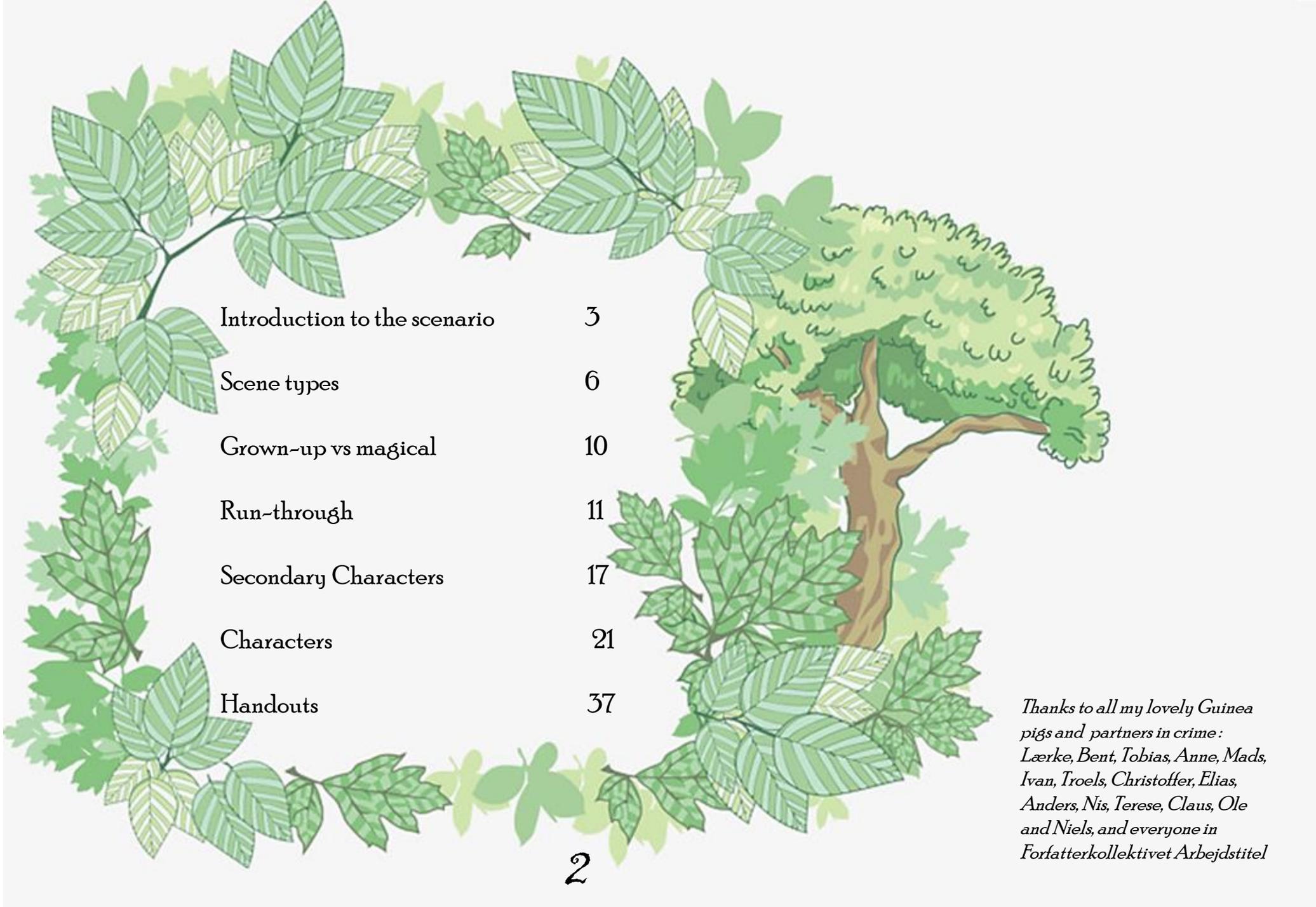


A lush, detailed illustration of a forest floor. A stream flows through the center, surrounded by dense green foliage, including various ferns and purple flowers. The scene is rich in texture and color, with a mix of deep greens and bright highlights.

BuzzKill

&

BlueEyes



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Thanks to all my lovely Guinea pigs and partners in crime: Lærke, Bent, Tobias, Anne, Mads, Ivan, Troels, Christoffer, Elias, Anders, Nis, Terese, Claus, Ole and Niels, and everyone in Forfatterkollektivet Arbejdstitel

Introduction

Hi there ☺

- and welcome to BuzzKill and BlueEyes.

It is the story of a family, and the summer they spend at Granny's house in the countryside, while she is hospitalized. And even more, it's a story about getting your past and present manipulated by the outlook on life and moods that BuzzKill and BlueEyes represent.

The scenario is set to last about 3-4 hours.

The basic idea behind the scenario is, that we shape the story of our life based on what we focus on in the present, and what we choose to remember from the past. Some will claim that if we wanted to, we can simply focus on the right stuff, forget the rest and live happily ever after. In this scenario it is not that simple, however, because the players are constantly distracted by BuzzKill and BlueEyes. It can be difficult to focus on the positive, when BuzzKill shouts in the back of your head, that everything is dangerous. And it can be difficult to get your act together and handle your problems, when BlueEyes tells

you that everything will work out, and you should just go out tonight and let it sort itself out.

Setting

The setting is inspired by Japanese stories, where children have magical playmates without anyone finding it weird. It is a world where technology isn't very present. There might be an old rotary phone in the house and mom might have an old computer, but we are far from the modern age of technology with smartphones, television and streaming services. Children mainly play with teddy bears and dolls, they read books, and they play outside and explore the neighborhood. It is a setting I have shamelessly stolen from movies like "My Neighbor Totoro", and "Spirited Away" by Hayao Miyazaki. You don't have to know the movies to play the scenario, but it can serve as a shortcut to understanding the mood and the structure of story.

Story

The narrative in BuzzKill and BlueEyes is a

small story, in the sense that it is about loving and caring people, who wants to help each other. It is not a story about how the parents fight and scream every night. It is not about sex, violence, cruelty or fighting evil. The center of it isn't drama and conflict in the family, but instead, it is about how they make life choices together. It is important that the players get the mood right, so they don't go looking for conflicts or villains that don't exist.

Characters

There are 5 characters; Aomame, an 11 year old girl, her parents, Satsuki and Kanta, and her two magical friends, BuzzKill and BlueEyes. Aomame's part is to go on adventures, and listen to BuzzKill and BlueEyes. Satsuki and Kanta will deal with grown up problems and talk a lot. Buzzkill and BlueEyes has the right to define a lot about the outside world, and they manipulate the other players. The players will have rather different experiences with the scenario, and it is worth mentioning to the players at the beginning.

Introduction

Story line

The story begins in the city, where the family lives in a small apartment. Mum and dad are sitting at the kitchen table in the evening and discussing that they have to move out to Granny's house for some weeks during the summer vacation. Granny is hospitalized and someone has to look after the house. She lives too far away to drive back and forth to the city every day, so they have to move there.

Then we meet the family on the day they arrive at Granny's house- Aomame meets the *Sorceress in the Cellar*, and the parents are reminded of their childhood out here. At the end of the day, they sit together for dinner and Aomame tells about her day.

After this we meet the family again some weeks later, where Mom and Dad have found out that Granny's health haven't improved, and it is uncertain that it will. The next day, Aomame goes to talk to *Spirit of the River* or the *Master of the Woods*, while the parents try to handle things at home. At the end of the day, they sit together for dinner and Aomame tells what she has learned today.

Finally, we meet the family on the night,

where Mom and Dad has got the news that Granny's is getting better, and she can move home soon. But she will not be able to manage on her own. The parents have to figure out how to take care of Granny in the years to come. The next day, Aomame goes to talk to *Spirit of the River* or the *Master of the Woods*, while the parents talk options at home. At the end of the day, they sit together for dinner and Aomame tells what she has learned today.

In a short epilogue, we revisit the family years later, where Mom and Dad are old, and Aomame is all grown up. They are talking about that summer they spend at Granny's house. In the epilogue all the scenes and stories that happened that summer is boiled down to one defining memory.

Structure

The scenario is set up around a circular routine, beginning with the parents, who talk, while Aomame is secretly listening (scene type: After Bedtime). Then Aomame talks to BuzzKill and BlueEyes to make sense of the grown-ups conversation (Aomame Chooses). The understanding she settles on

determines whether she plays with BuzzKill or BlueEyes the next day when she goes on adventures (Exploration scenes). The one she doesn't choose stays behind and meddles in the conversation between the parents (Grown-up time). Finally, the family meets up for dinner, and Aomame explains about her day (Aomame's Day). After this we jump in time and let BuzzKill and BlueEyes set a few words on the time that has passed, before we start the wheel over again with an After Bedtime scene.

Secondary Characters

There are three predetermined secondary characters, that you will play as the game master. It is *the Sorceress in the Cellar*, *the Spirit of the River* and *the Master of the Woods*. It's important that you make them mythical and give them opinions about the grown up discussions. Through these characters you will tie Aomame's adventures in with the parents reality. You will find guidance for this in chapter on "Grown-up vs Magical".

Introduction

Granny's illness

Granny and her illness is part of the backstory for the scenario. It is the reason why the family moves into her house, why Aomame learns more about her parents and meets all the fantastical spirits, and why the parents are reminded where they come from. Apart from this, Granny's illness has no part in the scenario. Granny is not a character, she isn't in any of the scenes, and we will not go into what the illness is. This is to ensure that the story becomes centered around the family and their time in the countryside, and not the sick Granny.

Grown-ups and Magic

The magical elements in the scenario represents other sides of the characters, than the one who plays the character directly. In the scenes with Aomame, she interacts with the magical as real, physical beings, who talk to her and she comes home and explains what they said and did. For the grown up roles Satsuki and Kanta, they will experience the influence as a inner dialogue, where they are talking to themselves. When they are

done, they will go back to the family and explain that they have thought about it and decided on something.

When Satsuki and Kanta were children, they also talked and played with the spirits, like Aomame does now; but they remember it as childish fantasies and unclear dreams.

The parents are not at all concerned about the magical playmates, and they will ask about what they said and did, but not question whether or not they actually exists.

Telling the world

Both you and the players, especially BuzzKill and BlueEyes have a lot of freedom to define the world around you. There are no predefined memories from the past, no description of Granny's house or the countryside. Since a lot depends on BuzzKill and BlueEyes' ability to define the memories, and give a different perspective on the world, it is important to cast players who can do that. I will give some pointers to this later.

Under Handouts, you will also find a list of Japanese names, to help the players.

Child and Grown-ups

As mentioned before, the scenario has two grown up characters, Satsuki and Kanta, and one child character, Aomame. It is important that there is a clear distinction between grown-ups and child, but it is also important that it doesn't end up with Aomame acting childish as a 5 year old. To create the distinction, Aomame should always be physical on a lower level than the parents; if they stand up, she sits on a chair. If they sit on a chair, she sits on the floor.

This doesn't apply when Aomame is with BuzzKill and BlueEyes.

Scene types

Every Act is built, so we start **After Bedtime**, where Aomame listens secretly to her parents conversation, then go to where **Aomame Chooses** a perspective and thereby a playmate for the next day's **Exploration Scene**. The playmate who is left behind joins the parents in the **Grown-up Time**. Finally the family meets up around the dinner table to hear about **Aomame's Day**. Between the acts there is short interlude, where BuzzKill and BlueEyes tells what has happened in the meantime.

After Bedtime

Satsuki and Kanta are talking about grown-up stuff after Aomame is put to bed. Aomame has snuggled out of bed, however, and is secretly listening. Aomame is sitting under the table, so the parents can't see her.

In these scenes Satsuki and Kanta can talk about their worries, and they can disagree on the way forward; things they would never do in front of Aomame.

Satsuki and Kanta can use their conversation topics if the conversation gets a little stale. The topics are under Handouts.

The game master cuts the scene, preferably before they are completely done with the talk, so there are unresolved things for the Grown-up Time scene later.

The Scenes are played semi-live and in real time. BuzzKill and BlueEyes are not in the scene.

Example

Satsuki: So, Aomame is in bed now.

Kanta: I am really worried about taking her out of school while we are here, but of course, I couldn't say that in front of her.

Satsuki: I think you are making too big a deal of it; that school was never any good. But of course we couldn't say that out straight but...

[Aomame listens intensely]

Aomame Chooses

These scenes come directly after the After Bedtime scenes. Aomame sneaks back into her room, and together with BuzzKill and BlueEyes she tries to work out what she just overheard.

The Scene always starts with the game master asking what shape BuzzKill and BlueEyes have in the scene, so we feel the change from grown-up reality to the child's imagination. The BuzzKill and BlueEyes should try to convince Aomame that they have the right interpretation. The scene ends, when Aomame chooses to side with one of them. The one she chooses is now the **Chosen**, and the other is the **CastAway**.

The Scenes are played semi-live and in real time.

Example

Aomame: Mom said Granny is ill.

BuzzKill: Yes, that is horrible. Old people die so easily, so we should take good care of her, while she is alive.

BlueEyes: Nonsense. She will get better in no time, and we should spend our time exploring her house!

Aomame: You're right, BuzzKill, I will bring her a good book.

[BuzzKill is now the Chosen, BlueEyes is the CastAway]

Scene types

Exploration scenes and **Grown-up time** happens during the day, and you cut between them, so Aomame's adventures with the Chosen intertwines with the parent's day with the CastAway.

Exploration Scene

In the 1. Act Aomame and the Chosen play around the house and find *The Sorceress in the Cellar*, who brings up *The Spirit of the River* and *The Master of the Woods*. She will also comment on the parents and their situation.

In the 2. and 3. Act Aomame and the Chosen start by drawing a map of today's voyage and they plan how to get to *The Spirit of the River* or *The Master of the Woods*. When they are done, the game master, asks the CastAway to comment and find the flaws in the plans. Ask BlueEyes to comment on what they are missing out on, because they are too cautious, and what turns out to be much easier than expected. Ask BuzzKill to comment on the dangers, they have overlooked and what will certainly go wrong.

In the 2. Act the game master will let the Chosen's predictions work out, but in the 3. Act the CastAway will be right. When the Chosen is left helpless, introduce the CastAway to the scene to save the day. The Chosen then finds themselves back with the parents.

At the end of the scene, they will meet who they set out to find, and they will talk about the parents situation, based on their point of view.

These scenes are cut by the game master, and plays out as classic pen and paper role play.

Act 3, example

Aomame: *What should we bring?*

BuzzKill: *We should bring boots, for crossing the wet field, and chocolate for the dangerous toads, so they let us pass.*

GM: *BlueEyes, what is BuzzKill missing?*

BlueEyes: *The sun will shine tomorrow, so the toads will be hiding and the field will be dry. But they will have to carry the heavy boots all the way and the chocolate melts in the bags.*

GM: *When the two of set out the next day, the sun is shining from a clear blue sky, and pretty soon the boots feels really heavy [...]*

GM: *I try to climb the tree to get to the Master of the Woods, but every time BuzzKill says, look out, you become a little heavier, and the branches are about to break under you. A pinecone looks down on you and says: "you will never make it with all that heavy worrying". What do you do?*

BuzzKill: *ehm, I don't know...*

GM: *- and with a wiz and a bang, Buzzkill disappears in a cloud of concerns, and BlueEyes smiles down at Aomame from the branch above.*

Scene types

Grown-up Time

In these scenes, we meet Satsuki and Kanta separately, doing their daily tasks around the house. It could be putting up shelves, cleaning the kitchen, working in the garden etc. The setup is that they are talking to themselves, remembering the past or thinking about the future.

The scenes play out as an inner dialogue, where the CastAway talks to the grown-up and influences the conversation. The grown-up cannot directly disagree with the CastAway, but has to acknowledge the memories and thought as their own.

The scenes are cut by the game master.

Aomame's Day

The scenes takes place around the dinner table in the evening. Aomame explains about her adventures during the day, who she met, and what they said. Satsuki and Kanta should listen and ask questions about her story. In these scenes Satsuki and Kanta are not allowed to disagree or talk about their own issues. It is very important that the scenes are about Aomame, and not a conversation between the parents. Otherwise the scenes becomes boring repetition of the Grown-up Time during the day, and the child's story is not properly intertwined with the grown-ups.

The scene is cut when Aomame is done talking.

Example

[Kanta is working in the garden. Aomame is playing with BuzzKill, so BlueEyes is with dad]

BlueEyes: Well, what to make of this. I think it will all turn out right.

Kanta: Yes, I feel that, too. But I am still worried about Aomame's education.

BlueEyes: Pish, posh, she will be fine! She is a smart kid, and she doesn't need a boring school to learn stuff.

Kanta: Yes, I suppose you are right. It is still a little weird, though.

Example

Aomame: *I met The Spirit of the River today. He said "Hi"!*

Satsuki: *Thank you. How is he?*

Aomame: *He is wondering if he will learn enough, when he is swimming around the river all day, far away from libraries and schools. But we agreed, that I will help out, and bring him the right books, so he doesn't fall behind.*

Kanta: *Are you worried about school?*

Aomame: *Nope, I read a lot, and I am well ahead of the others already. I am done eating now; can I be excused?*

Scene types

Interlude

Between the acts, BuzzKill and BlueEyes get to tell about the weeks that have passed, and how it was for the people they had scenes with.

So if Aomame chose BlueEyes as a playmate in the 1. Act, BlueEyes get to tell about what a great time Aomame had between 1. and 2. Act. BuzzKill on the other hand gets to tell about the worries and problems that have been hanging over the parents.

The scenes are a direct lead up to the next act, and the game master cuts them and moves to the After Bedtime scene.

Example

BuzzKill: *It has been some really long and boring weeks for Aomame. There is no one to play with, and Kanta and Satsuki has been way to busy with Granny to pay any attention to her. She misses her friends all the time.*

BlueEyes: *Satsuki and Kanta has had some amazing weeks. They can barely remember when they last had this much time to talk and just hang out. Even though Granny is ill, it has been good to visit her and remember the old times. Some days, Kanta and Satsuki can't even remember why they ever left this place.*



Grown-up vs magical

A key element in the scenario is your ability as game master to reflect the grown-ups talk in Aomame's conversation with the fantastical spirits she meets. Based on the Conversation Topics for Satsuki and Kanta, here are some suggestions on how to reflect them into Aomame's scenes. This is just for inspiration, you don't have to memorize it.

Death

The Master of the Woods could explain that everything that we experience leaves an imprint in our growth rings, and that our ancestors are in the ground, where our roots stand strong.

Finances

Aomame could run into a squirrel, gather for the winter and worrying about how much she needs. The squirrel could end up deciding that she has enough now.

Work

Aomame could meet a busy bee, who wouldn't dream of doing anything but work, because it is so much fun.

Children

Aomame could run into a toad with hundreds of offspring. The Toad could tell Aomame that it cannot imagine being an only child, and it sounds mostly like a lonely child.

School

Aomame could meet an old owl, who is the cleverest animal in the forest, and never had any need to read a book or go to school. All you have to do is listen, look and learn.

Expectations of life

The Spirit of the River could laugh at the silly human idea of predicting what lies ahead. The Spirit of the River never knows what lies ahead, only that it will be different from what lies behind.

Old Age

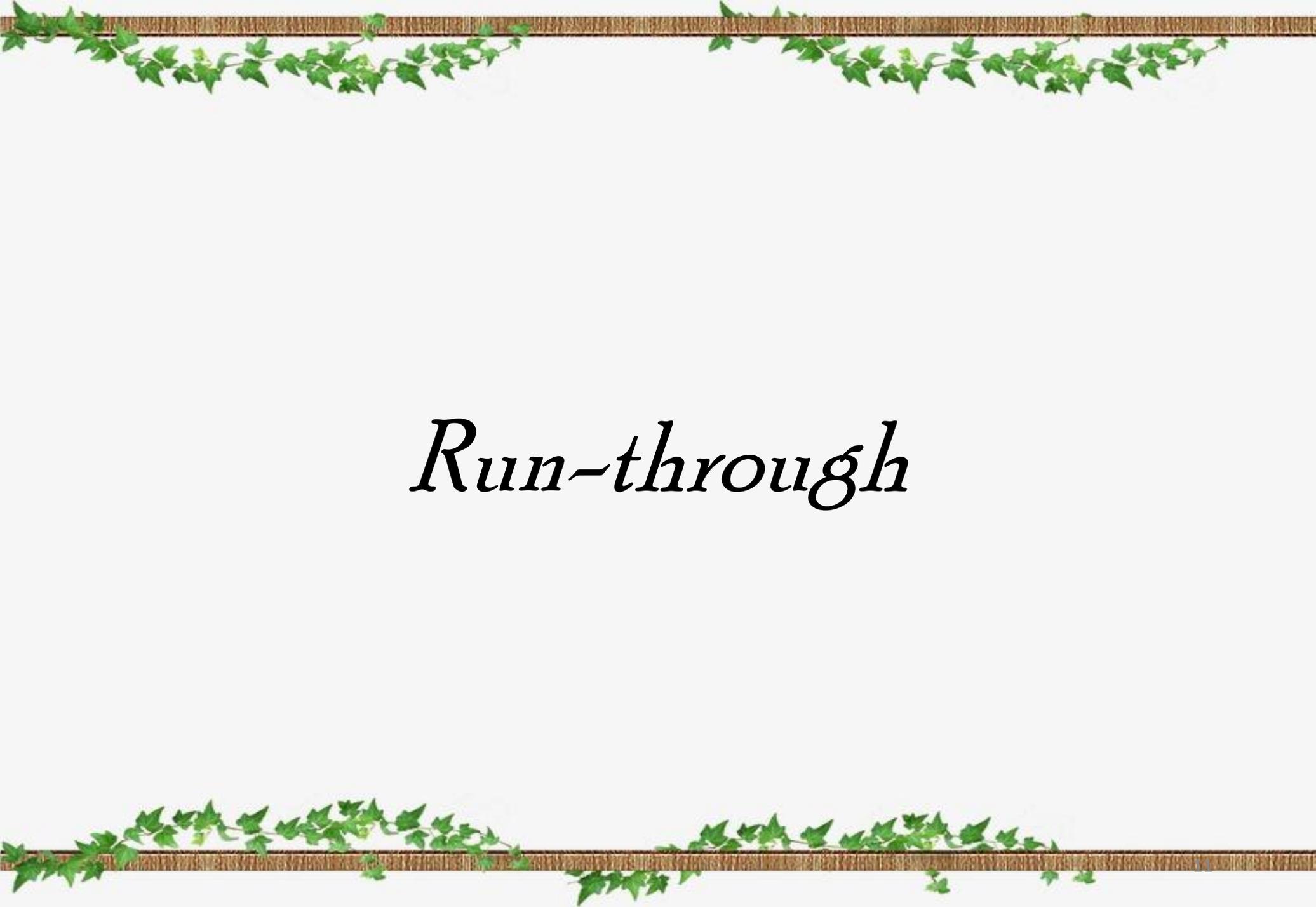
Aomame could run into an old turtle, who explains that the best thing about old age is that you finally fit the shield perfectly, and have enough memories to smile all day long at the mere thought.

Moving out

Aomame could stumble on a baby bird, who is trying to fly for the first time. It could explain that it is so excited to see if the wings will carry it, and the nest has just felt so small lately.

Where to live

Aomame could meet a mouse of the forest and a mouse of the field, who are discussing where to have lunch, because the field is full of corn, but the forest has berries.



Run-through

Introduction

Welcome the players, and introduce them to the information in Setting, Grown-ups and Magic, Story and Characters.

Make sure they understand that this is not about conflicts and villains, but a story of a loving family. You will not be arguing, but you will find your way together.

Explain the difference between the different types of characters, and where we are when the story begins.

The players who shows most initiative in the warm-up exercises, should be cast as BuzzKill and BlueEyes.

Aomame, Satsuki and Kanta can be cast based on player preference. Give them time to read the characters, and let them go for coffee, toilet break etc. to make sure no one feels a pressure to read fast. Try to spot if anyone has reading problems, and talk to them about the character.

Remember to hand out the Conversation Topics to Satsuki and Kanta.

Now explain the structure of the scenario, so they understand the Wheel of scenes, and make sure they understand the different scene types.

Warm-up

1. Warm-up, telling the world

Give the players the visual handouts, and ask them to choose a couple of pictures and tell us something about the world based on this. Ask leading questions, and introduce *The Sorceress in the Cellar*.

Make a mental note on who shows most initiative and imagination.

2. warm-up, changing perspective

Return to the pictures, and ask "what is wrong, what is dangerous in this picture?" and afterwards ask "what is exiting and fun about this picture?"_ Ask both questions to the same pictures, and repeat a couple of times.

Make a mental not on who is more convincing and good at changing perspective.

3. warm-up, names

The names can be a little difficult, so take some time to practice them. Let each player explain how their character looks like, and let them start with "my name is and I .." Continue until the names feels natural.

Go ahead to 1. Act

1. Act

Granny's House

❖ After Bedtime

Satsuki and **Kanta** are sitting at the kitchen table in the evening, after Aomame has gone to bed. Granny has been hospitalized and they need to move to her house for a couple of weeks during the summer vacation. How will Aomame react to this?

Aomame sits quietly behind the door and listens.

Remember that the Conversation Topics can help.

GM cuts the scene

❖ Aomame Chooses

Aomame, **Buzzkill** and **BlueEyes** sit under the blankets and discuss what to make of what mom and dad said.

Aomame cuts the scene when she chooses which of the two she sides with. This is the *Chosen* in the next scene.

Remember to ask, which shape BuzzKill and BlueEyes have in the scene.

❖ Exploration scene (cut to the parent's scenes)

The family arrives at Granny's House and Aomame runs off to play with the Chosen, while the parents moves in.

Aomame and **the Chosen** runs into **The Sorceress in the Cellar**, who mentions The Spirit of the River, The Master of the Woods and asks for good stories from the world outside.

GM cuts the scene

Remember to describe something magical every time you cut back to the scene.

❖ Grown-up Time (cut to Aomame's scene)

Cut between scenes with **Satsuki** and **Kanta** in the attic, where the CastAway describes which memories come to mind about their childhood out here.

GM cuts the scene

Remember to describe something adult and mundane every time you cut back to the scene.

❖ Aomame's Day

Aomame, **Satsuki** and **Kanta** sits by the dinner table and Aomame tells what she has done during the day.

Aomame cuts the scene, when she is done.

Remember that the scene is about Aomame and not her parent's internal talks.

2. Act

As expected

❖ Interlude

BuzzKill and BlueEyes tells us what has happened since we last saw the family. They tell the story for their playmates from the previous act.

❖ After Bedtime

Granny's illness is dragging out, and they have to stay here longer than expected. What will this mean to work and Aomame's school?

Aomame sits quietly behind the door and listens.

Remember that the Conversation Topics can help.

GM cuts the scene

❖ Aomame Chooses

Aomame, **Buzzkill** and **BlueEyes** sit under the blankets and discuss what to make of what mom and dad said.

Aomame cuts the scene when she chooses which of the two she sides with. This is the *Chosen* in the next scene.

Remember to ask, which shape BuzzKill and BlueEyes have in the scene.

❖ Exploration scene (cut to the parent's scenes)

Aomame and the **Chosen** plans how to get to The Spirit of the River or The Master of the Woods. The **CastAway** explains to the GM, why the plan is all wrong. The GM steers the scene so everything goes according to plan anyway.

GM cuts the scene

Remember to describe something magical every time you cut back to the scene.

❖ Grown-up Time (cut to Aomame's scene)

Cut to separate scenes with **Satsuki** and **Kanta** during the day, where they wonder what to do. The **CastAway** keeps them company.

GM cuts the scene

Remember to describe something adult and mundane every time you cut back to the scene.

❖ Aomame's Day

Aomame, **Satsuki** and **Kanta** sits by the dinner table and Aomame tells what she has done during the day.

Aomame cuts the scene, when she is done.

Remember that the scene is about Aomame and not her parent's internal talks.

3. Act

Against expectations

❖ Interlude

BuzzKill and BlueEyes tells us what has happened since we last saw the family. They tell the story for their playmates from the previous act.

❖ After Bedtime

Granny has recovered and will be send home soon. However, she will not be able to live alone. How will Satsuki and Kanta handle this, and what will it mean for Aomame.

Aomame sits quietly behind the door and listens.
Remember that the Conversation Topics can help.

GM cuts the scene

❖ Aomame Chooses

Aomame, **Buzzkill** and **BlueEyes** sit under the blankets and discuss what to make of what mom and dad said. **Aomame** cuts the scene when she chooses which of the two she sides with. This is the *Chosen* in the next scene.

Remember to ask, which shape BuzzKill and BlueEyes have in the scene.

❖ Exploration scene (cut to the parent's scenes)

Aomame and the **Chosen** plan how to get to the spirit they didn't meet in 2. act. The **CastAway** explains to the **GM** why the plan is all wrong, and this time the **CastAway** is correct. **GM** sets a situation the **Chosen** can't get out of, and when they give up, the **CastAway** takes over the scene and saves the day.

GM cuts the scene

Remember to describe something magical every time you cut back to the scene.

❖ Grown-up Time (cut to Aomame's scene at a point where she is with BlueEyes)

Aomame has been away for a long time, and BuzzKill is making the parents worry.

GM cuts the scene

Remember to describe something adult and mundane every time you cut back to the scene.

❖ Aomame's Day

Aomame comes home/ is found

GM cuts the scene, when the family is done talking

Remember that the scene is about Aomame and her parent's internal talks.



Epilog

Do you remember that summer?

We meet the family again, many years later. Aomame is all grown up, and Satsuki and Kanta are old by now. The three of them are sitting in the living room over a cup of tea, and remembering that summer, way back, in Granny's house

- ❖ Ask Aomame, Satsuki and Kanta to sit with the playmate that had most influence on their summer that year.
- ❖ Then ask BuzzKill and BlueEyes to define that one, dominant memory which comes to mind for each of the characters who sits next to them
- ❖ Aomame, Satsuki and Kanta ends their memory by nodding and saying **"Yes, that is what that summer was all about"**

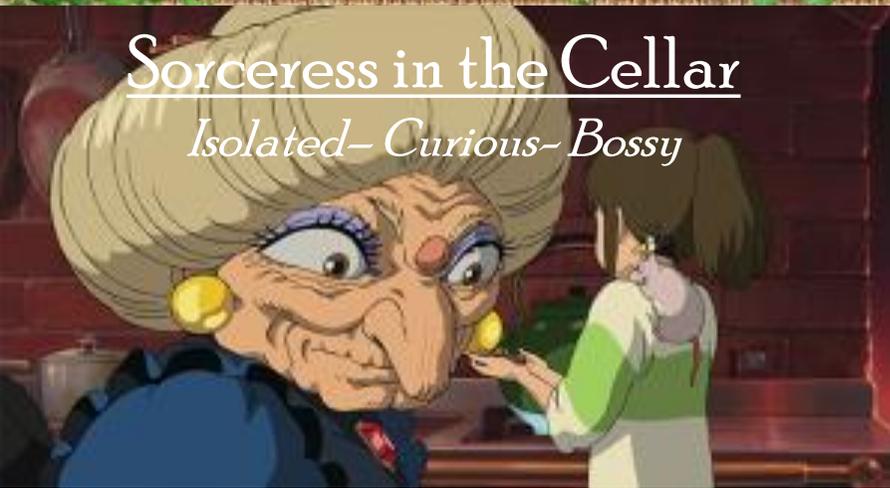


Secondary Characters

Played by the game master

Sorceress in the Cellar

Isolated– Curious– Bossy



Purpose

The Sorceress in the Cellar is your way of introducing *The Spirit of the River* and *The Master of the Woods*, and to make Aomame curious about the world around her. Use her to tell Aomame about all the adventures that are out there. If you have to, send Aomame on a mission to go talk to *The Master of the Woods* or *The Spirit of the River*.

Introduce the Sorceress during the warm-up exercises, and make sure that Aomame runs into her in the 1. Act. Maybe Aomame's ball rolls under the house, maybe she follows a weird shadow or creature into the darkness, or hears weird noises from down there.

Make the trip under the house full of darkness, moist soil, scrapped knees and slimy snails and creeps.

The Sorceress in the Cellar is trapped in the big hole under the house. She is practically consumed by a desire to hear news from the outside world. You get to her by crawling into the dark space between the floor of the house and the ground beneath it.

The Sorceress has an army of spies, like snails and shadow creatures, so she knows everything that goes on in the house (unless someone whispers, why do people do that !) But her spies cannot leave the shadows, so she never knows what is happening in the sunlight, by the river or in the forest.

Playing the Sorceress in the Cellar

Introduce her in the warm-up exercises, so she is not a surprise. Bring her little spies into as many scenes in the house as possible.

Apart from using the Sorceress for her purpose, you are free to do whatever you want with her. Choose how she talks, let her be kind or sneaky, mistrustful, naive, poor soul or dark villain as you wish.

Secondary Character



The Spirit of the River

Movement- Renewal- Cleansing

Mandatory traits of The Spirit of the River:

- The outlook on life he represents
- The Spirit of the River is willing to talk to Aomame
- The Spirit of the River knows Satsuki and Kanta and knows everything about the past and present, but not the future.

You decide

- What does The Spirit of the River look like?
- How does The Spirit of the River talk?
- What does The Spirit of the River think of The Sorceress in the Cellar and The Master of the Woods?

The Spirit of the River represents an outlook on life, where we float through life as if we were following the current on the river. There is no point in fighting the current, or trying to go back. No matter what we do, we will always be carried downstream. The river washes everything away and leaves it behind on the riverbanks. Sorrow, disappointment, regret, all is washed away by the river.

The Spirit of the River cannot heal Granny or make her young again. It would be a really strange thing to do, because life flows in one direction only. And there is always something interesting around the next bend of the river.

The Spirit of the River's purpose is to give Aomame something to tell her parents about when she comes home.

Playing The Spirit of the River

Let The *Sorceress in the Cellar* bring The Spirit of the River into the fiction early on.

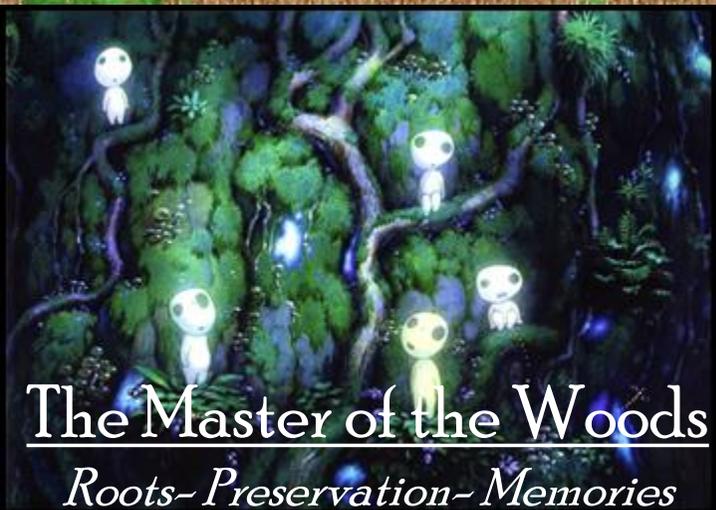
Whatever The Spirit of the River says should relate somehow to what Kanta and Satsuki is talking about at home. Here are some pointers, and also read the chapter about The Grown-up vs Magical.

If Kanta and Satsuki tries to plan ahead, tell Aomame that humans often forget that they are not really in control of the current, and all they can do is decide how to handle that.

If Kanta and Satsuki tries to hang on to their old life, tell Aomame that nothing lasts forever, and that every spring brings new things to the river from the cold mountains.

If Kanta and Satsuki are sad, or scared that Aomame will be sad, tell Aomame that sorrow and pain disappears just a little further down the river.

Secondary Character



The Master of the Wood represents an outlook on life where we have our roots deeply planted in our past to keep us calm and well-balanced. Life is a circle, where we grown up, die away and gives way to new life. We carry our ancestors within us, and we are carried on by those who come after us.

The Master of the Wood cannot heal Granny or make her young again. It would also be a weird thing to do, because who would wish to grow smaller and loose the growth rings and all the memories they store?

The Master of the Wood's purpose is to give Aomame something to tell her parents about when she comes home.

Mandatory traits of The Spirit of the River:

- The outlook on life he represents
- The Master of the Woods is willing to talk to Aomame
- The Master of the Woods knows Satsuki and Kanta and knows everything about the past and present, but not the future.

You decide

- What does The Master of the Woods look like?
- How does The Master of the Woods talk?
- What does The Master of the Woods think of The Sorceress in the Cellar and The Spirit of the River?

Playing The Master of the Woods

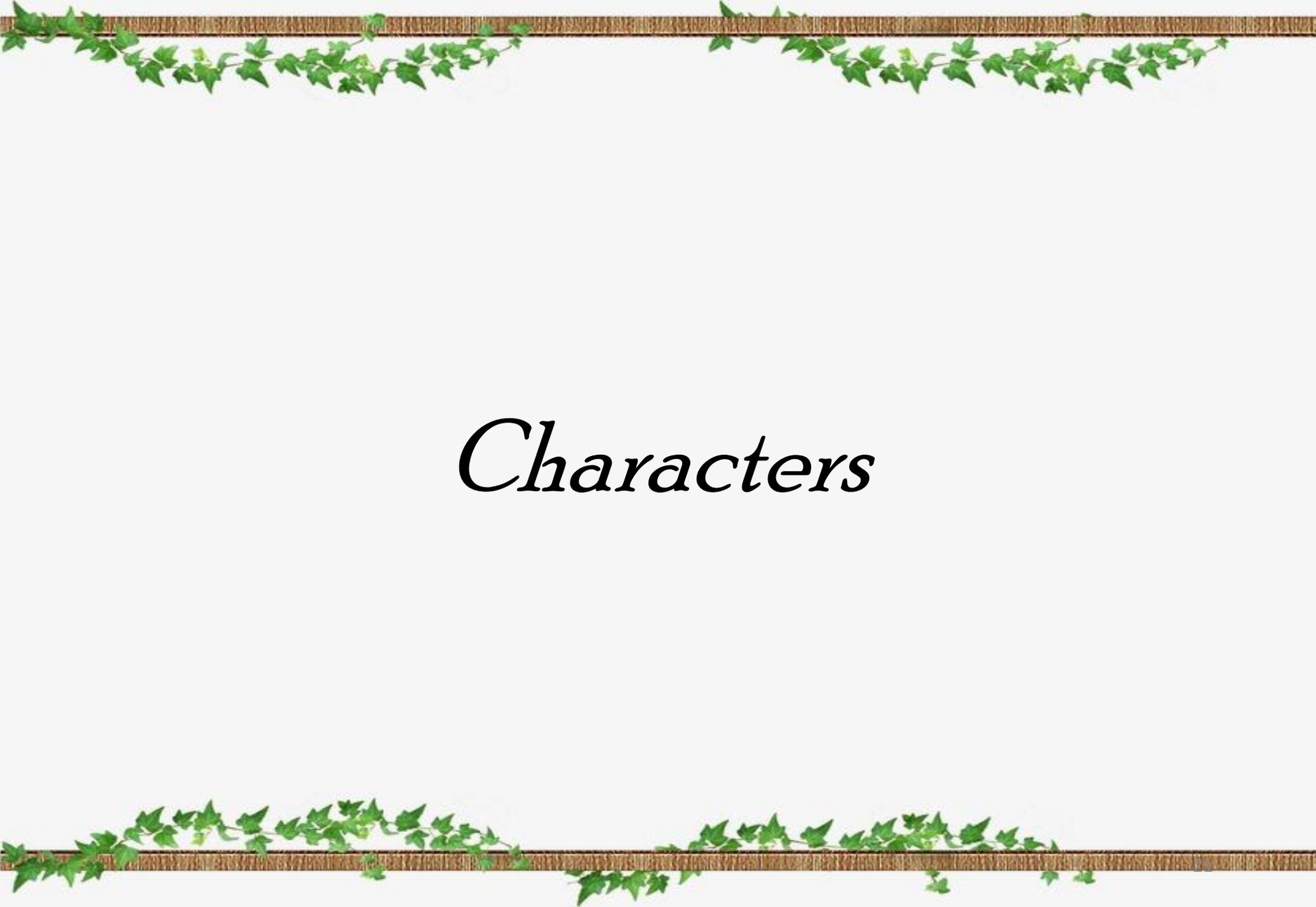
Let The *Sorceress in the Cellar* bring The Master of the Wood into the fiction early on.

Whatever The Master of the Wood says should relate somehow to what Kanta and Satsuki is talking about at home. Here are some pointers, and also read the chapter about The Grown-up vs Magical.

If Kanta and Satsuki talks about missing Granny or life in the city, tell Aomame that every memory lives on in her growth rings.

If Kanta and Satsuki are afraid of moving Aomame or Granny, tell Aomame that as long as the soils is thick and rich, you can grow anywhere.

If they are worried that things disappear and die away, tell Aomame that everything that withers away in the fall comes back tenfold in the spring.



Characters



Satsuki

Pragmatic – Busy – Loving

Satsuki is a 36 year old woman. She is Kanta's soul mate, Aomame's mother and Granny's daughter. She works in a big office, where there is a constant flow of documents to read, and sign, and process, so there is always lots of work. She grew up in the countryside, but moved to the city with Kanta, when they were very young.

Life, then and now

Satsuki grew up in the countryside with Granny, far from the city, where she lives now. Her childhood was filled with Granny's stories, and adventures with Kanta, and sometimes it feels like the lines between reality and fiction is a little blurred. The woods, the riverside and the rice fields all had that touch of the fantastical, so you would half expect spirits to inhabit them. When Satsuki finished school, she and Kanta did as most of their school mates and moved to the city to find work and a better life.

Today, Satsuki, Kanta and Aomame live in an apartment in the inner city, Aomame has her own room with a bunk bed, and Satsuki has a small desk in the corner of the kitchen with all her work papers in well-organized piles. In the weekends, they go out to experience the city, and at the end of the day, they ride the bus home, and shuts out the city life and light behind the heavy dark curtains.

Kanta's soul mate

Kanta is Satsuki's best friend and the one person who really knows her. Of course, this doesn't mean that they always see eye to eye, but they always find their way back to their love for each other. Even when Kanta starts up yet another project, that he will never finish, Satsuki always finds the gentleness to let it go, and clears some room the project.

Kanta has been unemployed for a while, and even though it doesn't do any good for their economy, it has been good to see him focus on the home and spend so much time with Aomame. It also makes it a little easier when Satsuki has to work late or in the weekends.



Satsuki

Pragmatic – Busy – Loving

Aomame's mother

Aomame is a wonderful whirlwind of chaos in the middle of the mundane day to day life. She dreams, plays, lives and is all things at once. Sometimes she is angry and unreasonable and stomps her feet in anger, but she is doing that less and less now, where she is almost grown up. Satsuki is aware that Aomame is no longer the little girl she used to be. Satsuki and Kanta try to the best of their ability to prepare her for what lies ahead so she can get all the best out of life, and side step the worst of it.

Every now and again, Aomame says things that sound way beyond her years. It can seem like deep philosophy and Satsuki has to remind herself that she shouldn't read too much into it; she is still a child after all, and doesn't understand grown up life. Anyway, Satsuki can't help but wonder where Aomame gets it from, and she can't help paying attention to what she says.

Granny's Daughter

Granny is getting old. When the story starts, Granny has been committed to a hospital close to where she lives, far from the city where Kanta and Satsuki lives. Even though it hasn't happened before, it is clear that she is growing weaker. As the closest relatives she has, Kanta and Satsuki will have to find a way to take care of her. The only question is how to do that?

Granny has always loved her house, close by the woods and the river. But she cannot manage it alone anymore. Maybe one could move in with her and help her out? If only it wasn't so far away from the life Satsuki had build in the city.

Maybe Granny would be willing to move into the village close to her house. Then she would still be close to her old surroundings, and the people she has known for a lifetime. However, it would require money to pay for a house in the village, and someone to help Granny. And money is in short supply all around.

Of course, Granny could also move to the city and live with them there. Many of their friends are living with their parents, and there might be room for an extra bed in Aomame's room.

Satsuki

Pragmatic – Busy – Loving

Tips to play Satsuki

Aomame often plays with her magical friends, and that is not weird for you. Ask about their games, like they were regular friends.

Sometimes, you will share Satsuki with the players of BuzzKill or BlueEyes, so you both speak for her in the scene.

Satsuki likes to talk about family and the practicalities of their future plans.

Satsuki often says: *"That's the plan, then."*

Satsuki is good at making decisions.

Satsuki and Kanta do not discuss worries or disagree about important things when Aomame is in the room. Those kind of talks are better kept for when Aomame has gone to bed.



Kanta

Dreamer – Relaxed – Loving

Kanta is a 36 year old man. He is Satsuki's soul mate, Aomame's father and Granny's son in law. He is a school teacher by profession, but he is out of work for the time being. His dream is to work with something creative and exciting, and he isn't very focused on the salary. He grew up in the countryside and moved to the city with Satsuki when they were very young.

Life, then and now

Kanta grew up in the village, close to Granny's house and Satsuki, and far away from the city where he lives now. His childhood was filled with Granny's stories, and adventures with Satsuki, and sometimes it feels like the lines between reality and fiction is a little blurred. The woods, the riverside and the rice fields all had that touch of the fantastical, so you would half expect spirits to inhabit them. When Kanta finished school, he and Satsuki did as most of their school mates and moved to the city to find work and a better life.

Today, Satsuki, Kanta and Aomame live in an apartment in the inner city, Aomame has her own room with a bunk bed. Kanta has a lot of boxes with different projects tucked away under the bed and on top of the closet in the bedroom. There is one with a collection of pictures he wanted to arrange on a canvas, another with text and short stories, which he hasn't quite finished yet. In the weekends, they go out to experience the city, and at the end of the day, they ride the bus home, and shut out the city life and light behind the heavy dark curtains.

Satsuki's soul mate

Satsuki is Kanta's best friend and the one person who really knows him. Of course, this doesn't mean that they always see eye to eye, but they always find their way back to their love for each other. Even when Satsuki has forgotten to say that she will be working late again, Kanta always finds the tenderness to remember that she will be exhausted when she comes home. So he puts on the kettle and has the tea ready when she comes home, and they sit together and talk about her day.

Kanta has been unemployed for a while, and of course that has an impact on their economy. On the other hand, it has freed up time for the family, and it finally feels like there is time enough to enjoy life together. And it allows Kanta to really get into his projects, and maybe even finish some of them.

Sometimes, Kanta feels that he isn't contributing enough at home, but Satsuki always tells him not to be silly.

Kanta

Dreamer – Relaxed – Loving

Aomame's father

Aomame is a wonderful whirlwind of chaos in the middle of the mundane day to day life. She dreams, plays, lives and is all things at once. The last couple of years the transition from child to grown up has happened so fast that Kanta finds it hard to keep up.

Satsuki and Kanta try to the best of their ability to prepare her for what lies ahead so she can get all the best out of life, and side step the worst of it.

Every now and again, Aomame says things that shows clearly that she knows more about the world than Kanta and Satsuki realizes. The clear perspective of a child really puts things in perspective and makes it all seem so simple. Of course the world is more complicated than Aomame's stories, but Kanta likes to hold the idea that life could, in fact, be that simple. In any case, Kanta can't stop listening.

Granny's son-in-law

Granny is getting old. When the story starts, Granny has been committed to a hospital close to where she lives, far from the city where Kanta and Satsuki lives. Even though it hasn't happened before, it is clear that she is growing weaker. As the closest relatives she has, Kanta and Satsuki will have to find a way to take care of her. The only question is how to do that?

Granny has always loved her house, close by the woods and the river. But she cannot manage it alone anymore. Maybe one could move in with her and help her out? If only it wasn't so far away from the life Satsuki had built in the city.

Maybe Granny would be willing to move into the village close to her house. Then she would still be close to her old surroundings, and the people she has known for a life time. However, it would require money to pay for a house in the village, and someone to help Granny. And money is in short supply all around.

Of course, Granny could also move to the city and live with them there. Many of their friends are living with their parents, and there might be room for an extra bed in Aomame's room.

Kanta

Dreamer – Relaxed – Loving

Tips to play Kanta

Aomame often plays with her magical friends, and that is not weird for you. Ask about their games, like they were regular friends.

Sometimes, you will share Kanta with the players of BuzzKill or BlueEyes, so you both speak for her in the scene.

Kanta prefers to talk about the world and dream away. He is good at asking questions and imagining how things could be different. He very often says : *"Yes, I will play around with that."*

Satsuki and Kanta do not discuss worries or disagree about important things when Aomame is in the room. Those kind of talks are better kept for when Aomame has gone to bed.





Aomame

Curious – Caring – Independent

Aomame is an 11 year old girl. She is enthusiastic about exploring the world around her, and wants to know more. She is always going of on adventures with BuzzKill and BlueEyes, she tries to understand mom and dad. Even though she remembers Granny, she remembers her stories even clearer. Aomame lives with her parents in the city, and finds it odd that they never ask her before they decide on stuff.

Life, then and now

Aomame is born in the city, and has only visited Granny a couple of times. She used to like dolls and all things pink, but she outgrew that years ago. Today she is almost grown up and handles her own homework. On Thursdays she also cooks for mom and dad, and her specialty is a noodle soup that even dad can't succeed with.

Aomame is a strong reader and has piles of books in her room. Some of them were gifts from Granny, and she is getting through even the difficult ones. She is determined to learn an extra language, but hasn't decided on which one yet.

Aomame and the world

Aomame has started to question the world around her to a much higher degree than before. She listens in on mom and dad's conversations and tries to make sense of it, but a million questions arise; What to do when she grows up? How to afford an apartment of her own, and where to find one that is big enough for mom and dad, too. Why are people generally not always kind to each other, and what really happens when you die? Why do grown ups care so much about what other people think, and what is so dangerous about some movies, since she is not allowed to watch them on her own? At some points these questions will need to be answered by Aomame herself, but they seem so difficult right now.

Aomame

Curious – Caring – Independent

Aomame going on adventures

Aomame loves reading and going on adventures with BuzzKill and BlueEyes more than anything. Even though the two of them rarely like each others company, it is still lots of fun to go with them individually. And they know all sorts of things about the world. They pretty much never hesitate to explain her how what she should think. Some times it can be a bit difficult to keep up with BlueEyes, and every now and again BuzzKill can be a bit boring, but generally there is always truth in what they say.

Granny lives in the countryside

It has been a while since Aomame last visited Granny. She remembers spending a summer vacation there at one time, but otherwise she mostly remembers Granny for the postcards and books she sends for Christmas. The best part of it is when Granny explained about all the spirits and magical creatures who live out there in the countryside with her. Aomame hasn't met any of them yet, but she hopes she gets to before she is too old to meet them.

Mom, Dad and Aomame

Aomame really likes her life with mom and dad. Mom is a little too busy at times, and dad has a bit too many weird ideas, but when they spend time together they have lots of fun.

Sometimes mom and dad seem to forget that she is actually not a little girl anymore. Like when they make plans for her without even asking her first. They used to talk French when she was in the room, and literally decided things over her head. At some point they found out that she could actually understand most of it, so they stopped doing it. Instead they talk privately when they think she is in bed. They haven't figured out that she sneaks out of bed to listen to them talking in the kitchen.

Aomame has become aware that not all things are easy and fun. There is apparently a wide range of stuff that mom and dad don't tell her. Right now it is unclear to Aomame how to handle this knowledge, but there has to be a way of helping her parents!

Aomame

Curious – Caring – Independent

Tips to play Aomame

Aomame can see and hear BuzzKill and BlueEyes and play with them as if they were normal friends.

BuzzKill and BlueEyes can take any shape or size they wish to, but Aomame will always be able to recognize them.

Aomame cannot form an opinion without listening to BuzzKill and BlueEyes, and she has to chose to side with one of them.

Aomame is always placed physically in a way, so she is lower than her parents. If they stand up, she sits down, if they sit on chairs, she sits on the floor.

Aomame is 11 years old. She is a small adult, and not a small child. She is not yet a rebellious teenager, so even though she might disagree with her parents, she is mostly curious, light hearted and exploring the world around her. If you are in doubt about how to play her, play her more as an adult and not as more of a child.



BuzzKill

Because the world can be cruel

BuzzKill is the inner voice, who is critical about the world and worries quite a lot. BuzzKill would like to be viewed as a realist, but most people would use the label pessimist. But basically, that is just because people are so blinded by their own deliberate naivety that they can't see the world as it really is.

Both BuzzKill and BlueEyes live with the family, and their mission is always to guide them to live a good life together. Mom and Dad think they are just a gut feeling or an instinct, but Aomame can see them both and they play together a lot.

Kanta and Satsuki before Aomame

Satsuki grew up in the countryside with Granny in her run down house. Kanta lived in the modest village close by. Granny's house was situated in the middle of nowhere, between the dangerous forest, the wild river and the swamp like rice fields. The neighbors were abandoned and maybe even haunted houses, left to fall a part.

It was a childhood, where the lack of money was always apparent. There wasn't lot of children around, so Satsuki and Kanta pretty much just had each other, and of course the local spirits. The spirits are kind of ok, but you have to be careful with them, because they don't understand how humans work and might harm them accidentally. Satsuki and Kanta probably think that they were just figments of their imagination, and that is probably for the best.

When the kids grew up they had to leave home, because there was nothing for them there. Granny was sad to see them leave, but she understood why it had to be that way; It must have been really lonely for her out there, once they left.

Grown-up

Today, Satsuki, Kanta and Aomame is living in a tiny apartment in the city. There is barely room for all of them, especially since Aomame has too many teddy bears and Kanta is taking up so much room with his endless projects. Even the kitchen is a mess, because Satsuki has a small mountain of work papers piled up on the desk in the corner. When everyone is home in the weekends, they have to leave the apartment to be able to breathe. Since they cannot afford a car, they have to ride the bus. At night, they only have a curtain to block out the noise of the city and try to get some rest.

Despite the many problems, Satsuki and Kanta have a surprisingly light outlook on life. They are best friends, and they know each other so well. At some point, though, they will have to deal with the fact that Satsuki works much too hard, that Kanta hasn't been able to find a job and Aomame is left way to much on her own. Things could fall apart completely, if this is ignored.



BuzzKill

Because the world can be cruel

My best friend, Aomame

Aomame is the best friend in the entire world, and there is nothing more important than her well-being. She is a wonderful little ball of chaos, and she dreams, plays and is all things at once.

Sometimes she will get a little careless and forget to think before she acts, but luckily BuzzKill is there to guide her. When she learns to see the world as it really is, it will be much easier for her to avoid the pitfalls and unpleasantness that would ruin her chances of a good life. If only BlueEyes would stay out of it! That blind and naive fool is getting Aomame into all sorts of dangerous and ill-considered situations.

God old Granny

Granny is old and sick and needs help. Satsuki and Kanta has to step up and find a solution. No matter how they choose to handle it, it will inevitably have a great impact on Aomame's life.

If they have to move to the countryside to take care of her, Aomame will loose all her friends. She would also have to attend a school, where she will learn less than she does in the city.

If Granny moves in with them in their city apartment, there will be even less room. It is no picnic to share a room with an old and sick Granny, even if you love her. And Granny would probably not like the city, anyways.

And if Granny goes to live in the village near to where her house it, it would drain Satsuki and Kanta's savings, so they have almost nothing to live on. It sure isn't an easy situation for Satsuki and Kanta. These kind of dilemmas make BuzzKill thank the stars not to be a grown up human!

BuzzKill

Because the world can be cruel

Tips to play BuzzKill

BuzzKill talks and plays with Aomame as friends.

BuzzKill participates in the adult's conversations, but not as an individual character. Everything BuzzKill says in the scenes represents the views of the adult.

BuzzKill has the right to define memories for the humans, same as BlueEyes does.

BuzzKill and BlueEyes share the family, so when one of them is playing with Aomame, the other is with the grown-ups.

BuzzKill can take any shape or size, but Aomame will always be able to see through it.

BuzzKill will often stand with arms crossed

BuzzKill's instinct reaction is to sigh and shake the head.

BuzzKill often begins sentences like :

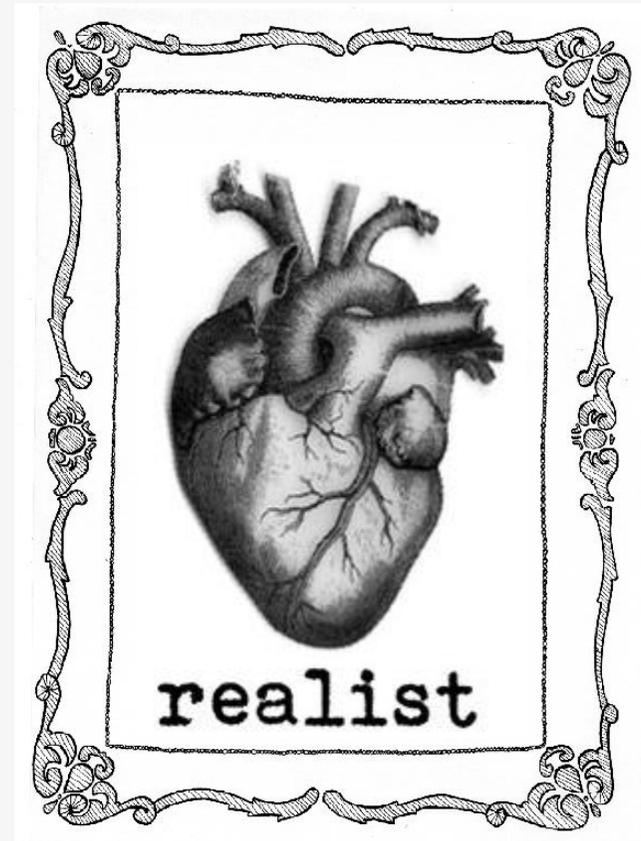
It is dangerous because...

That is impossible because...

It will not end well because...

You have to be careful that...

It must be hard on ... (mom, dad, Granny etc.)



BlueEyes

Because the world is awesome!

BlueEyes is all about enthusiasm and seeing possibilities and adventures everywhere. Some might describe that as naive and taking things too lightly, but that is obviously just because they have caved in to bitterness and depression. In real life, you can do anything, if you just believe it hard enough.

Both BuzzKill and BlueEyes live with the family, and their mission is always to guide them to live a good life together. Mom and Dad think they are just a gut feeling or an instinct, but Aomame can see them both and they play together a lot.

Kanta and Satsuki before Aomame

Satsuki grew up in the countryside with Granny in her run down house. Kanta lived in the idyllic village close by. Granny's house was perfectly situated between the rich forest, the calm river and the lots of old and majestic houses. It was a childhood filled with imagination, warm summer day and Granny's care.

Satsuki and Kanta were best friends, and they went on adventures together and played with magical beasts and spirits. They are always fun to play with, because they look nothing like humans, and can do a lot of exiting stuff. Satsuki and Kanta probably think that they were just figments of their imagination, and that is probably for the best.

When Satsuki and Kanta grew up, they decided to expand their adventures to the rest of the world, so they moved out. Granny felt that is was a great idea, and really looked forward to hearing all the fantastic tales from the city.

Grown-up

Today, Satsuki, Kanta and Aomame lives in a wonderful apartment in the city center. The apartment simply emanates life through Aomame's teddy bears, Satsuki's charming desk in the corner of the kitchen and all of Kanta's exiting projects in boxes. The city is so full of life and stuff to do in the weekends, and they are so close to it all.

Kanta and Satsuki are best friends, and they spend almost all of their time together. Sometimes Satsuki even brings her work home, just so she can be home more. And Kanta is great at coming up with new interesting projects, that they can do together.

Lately, Kanta hasn't been working, which is great, because it means he is spending much more time with Aomame. When you think of how often grown-ups focus on problems and serious stuff, one can only hope that Satsuki and Kanta continue to play and find the things to enjoy in life.



BlueEyes

Because the world is awesome!

My best friend, Aomame

Aomame is the best friend in the entire world, and there is nothing more important than her well-being. She is a wonderful little ball of chaos, and she dreams, plays and is all things at once.

Sometimes she can be a little too timid or shy, but luckily BlueEyes is there to guide her. When she learns to see all the exiting and wonderful things the world has to offer, she is sure to get a life full of adventure and fun. If only that old stick-in-the-mud BuzzKill would stay out of it! Aomame is missing out on so much if she takes too much advice from that source.

God old Granny

Apparently, Granny isn't as strong as she used to be, but thankfully her spirit and stories are still the same. Obviously, Kanta and Satsuki will have to figure out a way to help her a little, and that is really good news for Aomame. She is sure to see Granny more often! Maybe they will move to the great countryside permanently. Maybe Granny will move to the city, so Aomame can show her all her favorite spots. Or maybe she will move to the village next to where she lives now, so she can be surrounded by friends. However it turns out, it is going to be great!

BlueEyes

Because the world is awesome!

Tips to play BlueEyes

BlueEyes talks and plays with Aomame as friends.

BlueEyes participates in the adult's conversations, but not as an individual character. Everything BlueEyes says in the scenes represents the views of the adult.

BlueEyes has the right to define memories for the humans, same as BuzzKill does.

BlueEyes and BuzzKill share the family, so when one of them is playing with Aomame, the other is with the grown-ups.

BlueEyes can take any shape or size, but Aomame will always be able to see through it.

BlueEyes always smiles

BlueEyes basic instinct is to laugh, nod and clap the hands with enthusiasm.

BlueEyes often begins sentences like :

That is easily done!

Fabulous idea!

This going to be great!

You should see it as an opportunity to...





Handouts

Conversation aids, Kanta

Do you want
more
children?



How will we get the
money to match the
plans?



How will Aomame
react if Granny
dies?



Are you working
too much?



How do you hope to
spend your life
when you grow
old?



Do you ever feel that
we let Granny down
by leaving back
then?



Are we getting
enough out of life?



Do you ever miss
living in the
countryside?



Conversation aids, Satsuki

Do you want to
work?



What should we do
with Aomame's
education?



How do we make
Granny's last time a
happy one?



Are we good
enough as parents
to Aomame?



Did life turn out
like you wanted it
to?



Does Aomame miss
her friends?



Is it important to
you to live in the
city?



What would you
change about the
way we live?



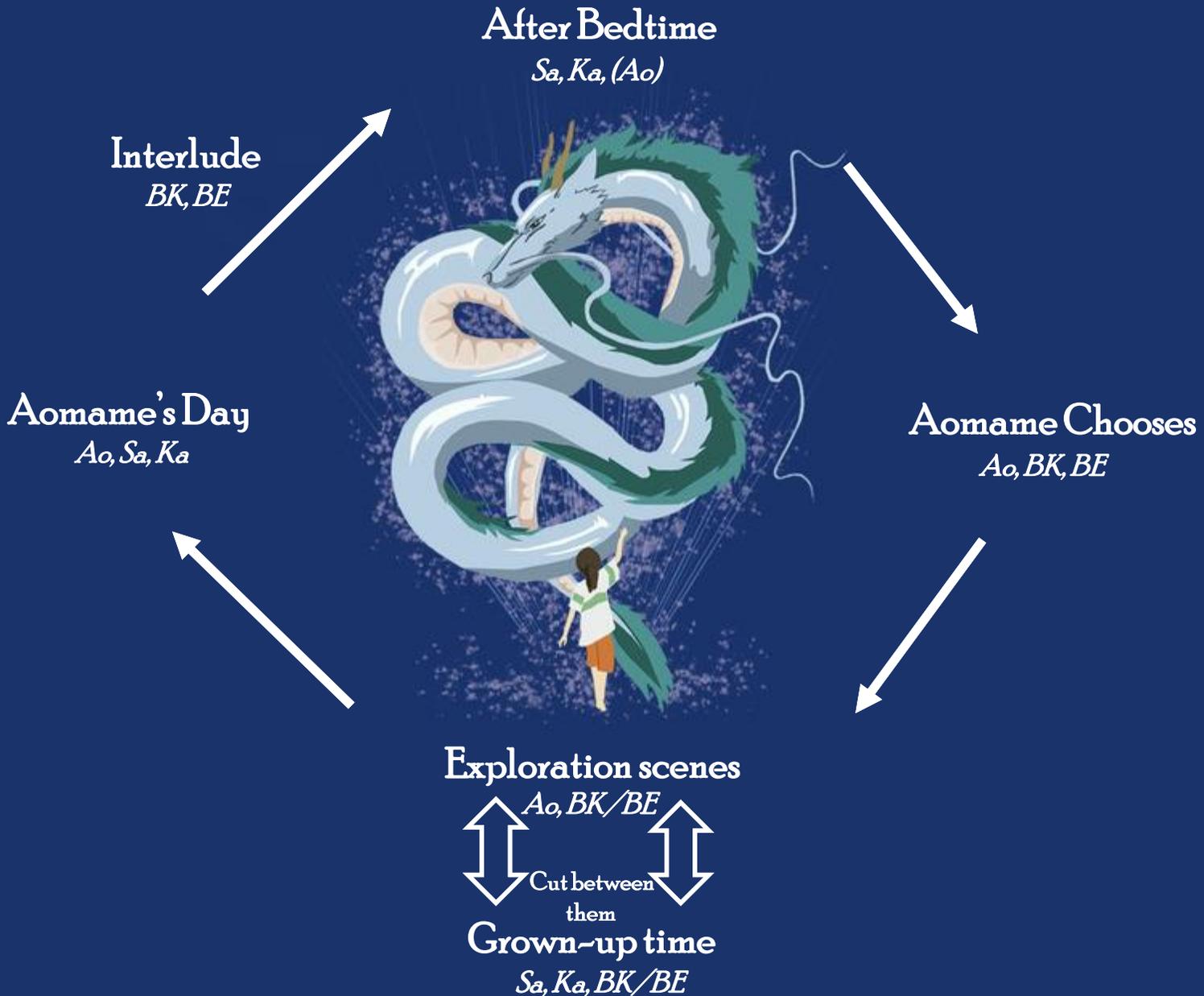


Exploration scenes
Ao, BK/BE

↕
Cut between
them

Grown-up time
Sa, Ka, BK/BE

Ao = Aomame
Sa = Satsuki
Ka = Kanta
BK = BuzzKill
BE = BlueEyes



Ao = Aomame
Sa = Satsuki
Ka = Kanta
BK = BuzzKill
BE = BlueEyes



Names

Akiko

Etsu

Haruka

Natsu

Anzu

Fuyu

Hoshi

Shiro

Chiko

Gorou

Katsu

Tamiko

Daisuke

Hanako

Masahiro

Yoshi





Names

Akiko

Etsu

Haruka

Natsu

Anzu

Fuyu

Hoshi

Shiro

Chiko

Gorou

Katsu

Tamiko

Daisuke

Hanako

Masahiro

Yoshi



















