

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 set your Voodoo Doll to look like Thomas as you head into the gloom. Alright Metropolis! Gimme something good! Gimme something real good! **\$11**? Hidden in a record sleeve? I mean, it's alright, but something better? A rare item perhaps? Yes, there it is! On top of a desk! Excited, you reach for it—It's **Restart Zero**. What a sick joke.

Well, maybe you can find something else. You keep going through the Radio room, exploring the premises, eventually coming to a doorway into a room filled with wires, which cover much of the floors and ceiling. You wonder where they all lead. Rob is already in the room, and he seems to be looking for items too, barely acknowledging your presence.

Kogi and Hachizaki seem to pop out of the wall. "Kogi!" you say, happy to see a friendly face in the gloom and you bounce over to grab her hands. She smiles, before going back to what she was doing, which was looking down at the ground. You wonder what she's looking for, but you give her some space.

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 disguised corridor in the wall.

The room is starting to feel pretty cramped. Kogi is still looking down at the ground for whatever it is she's hunting for, seeming to have a hard time seeing in the yellow light and gloom, squinting through her glasses.

BANG

Clink

The bellow of the gun firing shakes you out of whatever you were thinking, your ears ringing. Verdan stands there with a smoking gun, the *clink* being a red knife hitting the ground at his feet. You see the target—Kogi—and blood splatters both the front and back of her labcoat. It looks like it was Hachizaki who threw the knife to disrupt Verdan's aim and is about to dash in. Blood spurts both from the entry and exit wound in Kogi's shoulder, and she stumbles to the ground.

"tch," you hear Verdan say, as Kogi takes one wobbly step to turn around. Verdan stands imposingly with a huge smoking handgun.

You have to help her! You have to stop Verdan! "Kogi!" you shout, running forward towards Verdan at the same time as Hachizaki, 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.

"so I have to punch a few more holes in you!" Verdan shouts, whipping out a second handgun, aiming both horizontally, to try and hit both you and Hachizaki. Yikes!

BANG BANG BANG BANG

You weren't sure you would be able to dodge, but fate had plans in store for you, as you trip on a wire, sending you tumbling down under the two shots directed at you. Verdan doesn't seem to be too interested in aiming, but he's still firmly in control. Kogi stumbles back up to her feet, as he whips both guns back towards her, and she stares down the gun barrels.

"nighty night," Verdan says, smirking.

You and Hachizaki both pincer from the sides, punching into Verdan's huge midsection to try and stop him. You don't want violence, but if you want Kogi alive you don't have a choice! At the same time, Kogi dives forwards, towards Verdan and the ground.

BBAANNNGG

The two gunshots meld together, and you can see Kogi's hair ripple from the blast, but by some miracle, both shots both miss, and she snatches up the fallen red knife from Verdan's feet. In an

odd-sounding imitation of Verdan, she shouts “*let’s dance!*” slashing upwards. She starts a long cut along the side of his pants, aiming for the inside of his thigh, but he steps back just in time to avoid that.

The three of you press forward as Verdan laughs. *"ahahaha tehe keheheheh!"*

Kogi cuts across his chest, and Verdan's every attempt to re-aim his guns is thwarted by Hachizaki and you, as you try to pull his gun hands away, and Hachizaki tries to punch his grinning blue face.

Still with brute strength, Verdan is able to kick Kogi's slashes away to avoid a fatal stab, and with a twirl—oh he's quite strong isn't he? He lifts you off the ground as you grab tightly onto his arm, and you're swung directly into Hachizaki with a *whump*, as the two of you fall into a heap, tumbling away from him. He aims at Kogi again. She's too far to hit him, and you're too far to stop him! *"my voice doesn't suit you babe,"* he says and —

ccliicckk

The hammer falls down on an empty chamber.

click click click click click click

Verdan is briefly incredulous. “*oh right hehehehehehehehehehehe*”

With that he holsters his guns.

Kogi brandishes the 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.

As Hachizaki rushes forward, towards his knife to impose himself between Verdan and Kogi, you look towards the wall—there, a light switch! You stumble to your feet, and pull it down, shrouding the room in darkness, remembering where everyone was.

With a leap, you grab onto what you think is Kogi's hand, and pull her back towards the door you came into. She stumbles out with you, before Hachizaki dashes through the door, and Rob and Pollyanna soon follow—there's Verdan! You slam the door in his face, and it seems to lock on its own.

“cooome baaaack we werent finished!” The door muffles his voice, and he slams against it, but it seems to hold him. You don’t want to find out just how long it will hold him for, so it seems like a good idea to get moving.

“Pressure, on the wound” Kogi mumbles, and you and Hachizaki 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.” Seems like a good plan.

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 herded 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. It seems he’s been injured already, wearing a bloody shirt. He grimaces as he looks at you, wordlessly.

There’s a grunt as Kogi manages to struggle to her feet. What is she doing? “Kogi?” you 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.” Wait, is she going to try and—

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.

He tries to run, but Hachizaki stands in his way, slashing with his knife and cutting up one sleeve. Polly swings a rod at him, hitting another arm. Rob tries to grab onto one of Nicolas’ arms. What should you be doing here!? You didn’t plan on hurting anyone tonight! Defending Kogi is one thing, but should you really be helping her jump some guy? The question runs through your mind, as 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 you 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 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 Hachi and Rob can grab him, 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. Your rabbit ears are mostly vestigial, but it still feels as though you can hear it in them too. In excruciating pain you cover 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—he’s bleeding, it seems—but making his escape.

The lever he pulled... That’s where it was, right!? You stagger to your feet, covering your ears, and locate the switch Nicolas used. You turn off the horrible noise, and you lean against the panel, panting. Your ears are ringing, but you think it isn’t anything permanent.

“Etooo... renewed for a new season, that’s it!” Kogi says, not out of copying Nicolas yet. Ganging up on him wasn’t really something you planned tonight... Kogi hobbles back over to the chair and sits down.

Slowly, you and Kogi’s other allies begin to leave the room. Definitely not where you thought tonight’s violence would be coming from... you had best look 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.

You take a look at your little Volks Voodoo Doll, to see what it reads:

It seems he was involved with that Castle man... A **Hydrated** vampire, who thinks that Fran **Looked at (him) Funny**. He's likely able to **Heal** too, but he'll need it, seeing as how he's only at **5 HP**. He's also carrying around a **Scrying Mirror, Duct Tape, Blink Boots, and Fantastical Snakes**.

But also Lele was fighting him! The maid is a **Prospector**, able to keep her ear to the ground as **KGB**, but also has some **Paranoia**, in addition to a **Starter Item** and being a **Nakama**. She's doing better than Castle, at **14 HP**. Seems she's carrying around **Wizard's Drugs**, as well as **Balder's Glasses**.

Well, you might as well sleep until tomorrow.

Engagements witnessed:

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