ladies and gentlemen!” she calls to the cameras you know are somewhere in here. She’s getting into this, that’s fun. She stretches out an open hand theatrically, as the felled Nicolas glances back towards her, trying to shield himself while still looking over the dials. “Nic-san’s time on the stage was not long, but he was a fine actor! He deserves applause as he exits stage right!”

She raises her hammer above her head with both arms, even her wounded arm. She stares down at Nicolas’ patchwork face, and swings it straight down–

With the last of his strength, he shoves Kogi backwards as her swing misses its mark. It crashes into his shoulder instead. She stumbles back, and before you and Rob can grab him so she can finish him off for real, he whirls around and pulls a lever, immediately covering his ears–

SKSHHHHHHHHHHHHH

It's like the sound of screeching metal directly into your ears, a blast of static. They never had anything like this in the village! In excruciating pain, you drop your knife, covering your ears as you fall to your knees. Kogi has it the worst – he knocked her into a nearby speaker, belching its agonizing scream.

Covering his ears, Nicolas stumbles outside, past you and the others, still bleeding, but making his escape.

It's Amy who manages to locate the switch Nicolas used and finally turns off the horrible noise, and you lay there panting. You slowly pick up your knife again.

You and Kogi exchange glances with each other. This was not part of the plan. "Etoooo... renewed for a new season, that's it!" Kogi says, not out of copying Nicolas yet. Well, you'll have to get out of here eventually, but for now you can rest. You sit down. Ugh...

Eventually, Kogi's other allies trickle out of the room. You and her remain, and finally she gathers herself to make her way out of the room, looking for this floor's exit. You explore the premises, finally, finding a nondescript door. Opening it, you see the starkly different environment of a narrow steel spiral staircase, dimly lit. You make your way up.

You're in another room which looks very similar to yesterday's. You are guided to your bedroom by a guard, who closes and locks the door behind you.

Right, that masked man Arthur... surely there's something interesting about him, to hide behind a mask. You bet he's a clever man too, eyes that judge hidden by it... able to **Investigate**. (Character Name: I Want to Know.) The coat, feels like a doctor who could give a **Medical Checkup?** (Character Name: Isn't It Curious That Physicist and Physician Mean Different Things?). But lastly, there's something odd about him, maybe he's a **Potion Seller?** (Character Name: Is Aurum a Chemical?) Of course, you aren't too aware of what Magicians really do... But oh man is he loaded! **Emperor Time**, a **Dead Ringer**, **The Right Stuff**, **Ambrosia**, and **Aurelia's Sacrifice**. He also has a bunch of miscellaneous junk, what are you supposed to do with **two Amphibian Eyes**, **Quicksilver**, and a **Sundew?** Weird stuff.

Well, time to go to bed.

Engagements witnessed:

Hachizaki (assisted by Kogi) vs Nicolas

Verdan vs Kogi (backstabbed, assisted by Hachizaki and Amy) Witnessed by Pollyanna and Rob, who were allied to both parties.

Kogi (assisted by Hachizaki, Amy, Pollyanna, and Rob) vs Nicolas