The Painting of Evie Ward

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# Introduction

To my daughter Evelyn, I leave my set of paints. I hope one day they will set you free, as they did me.

-Abigail Lewis Ward, last will and testament

Your name is Evie Ward. Yesterday, your father, Earl Nicholas Ward of Oxendell, died unexpectedly of an infection. This morning you awoke to find yourself trapped in a painting hanging in the main hall of Oxendell manor.

Tomorrow, your aunt Adelaide and her husband Edgar arrive at Oxendell manor to help settle your father’s affairs. You hope that they will be able to help you, but with no way of speaking to them you doubt it. You try not to dwell on it too much, but you can’t ignore the creeping notion that there is no escape, that overnight and without warning you’ve been doomed to this existential prison for the rest of your life.

That evening, as you watch the sun set through the large windows across the room, a ray of hope appears. As soon as the last hues of twilight fade into night, the painting seems to soften around you. With quite a bit of effort, you find yourself able to push through the frame and into the real world. But something is wrong. You feel hollow, insubstantial, like you’re made of mist. The tile floor is cold against your feet but the sensation is distant. You can tell that you aren’t free yet. You run to your room to write a note for aunt Adelaide explaining the situation, but when you pick up your notebook it turns to ash in your hands. You stare for a moment at the pile of ashes, dread beginning to creep in again. You look frantically around the room, your gaze eventually settling on the paint set. You remember the cryptic message your mother wrote when she left it to you in her will. Could she have known that this was going to happen? The paints themselves are long gone by now anyway. They’d been used up in the eight years since her death. If they were your way out, you’ve long since wasted it.

As you wander the property you start to make some observations. The farther you get from the painting, the fainter your physical form becomes. As the sky begins to lighten you feel your radius of freedom shrinking. You rush back to Oxendell manor and climb into the painting just in time. You’re not sure what would happen if you stayed out there after sunrise, but you’re not willing to gamble your life to find out.

“I mean for god’s sake, the girl’s nearly twenty-five and hardly ever sees callers.” It’s early in the afternoon when you hear aunt Adelaide’s voice approaching outside. “It’s a shame, I suppose. A girl needs a mother.” Someone knocks on the door but nobody is around to open it. After a while the door opens. Adelaide and Edgar enter, followed closely by Edgar’s valet, carrying their bags.

“Evie?” Adelaide calls out, “Evelyn, we’ve arrived.” You struggle to move or say something, but you know by now it’s no use. “Ruth,” she says to someone outside, “would you see if she’s about?”

“Right away, ma’am,” Ruth replies, and rushes through the room into the house.

“Looks like someone finally finished that painting,” says Edgar, who you hadn’t noticed was looking at you. Adelaide looks up as well.

“Wouldn’t have been Nick, he was never a painter. Must have been Evie.” She stares for a moment, then scoffs. “Painting herself into her late mother’s work. I’m telling you, that girl’s not right.”

A few minutes later Ruth returns.

“No sign of her, mum, I looked all over.”

“Must have run off,” Adelaide says. “I wouldn’t put it past her. She never did like this place. I bet she took the first excuse to get away.”

“Phineas,” Edgar says, turning to the valet, “tell the constables she’s missing.”

“Right away, sir,” the valet says, walking out.

“If she doesn’t turn up in a few days we’ll start packing up the house,” he says. The two disappear to get settled. After a few hours, Edgar leaves to go into town. By the time he returns it’s late in the afternoon.

“I’ve spoken to a local solicitor,” he announces to the room. “He told me that as Evelyn’s closest living relative you have custodianship over her inheritance until such time as she is found.”

“It is quite a fine painting,” Adelaide says, apparently not listening. She seems fixated on you.

“It’s strikingly lifelike,” Edgar affirms, apparently not minding Adelaide’s apparent not listening. “We could always take it home with us, if Evie doesn’t turn up, that is.”

“I wouldn’t want it in our home. There’s something… unnerving about it. It feels like it’s watching us. I’d almost rather just burn the thing, but I’m sure such a fine-looking piece would sell for quite a bit at the Summer Exhibition.” Adelaide finally turns away from you to glance at her husband. Edgar starts to nod slowly.

“That’s a good idea, we should pack it up and take it to London with us on the twelfth.” The panic starts rising up within you again. The twelfth is only ten days away. You had planned on making your presence known to them tonight, but you can’t risk Adelaide burning you alive if she thinks the painting is haunted.

Your last hope is the paint set. The paints are gone, but maybe if you can find and capture those ten colors from elsewhere in the town, you can escape the painting before your ten days are up.

# Game Summary

This is a summary of the game. The actual instructions appear as *italicized text* throughout the book.

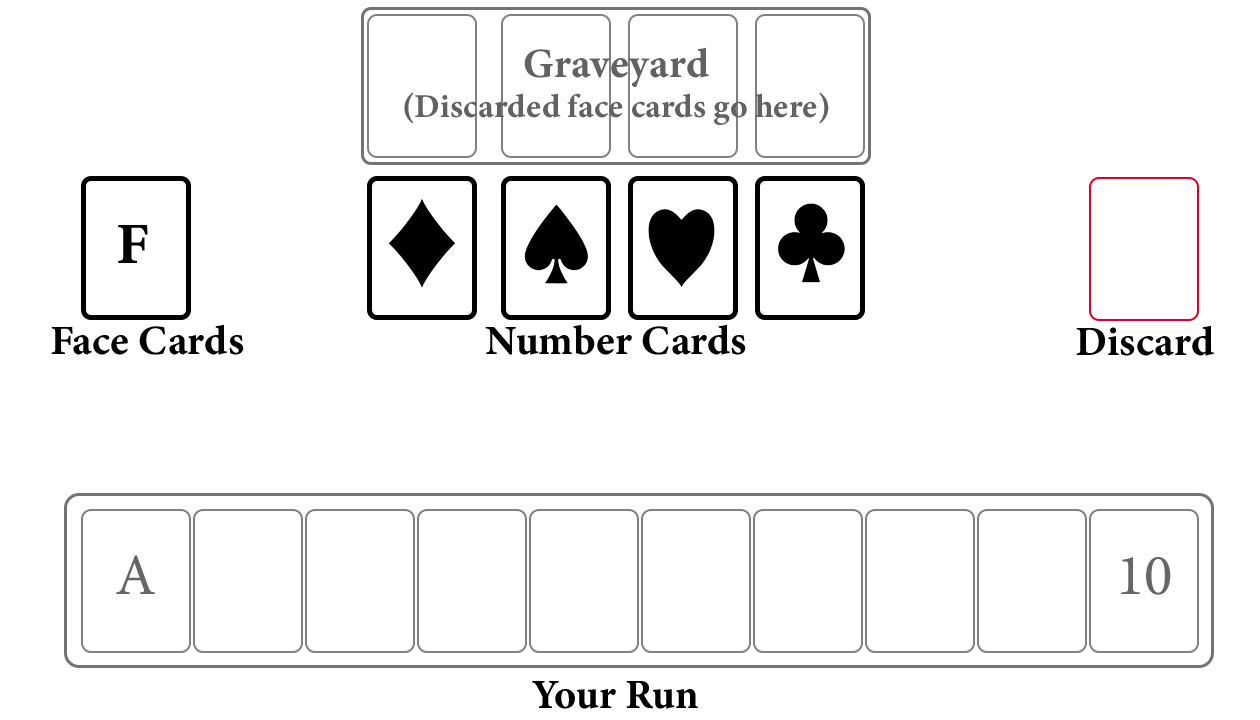
* This gamebook requires a deck of playing cards. While a joker card is not required in order to play, some game content will be inaccessible without one.
* This document is designed to be navigated using the outline feature of a word processor.

The goal of this game is to assemble a set of 10 colors, represented by the cards ace through 10. You collect the colors from four nearby locations, represented by the four suit decks. Each night you choose one suit to draw from. The goal is to get as many cards as you can from that suit in one night without getting caught. For each card you draw, you must also draw a face card representing a member of a household. If the suit of the face card matches the suit you’re drawing from, or if it’s a joker card, you are caught. This means you lose all of the cards you’ve collected that night, and, unless it is a joker, the card that caught you is sent to the graveyard. If all three members of any household catch you, the game ends.

# Setup

Separate all of the face cards from the deck. Add one Joker card and shuffle them. Then, place them face down to the left of your play area. For a more difficult game, add a second joker card.

Sort the remaining cards into four decks by suit. Shuffle each deck and place them face down in a row in the middle of the play area. Then, turn the top card of each deck face up.

The topmost card in each of the number card decks should always be face up.

Night 1

As night falls, you take stock of your options. It’s too risky to search Oxendell manor for pigments. If your aunt or uncle sees you, it’s over. You’re confident that you can reach the two nearest estates, the Gladstone estate and the Hart estate. You can also reach the chapel and the governor’s mansion in town. You still probably don’t want to be seen if you can avoid it, but being spotted by someone in any of those locations wouldn’t necessarily lead back to the painting right away. Given how far all of those places are from Oxendell manor and from each other, you won’t be able to visit more than one in a night, but you can spend a lot of time in each.

Once all of your houseguests have gone to bed, you step out of the painting. The search begins now.

*Draw one card from any of the four suit decks and turn to the corresponding page.*

Night 2

*If you have all 10 cards in your run, turn to G, otherwise, continue below.*

You watch the activity in the main hall of Oxendell manor with a kind of detached calm. Last night was stressful, but you survived it. You have a plan, and you have plenty of time to put it into action.

The day passes without incident. Once you’re sure everyone has gone to bed, you step out of the painting again, ready to take on the second night.

*Draw one card from any of the four suit decks and turn to the corresponding page.*

Night 3

*If you have all 10 cards in your run, turn to B, otherwise, continue below.*

A man from the local court arrives around midday with a copy of your father’s will. Your aunt and uncle’s servants help him gather various objects, presumably those your father left to other acquaintances and relatives of his, from around the house. Soon enough, the sun begins to set and the solicitor leaves for the day. You wait for total darkness and silence to fall, before stepping out of the painting.

*Draw one card from any of the four suit decks and turn to the corresponding page.*

Night 4

*If you have all 10 cards in your run, turn to B, otherwise, continue below.*

You spend the day thinking about how you got here. You remember how strange it was waking up in the painting and knowing right away where you were.

For as long as you can remember this painting has been hanging in the main hall. A daybed by an open window with a view of an apple orchard and a lake. It was a nice painting, but it had always felt incomplete, like it was supposed to be a portrait but the model never arrived. For that reason it had always been your favorite painting in the house. It felt like it was open to you, like a reserved seat at a table. A place you can always go because you know nobody else will be there. Your current situation sheds a different light on those ideas. Less a saved seat, more an empty cell. Like your uncle said when arrived, somebody finally finished the painting.

*Draw one card from any of the four suit decks and turn to the corresponding page.*

Night 5

*If you have all 10 cards in your run, turn to B, otherwise, continue below.*

It storms today. You barely see your aunt and uncle at all. You assume they’re attending to some business elsewhere in the manor, so you waste the day watching throngs of rain rattle against the windows and counting the seconds after lightning strikes. You could almost forget you’re trapped in a painting.

The realization that your time is halfway up creates a pang of anxiety that interrupts your calm. Your confidence has waned slightly since you began, but you’ve made progress and you still have plenty of time. Now that you know what you’re doing, it should be quite possible to escape in time. Luckily, the rain lets up before nightfall. You’re not eager to find out how waterproof you are in this form. Once it’s dark and quiet, you press through the frame and get to work.

*Draw one card from any of the four suit decks and turn to the corresponding page.*

Night 6

*If you have all 10 cards in your run, turn to B, otherwise, continue below.*

A constable arrives today to inform your aunt and uncle that they haven’t been able to find you. Since it has now been seven days since you were last seen, Adelaide may officially claim your inheritance. It doesn’t matter much to you. Her claim is only valid as long as you are missing. If you get out, you can take back your father’s property, and if not it won’t matter.

It does mean that she has the legal right to sell you now, but again, if you aren’t free by then it won’t matter. Still, you find yourself downtrodden as the light of day seeps away. You prise yourself from the painting and set out for the night.

*Draw one card from any of the four suit decks and turn to the corresponding page.*

Night 7

*If you have all 10 cards in your run, turn to B, otherwise, continue below.*

It has now been over a week that you have been trapped here. You miss the taste of food. You miss the feel of your bed, the feel of anything, really. If you could, you’d give away everything you own, every comfort and luxury you’ll ever experience, just for a moment of sleep. But you can’t.

The sun sets again and the painting releases you to the night.

*Draw one card from any of the four suit decks and turn to the corresponding page.*

Night 8

*If you have all 10 cards in your run, turn to B, otherwise, continue below.*

Your aunt and uncle spend most of the day discussing their inheritance. Adelaide is to inherit the title of Countess, though that doesn’t mean much, and through her Edgar will inherit the Oxendell estate and all of your father’s wealth. You feel as though the idea of your uncle claiming your inheritance should anger you, but in the face of a larger existential threat you can’t bring yourself to care.

The hours pass, night arrives. You push through the surface of the painting and set off.

*Draw one card from any of the four suit decks and turn to the corresponding page.*

Night 9

*If you have all 10 cards in your run, turn to B, otherwise, continue below.*

You feel drained today, exhausted but unable to rest. You consider that the painting might be sapping your energy. Every night it gets harder to push through the surface of the frame and easier to fall back into it. It doesn’t matter though, you’ll be sold off in London before you ever have to worry about that. As soon as the house is clear, you push out of the painting.

*Draw one card from any of the four suit decks and turn to the corresponding page.*

Night 10

*If you have all 10 cards in your run, turn to B, otherwise, continue below.*

They take you down from the wall today in preparation for their departure tomorrow. The confidence you felt on the first night has drained away little by little each day as the magnitude of your task became clear, and the consequences for failure grew closer. Now there’s nothing left but despair. You watch the sun set, possibly for the last time, and feel the painting’s binds relax. This is the final night. It’s all or nothing. You take a deep breath, and force yourself through the frame. It takes almost all of your strength. You have a feeling tomorrow night you won’t be able to push through.

*Draw one card from any of the four suit decks and turn to the corresponding page.*

Night 11

It seems your time is up.

*If you have all 10 cards in your run, turn to B, otherwise, turn to A.*

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# ♦ Diamonds

#### Ace

As you reach the open halls of the Gladstone manor you are stuck by a powerfully astringent odor mingling with the usual faint smell of rot. The shadowy, dust-smothered artifacts that surround you seem transformed by the sensation. More sinister, perhaps. More alive. Their eyes, those who have eyes, follow you as you pass. A dim light draws you deeper into the manor to a doorway with stairs leading downward. The warm glow of an oil lamp burns at the bottom, but you can hear no indication of movement.

After a moment you creep down the stairs, the smell becoming stronger with each step. In an instant you discover why. At the center of the room is the severed head of a cow suspended above a shallow puddle of blood on a metal work table. Thin copper lines protrude from the head, some connecting to various electrical instruments, others to a series of jars decorated with animal carvings. Fighting every instinct, you step further into the room. The smell is suffocating now. The buzzing of the instruments like a swarm of flies in your head. You reach out a trembling arm and dip a finger into the pool of blood. For a moment it takes all of your willpower not to vomit. Then all at once the blood vanishes, replaced with crumbling grey ash. Immediately you turn, retreating up the stairs and away from this sick place as the prickling warmth of the gruesome pigment washes through you.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a diamonds or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another diamonds card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

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#### Two

A large doorway leads you from the central hall of the Gladstone manor into the library. The walls of the circular room are lined with books from all over the world, some as many as a thousand years old, or so Doctor Gladstone had once told you. Gladstone’s books had always interested you. They told of exotic lands, great mysteries, and a world that had always been out of reach. The particular book you came here for is a large atlas, bound in purple leather and sitting, as it always had, on a podium in the center of the room. This book had always fascinated you the most, but you had been forbidden from so much as touching it. It was one-of-a-kind, too valuable to let a child leaf through at her fancy. All of this crosses your mind as you approach the book, but none of it slows you down. You grab the leather-bound volume and it crumbles to ash in your hands. The air feels softer as the new pigment flows into your being. You stare at the ashes scattered around the base of the podium, unable to muster any sorrow at what you’ve done. They were just images. Soon, you tell yourself, you’ll be able to see the real thing.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a diamonds or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another diamonds card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.

#### Three

The darkened halls of the Gladstone manor open before you. You reach a stairwell and head up to the second floor, eventually finding what you were looking for, the master bedroom. Surely a man as wealthy and travelled as Dr. Gladstone must have quite the collection of exotic tonics and ointments in his private chambers. You slip silently through the door, finding the bedroom devoid of life. A quick search of the room turns up nothing useful, so you move on to an adjacent room that you assume is Gladstone’s study. Upon entering the room, however, you discover that it is actually a Boudoir. A small writing desk sits in the corner. Opposite that is a dusty vanity upon which you find a mostly full container of arsenical lotion. You open the container and dip a finger into the mixture. After a moment, the lotion turns to ash in your hands. A feeling of cool lightness seeps into you as you absorb the new pigment before turning to leave.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a diamonds or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another diamonds card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

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#### Four

Dust fills the air and blankets every surface of the Gladstone Manor, creating an eerie quiet that reminds you of fallen snow. Sculptures, masks, and carvings from long-dead craftsmen line the hallways, staring vacantly at the walls before them. Most of the artifacts you pass are from Egypt. Dr. Gladstone must have spent a great deal of time there. He did after all design his house in the style of those ancient architects. Perhaps that is why the vase stood out so much when you saw it. Light blue porcelain decorated with intricate blue designs, this object clearly came from the orient. You place a hand on the vase and it crumbles to ash at your touch. A bracing chill sweeps through you as you leave the empty pedestal behind.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a diamonds or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another diamonds card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

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#### Five

One of the many items in Doctor Gladstone’s private collection is an amulet in the shape of the Ancient Egyptian symbol for life. It had always been your favorite item, and as such it was the only item that you remember the precise location of. You hesitate in front of the open display case, staring at the simple light-green carving. It seems a shame to destroy something so ancient, and so beautiful. Surely you could find another object of the correct pigmentation. But the truth is, time is short. You can’t afford to risk your own freedom for the sake of an object. You reach for the amulet, just as you’ve wanted to do your entire life. For a moment, you’re holding it. It’s cool to the touch, and lighter than you expected. Then, it’s gone, leaving you with a handful of ash and the soft tingling sensation of a new pigment.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a diamonds or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another diamonds card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

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#### Six

You wander aimlessly through the artifacts of Doctor Gladstone’s collection, searching for any usable pigment. You had been certain it would be easy to find pigments here, but it seems time has worn the color off these once vibrant objects. A glint of light catches your eye, bringing you to a stop. In the corner of the room a single golden coin sits on a shelf. The symbol on its face appears to be hand-moulded. You pick up the coin and it dissolves in your hand, scattering ash across the floor. The new pigment courses through you like adrenaline, filling you with a buzzing energy.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a diamonds or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another diamonds card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

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#### Seven

You seem to have stumbled upon a dressing room. One that, judging by the dust coating nearly every surface, had gone unused for quite some time. The room appears to have been rummaged through recently. Drawers and cabinets stand open, their contents left disheveled and unorganized. Draped over a chair in one corner is the only object in the room not covered in dust: an ornate blue gown. It looks either brand new, or recently cleaned, odd considering there hasn’t been a woman living in the Gladstone manor for nearly a decade now. It doesn’t really matter either way. You pick up the dress and let it crumble away, the ash all but disappearing among the particles of dust. The pigment instills a welcome sense of comfort and serenity in you as you leave the room.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a diamonds or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another diamonds card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

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#### Eight

After some wandering you find yourself in a study. It seems too small to belong to Dr. Gladstone. There’s barely enough room for a desk. A quick glance at the letters on the desk reveal that this is the study of Mr. Livingston, Gladstone’s assistant and travelling companion. Beside his desk you spot a brown globe. Without missing a beat, you reach out and touch it. The globe turns to ash and falls to the ground in one smooth motion. As the brown paints from the globe seep into your being you feel denser, more substantive. You leave the tiny study and head back to the hall.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a diamonds or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another diamonds card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

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#### Nine

You’re less familiar with the Gladstones’ drawing room than you are with the rest of the house. You had never been allowed in here as a child, not that you had much interest. A grand piano sits in a rounded alcove across from a large fireplace with a sitting area. You’re about to turn and leave when a flash of green catches your eye. Beside the grand piano is a toy piano, no more than a foot tall and painted dark green. Presumably it belongs to Gladstone’s son. Regardless, you walk over to the toy and pick it up. To your surprise, only the wooden outside of the piano dissolves. The internal chimes all tumble to the ground with a loud clang. You freeze as the new pigment soaks into you. When it becomes apparent that nobody heard the sound, you turn and leave the room.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a diamonds or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another diamonds card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

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#### Ten

You find yourself in a poorly-maintained yard behind the Gladstone manor. Brick-lined flower beds and gardening plots are overrun with weeds, ivy, and unkempt grass. In search of flowers or other brightly-colored plants, you venture further into the yard. Eventually, you stumble upon the grave of Mary Gladstone, who died nearly ten years ago. The area around the grave is much better tended than the rest of the garden, though curiously the earth over the grave appears to be freshly turned. There are still no flowers to be found in the area. You do, however, find a wrought iron shovel resting near the grave. You grab the handle of the shovel and it dissolves before you can lift it off the ground. The forest appears to grow darker and you feel heavier as the black iron flows through you. Then, glancing once more at the grave, you head back towards the manor.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a diamonds or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another diamonds card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

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#### Jack

“Mother?” A child’s voice stops you as you reach the main hall. You turn and see Martin Gladstone staring at you, his mouth agape. “I knew you’d be back,” he whispers, “father said you’d be back.” He thinks you’re someone else. If you handle this right, you might be able to get away without an incident. You smile and nod slowly, then turn to walk away.

“I must tell father,” Martin says behind you. You spin back to face him but he’s already running down the hallway away from you. You raise your arm, pushing the unsettled pigment down the hall after him. It washes over him, knocking him to the ground. You sigh, considering his unconscious form for a moment. He’ll be fine, and your secret is safe for now.

*Place the Jack of Diamonds face up behind the diamonds deck. Place all cards drawn this turn face up in the discard pile.*

*If this is the third diamonds card to be placed here, turn to F.*

*Otherwise, return all other face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

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#### Queen

You’re just arriving in the main hall of the Gladstone manor when the front door opens and Mr. Livingston steps through. He doesn’t notice you at first. He eases the door silently closed and begins to cross the room before he spots you. Immediately his eyes narrow.

“You’re not the first to break in to this manor,” he growls, drawing a pistol from his coat. You can tell from his voice that he’s been drinking. He raises the pistol and fires, shattering a display case several feet to your right. You dive away from the shower of glass and raise your arm towards Mr. Livingston. Your unset pigment surges forward, crashing into him and knocking him out. You slip through the doors of the manor and out into the night.

*Place the Queen of Diamonds face up behind the diamonds deck. Place all cards drawn this turn face up in the discard pile.*

*If this is the third diamonds card to be placed here, turn to F.*

*Otherwise, return all other face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

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#### King

“Stop, specter!” a voice rings out just as you reach the entry hall. You turn to see the barrel of a hunting rifle, on the other side of which is a pale and disheveled Doctor Gladstone. His bloodshot eyes widen with recognition and too late you realize your mistake.

“Miss Ward? But how...” he whispers. The rifle sags for a moment before snapping back up. “The painting. Cursed spirit, you may bear her likeness but you can’t outwit me.” He fires twice, the shots echoing back through the halls of the mansion, but the bullets pass through you and embed themselves in the wood of the door behind you. It won’t be much time now before somebody comes to investigate. Gladstone drops his rifle. He’s reaching for an ancient looking pendant. You launch yourself towards him. The unset energy of the night swirls and boils around you. His face contorts in terror as you reach out, and then relaxes. He falls to the ground unconscious as the pigment disperses around him.

*Place the King of Diamonds face up behind the diamonds deck. Place all cards drawn this turn face up in the discard pile.*

*If this is the third diamonds card to be placed here, turn to F.*

*Otherwise, return all other face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

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#### Joker

Something is wrong. A feeling of unease creeps over you as you move through the halls.Ahead of you, a shadow appears in a doorway lit by an oil lamp. You quickly duck into a nearby room. Down the hall, you hear the sound of wooden stairs creaking under someone’s slow, heavy footsteps. Peeking out from around the corner, you see a human figure standing in the hallway. It appears to be a woman. Smoke rises from her sunken, black eyes and mouth. Her sickly grey skin is covered in a layer of blackened bandages, and electrical wires trail from her scalp and back.

You panic at the sight of her, thrusting your arm towards her. The night’s collected pigment energy slams into her, but she limps towards you unaffected. You turn and run. Behind you, she lets out a screech so piercing that you swear you can still hear its reverberations when you reach Oxendell manor.

*Place all cards drawn this turn face up in the discard pile.*

*Return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck.*

*Then, turn to the next night.*

# ♠ Spades

#### Ace

You’re searching the area around the chapel for useful flowers when you see a door you had never noticed before. Curious, you enter and go down a few steps to a small, dark room. You look around. One wall is lined with long shelves, filled with bottles of wine. You approach the shelf and take one. It’s a deep, rich red color. You pop the cork off the top and pour a bit into the palm of your hand. It turns to ash as it hits your skin. As you absorb its essence, you feel a gentle warmth. It’s invigorating. You slide the open bottle back onto a shelf and leave the small room, returning to the chapel.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a spades or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another spades card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Two

It seems the chapel is preparing to host some kind of ceremony. In one of the back rooms you discover several vases overflowing with flowers. You approach for a better look. The flowers are a rich purple color, with dark green leaves and stems. You pull off a single petal from one of the flowers. It crumbles in your fingers, turning to ash. The pigment flows through you as you absorb its energy. It feels as rich as the color appears. Not wanting to disrupt whatever these flowers are for, you turn and head back to the main chapel.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a spades or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another spades card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Three

You move up the aisle towards the back of the chapel. Among the dull grey tones of the altar and podium, something bright catches your eye. It’s a white cloth, so brilliant it appears to glow. It’s folded neatly on a shelf behind the altar. As you grab it, it turns to ash, raining down over the altar and everything around it. You absorb its white pigment. It feels cool and calming as the essence moves through you. Finding nothing more of interest behind the altar, you head back to the front of the chapel.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a spades or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another spades card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Four

The chapel’s stained glass window transforms the moonlight into colorful patterns on the floor. Normally you would never be able to reach the window, but it looks like tonight someone just finished doing some kind of work on it. There’s a ladder leading right up to the bottom of the window. You climb up and touch the lowest tile in the window, a blue one. The tile crumbles away to ash. You shiver as the chilling blue pigment flows through you. You’ve almost reached the bottom of the ladder when the window above you groans loudly. You look up in time to see a huge section fall out of the center of the window. It narrowly misses you, hitting the ground with an earth-shattering crash. You stand there motionless as the reverberating sound dies off. After several minutes, you feel confident that nobody is coming.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a spades or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another spades card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Five

As you walk around the side of the chapel you notice a plethora of light green vines growing up its walls. You reach into the mass of vines and as you touch a handful of them, they crumble. The essence of their light green color washes over you, feeling pleasant and soothing. The leafy vines continue to crumble and turn to ash, leaving behind an ash-stained wall. The effect spreads across the outside walls of the church, turning every vine into flakes of ash. You leave behind the ashes and continue to survey the church grounds.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a spades or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another spades card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Six

A small golden angel statue seems to stare at you from the front of the chapel. The faint moonlight through the windows catches it just right as it shimmers. You approach it, admiring the way it reflects the light. It is positioned in the center of a small alcove. You pick it up. It begins to crumble away as you absorb its golden yellow pigment. It feels somewhat sunny and warm as the essence flows through you. The ashes pile up in the alcove, replacing what was once a beautiful decoration. You leave behind the remains and circle the chapel again.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a spades or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another spades card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Seven

You take notice of the bench coverings. They are a deep royal blue. You approach one. You touch it lightly, then tug on the fabric. It begins to crumble into ash as you feel the rush. You feel the wave of the dark blue color wash over you as you absorb it. You move away from the pew as the whole row turns to ash. You back away from the remains.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a spades or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another spades card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Eight

The silence of the cemetery outside the chapel is eerie. You can almost feel the presence of the spirits there. You look at the ground, eyeing the brown earth. You bend down and touch the dirt. The brown pigment feels somewhat earthy and warm. It turns to ash beneath your fingers, crumbling into almost nothing. You rise again, looking at the new black patch on the ground. You take one last look around before moving away.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a spades or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another spades card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Nine

You notice moss growing on a headstone outside. You can almost feel the presence of the spirit of the person who was buried there as you approach. You reach towards the stone and touch the soft, dark green moss. It crumbles to ash. The effect travels over the headstone, turning the green to black and leaving behind a dusty coating. You feel the power of the dark green essence absorb into you. You move away from the headstone and look around.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a spades or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another spades card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Ten

You notice the gate to the churchside cemetery. It is forged of black iron bars. Was it to keep things out, or keep things in? You wrap your hands around the bars of the gate, you break away two handfuls of ash as the gate crumbles in your hands. This pigment is dark and cold. It creeps through you. The rest of the gate begins to crumble as well. All that remains is a large pile of ashes blacker than the iron that forged the gate. Whatever it was keeping in or out would find everything much more accessible now. You turn away from what remains.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a spades or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another spades card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Jack

You move to the side of the chapel, where there is a long corridor. You pass by doors to several small rooms. You hear footsteps. You hide behind the nearest thing you can find, a tall bookshelf. You see someone enter the building from the end of this hallway. They walk right by your hiding place. It sounded like they stumbled a bit. You look around the corner of the bookshelf to see if you can get a good look at them. It looks like it’s a priest. You didn’t immediately recognize him, but you were sure you had seen him before.

The priest opens the door to the wine storage room. Was he crazy? Curious now, you follow him. You slipped through the door and hid behind a shelf. You watch him carefully. He slides a bottle off a shelf, pops off the top, and puts his mouth straight to the bottle.

You realize this is Priest Taylor. You had always thought there was something strange about him. Maybe this was his secret, he was taking holy wine from the church. Clearly something wasn’t right about him.

You bump into the shelf as you lean forward. A bottle of wine falls to the ground and shatters. Priest Taylor looks in your direction. He sees only a glimpse of you, but it’s enough to alert him.

“What are you doing in this place?” He practically screams his question as he hurls the bottle of wine he is drinking from in your direction. It lands nowhere near you. “Did the Bishop send you to follow me? I know he’s a suspicious man.”

You remain hidden, hoping he will just go back to the wine.

“I know you’re there,” he continues. You realize you may have no choice in this situation. You must do what you have to do. You slowly step out from your hiding place. His face pales.

“Evil spirit, I should have known one of you would come for me!” He picks up another bottle of wine. Before he can attack, you rush at him, pushing the pigment you’ve collected tonight into him.

The Priest collapses to the ground, unconscious.

*Place the Jack of Spades face up behind the spades deck. Place all cards drawn this turn face up in the discard pile.*

*If this is the third spades card to be placed here, turn to D.*

*Otherwise, return all other face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Queen

You move through the cemetery. You look around at all the headstones. It’s an eerie sort of quiet. You hear a door open and close. Is there someone else here with you? You hide behind a particularly tall headstone. You see a figure approaching. As it gets closer, you recognize it as Sister Mason, one of the most devout in the area.

Sister Mason approaches the headstone of one of her family members. She touches it softly. Her back is to you, so you try to slip away. She hears you and whips around to face you. As soon as she sees you she becomes visibly confused.

“Evie Ward? Is that you?” She comes closer. “I noticed you haven’t been coming to services, are you alright?”

Her face pales as she realizes. “You’re…”

You have no choice. You lunge at her, the fresh pigment of the night swirling around you. In an instant she’s knocked out.

*Place the Queen of Spades face up behind the spades deck. Place all cards drawn this turn face up in the discard pile.*

*If this is the third spades card to be placed here, turn to D.*

*Otherwise, return all other face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### King

You creep through the rows of pews in the chapel. It is peacefully quiet, but a somewhat eerie quality taints the air. It’s an odd feeling. You hear a click. A door being unlocked? It came from the side of the chapel. You moved towards it, sure your ears were playing tricks on you. But the door opens. You retreat into a corner, hoping whoever it is won’t notice you. Who would be sneaking around the church at this hour? You watch Bishop Cobbler himself come through the door. He looks around the chapel. He notices your form in the corner. You try not to move, hoping he still won’t notice you in the shadows.

No such luck.

“Young lady, are my eyes deceiving me?” He calls out to you. “You shouldn’t be here at this hour.”

Not knowing what else to do, you try to flee. The Bishop pushes up his glasses and finally sees you clearly. “A demon is here!”

In a panic, you rush at him. An instinct almost feral takes over. His eyes widen as the fresh pigment from tonight envelopes him. Then, he falls to the ground, unconscious.

*Place the King of Spades face up behind the spades deck. Place all cards drawn this turn face up in the discard pile.*

*If this is the third spades card to be placed here, turn to D.*

*Otherwise, return all other face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Joker

You creep through the quiet cemetery, observing your surroundings carefully. You hear an odd sound coming from the corner, kind of like someone humming. It isn’t long until you realize someone else is there in the shadows. You can barely make out the form, but someone is there. They clearly haven’t seen you. Perhaps you can still escape. You move towards the church building.

At that moment, the figure turns around. “Hey!” a deep voice shouts. You move away faster.

“Come back here!” he moves fast. You eventually find yourself backed into a corner, face to face with a gravedigger. Who digs graves at this hour?

He brandishes a shovel at you. “I told them there was ghosts out here. Who are you? Who have you come back to haunt?” Practically everything you fear is present in his dark stare.

You lunge at him. The fresh pigments from tonight shoot towards him. He waves his shovel around frantically and the pigment disperses harmlessly in the air. The effort sends him stumbling backwards into an open grave. You take the opportunity and run for the cemetary gates while he’s stuck.

*Place all cards drawn this turn face up in the discard pile.*

*Return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck.*

Then, turn to the next night.

# ♥ Hearts

#### Ace

You know where to look in Hart manor to find red pigment. The Baron always carries a cane bearing a deep maroon ruby, an heirloom of the Hart family going back as far as the town itself. Such a valuable item would only be kept in the chambers of the Baron himself. Sure enough, as you enter the room of the sleeping royalty you spot the gleaming gemstone leaning against the Baron’s bedside table. You silently make your way to the side of his bed and grab the scepter. Almost instantly it begins to crumble, falling through your fingers and scattering the floor in ash. You turn and leave, the warmth of the red gem now coursing through you.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a hearts or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another hearts card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Two

You find yourself in the immaculate dressing room of Anne Hart, the Baron’s wife. To one side, several dresses hang neatly in a wardrobe. To the other sits a jewelry box so beautiful it may as well be a piece of jewelry itself. Directly opposite the door is a vanity, upon which rests a silken purple shawl. As far back as you can remember, Lady Hart has worn this shawl to public events and social gatherings around town. It may be the single most famous garment in Oxendell. Regardless, you grab the fine silk. It rolls and boils in your hand, throwing ash into the air and coating the room in grey dust as it dissolves. The purple pigment washes over you and with it you feel a calm comfort. You regard this once spotless room for a moment. Then, you return to the halls of Hart manor.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a hearts or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another hearts card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Three

The upper attic of Hart manor is a sea of forgotten things. Among those things you find an old chest, beautifully painted but clearly abandoned for some time. Inside, amid the hastily packed rags and time-worn clothing items, you discover a pair of long white gloves, seemingly untouched by time.

You tenderly pick them up and are stuck all at once by a wall of sound. You hear voices, music, the clink and rattle of silverware. Then, just as suddenly, it all fades away, replaced with the sounds of crickets and gently lapping water.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Peterson,” you hear a woman’s voice nearby. “I’m betrothed to Fredrick. You had to know this is how it would end, that we couldn’t be together.”

For a moment you’re filled with despair and rage, then suddenly you’re back in the attic. You hadn’t realized it but you’re lying on your back now. The gloves are gone, replaced with a pile of ash and a feeling of chilling hollowness.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a hearts or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another hearts card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Four

Being the oldest structure in Oxendell, The cellar of the Hart estate is a place of old wine and even older secrets. These ancient tunnels reach under the entire town, providing a hidden place for generations of townsfolk to engage in countless secret activities over the centuries.

As you descend the steps from the manor, you’re stopped dead by the sound of voices. Quickly, you duck underneath the steps, praying that whoever it was hadn’t seen you. The voices grow louder, a man and a woman speaking in low, urgent tones. You can’t make out what they’re saying, even as they pass right by you, but you can just see them through the gaps in the stairs. One of them drops a light blue blanket and pauses as if to pick it up before hurrying on without it.

Once you’re sure they’re gone you come out from under the stairs. The blanket is small, likely for a baby. You pick it up and it turns to ash. Suddenly, the chill of these ancient tunnels seems more pronounced. You head back up the stairs to the manor.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a hearts or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another hearts card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Five

The Hart Estate is known throughout the countryside as a seat of old power. The manor is extravagant to say the least, full of priceless works of art passed down through the ages. Yet somehow, after hours of searching, you have been unable to find a suitable pigment. A house containing nearly all of the fine art in Oxendell, and you can’t find the colors you need.

Eventually, you come across a painting of a hillside. The image is rendered in such vibrant greens that you can almost feel the warmth of the sun emanating from it. As you touch the painting, the grass on the hillside dries out and the painted landscape becomes barren before your very eyes. You feel yourself absorb the green paint. A tingling sensation and a sharpness of focus come over you as the new pigment settles.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a hearts or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another hearts card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Six

The fires are roaring tonight in Hart manor. You enter the dining room, and are shocked to find that a few serving dishes have yet to be cleaned up. If the servants are still about finishing their work for the night, you might have reason to be more cautious.

A vase on the grand walnut dining table grabs your attention. Across its surface is a series of beautifully painted sunflowers. Sunflowers have always appealed to you. Their independence has always seemed so noble and unique among flowers. You run a hand along the surface of the vase and watch as it falls away into a thousand tiny particles of ash. You can’t help but feel a twinge of regret as the intense energy of the yellow pigment seizes you.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a hearts or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another hearts card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Seven

The bedrooms of the Hart manor are numerous, but this one doesn’t seem like the room of a nobleman. Clothing is scattered across the floor and the smell of tobacco hangs in the air. You notice a small handkerchief hanging atop the dresser and reach out to grab it. Suddenly, you hear the sounds of birds chirping, and the smell of sweat and soil fills the room. Your muscles ache and sweat rolls down your face and back.

“Peterson,” a voice says from behind you. It sounds a bit like Lord Hart, but it’s not him.

“Yes, your lordship?” you find yourself replying.

“Beautiful job on the garden. You’ve truly outdone yourself this time. It’s sure to be the talk of the party.” The voice chuckles and for a moment you’re overflowing with pride. “Come and join me for a drink in the shade.”

The handkerchief is gone. In its place is a handful of ash. The sense of pride and serenity lingers as you absorb the dark blue pigment.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a hearts or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another hearts card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Eight

As you traverse the halls of the Hart manor you stumble upon an armory. Finely crafted swords and armor of various ages adorn the walls, and a rack of fencing foils sits in the center of the room. The foils belong to Jude Hart, Lord Hart’s successor. You had trained alongside him when you were younger. As you got older you had been encouraged to give up fencing and engage in more “appropriate” activities. He, meanwhile, had been allowed to continue training, and according to rumor had become fairly adept at it.

You pick up one of the wooden training swords you used to practice with, realizing too late that doing so will destroy it. The wood creaks and splits before bursting into ash. It doesn’t really matter, you don’t have much interest in fencing anymore anyway. The brown pigment permeates your form as you leave the armory.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a hearts or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another hearts card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Nine

The halls of Hart Manor are old and sprawling. Parts of the antique construction haven’t been used for decades. You wind your way through the maze of first floor corridors to a pair of large double doors, which open more quietly than you had expected. Inside is a large ballroom with a high vaulted ceiling, hung with crystal chandeliers. The smallest sounds echo off the marble pillars and floor. Round tables are clustered near the walls, some still covered by tablecloths. It seems this room was recently used.

The moonlight streaming in through the high arched windows draws your eye to a pair of cloth slippers. They are a beautiful deep green, so vibrant they seem unreal. As you reach for them, you suddenly hear voices, music, and the squeaking of shoes on marble.

“So nice to finally meet you” A woman’s voice emerges from the crowd, “I’ve long been an admirer of your work on our gardens here. If you’d have me, I’d love to tour the grounds with the artist himself.”

The voices fade, leaving you with only a small pile of dust where the shoes had been. The room seems to become clearer around you as you absorb the deep green pigment. The question of how the shoes came to be abandoned in the ballroom nags at your mind, but you don’t have time to investigate. You must move on.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a hearts or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another hearts card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Ten

The halls in the deepest, oldest sections of Hart Manor are dark and narrow. Eventually they lead you to a small room towards the back of the manor. As you adjust to the darkness of the room, you notice it’s filled with boxes and chests of all shapes and sizes. Most are covered with a thick film of dust or hidden under sheets. In the center of the room is a heap of blackened wood, which on closer inspection appears to have once been another chest. You reach out to sift through the burnt remains but they turn to ash at your touch. The black charred pigment flows into you, giving weight and substance to your form. All that remains is an ornate silver cross resting in the pile of ashes. You consider it for a moment, then turn to leave.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a hearts or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another hearts card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Jack

Navigating the Hart estate is troublesome even in the daylight. At this hour it’s a nightmare. You feel your way through seemingly endless pitch-black corridors, looking for anything familiar, but you can’t shake the feeling you’re only moving deeper into the house.

“You don’t look well,” whispers a voice from behind you.

You whip around to see Jude Hart standing in the hallway.

“Evie Oxendell, right?,” he says quietly, “I thought you went missing. What are you doing here?” He starts to move closer as he talks, his voice slowly growing louder. “Have you been here the whole time? There are a lot of people out there trying to find you, you know. I’m going to have to tell my father about this.” He’s practically shouting now. You have to put a stop to this before it’s too late.

The pigment you collected tonight hasn’t had time to set yet, and it begins to agitate. Jude barely has time to react as you raise your arms and channel the roiling energy into him. He falls to the ground, unconscious as the pigment dissipates into the air.

*Place the Jack of Hearts face up behind the hearts deck. Place all cards drawn this turn face up in the discard pile.*

*If this is the third hearts card to be placed here, turn to C.*

*Otherwise, return all other face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Queen

You’re passing through the library on your way to the main hall when Lady Hart steps into the doorway in front of you. Despite being in her nightgown, the usually timid woman appears now as a rather imposing figure. She stares right through you with the cold, bleary gaze of a sleepwalker as her mouth twists into a cruel smile. In this moment, it almost seems as if *she* is the apparition.

“There’s nothing I hate more than finding rats scurrying around my home,” she says, pulling a pistol from behind her back and pointing it at you without hesitation. There isn’t a moment to waste. You call on tonight's yet-unset pigment and thrust it at her. She falls backwards just as the pistol fires, lodging a bullet in the books behind you. Moments after her unconscious body hits the ground, you hear movement in the rooms above. You rush to the front doors of the manor and slip out just in time.

*Place the Queen of Hearts face up behind the hearts deck. Place all cards drawn this turn face up in the discard pile.*

*If this is the third hearts card to be placed here, turn to C.*

*Otherwise, return all other face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### King

You’ve just stepped into the main hall when you spot Lord Hart descending the stairs, his heavy footfalls shaking the floorboards. You duck into a nearby room and pray he hasn’t seen you. There doesn’t seem to be anywhere to hide. With a great thud the door bursts open and Lort Hart steps through.

“You shouldn’t be here,” he growls, walking towards you. “Father Tyler said we’d be rid of you once and for all. I should have known a century-old curse wouldn’t be dealt with so easily.” He thinks you’re something else. If you could just get away now you may be able to keep tonight’s pigment, but there’s nowhere to run. He’s standing between you and the only exit. “Clearly the heavenly solution didn’t work,” he says, raising his cane to strike, “so I’m going to try an earthly one.”

As he brings his cane down, you reach out. The boiling energy of the unsettled pigment rushes into him, knocking him backwards into the wall. His cane clatters to the ground next to his unconscious form. The pigment dissipates with a soft fizzing sound as you beat a hasty retreat out of Hart Manor.

*Place the King of Hearts face up behind the hearts deck. Place all cards drawn this turn face up in the discard pile.*

*If this is the third hearts card to be placed here, turn to C.*

*Otherwise, return all other face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Joker

You slip through the doors of Hart Manor and into the brisk night. You barely make it two steps from the door before a voice stops you.

“Nightmare,” the groundskeeper regards you with something like passing interest. He’s standing perfectly still in the middle of the road, staring at you. He seems to want you to say something but you can’t, so after a moment he continues.

“This is my home, nightmare, I’ve taken care of this estate for over two-hundred years.” You feel a sudden icy grip around your entire being. The night’s pigment starts to boil and drift away. “So you can imagine my displeasure when some totty-all-colours comes in and starts making a mess of the place,” he hisses. The grip grows tighter. With the last of the night’s pigments you break out of the groundskeeper’s supernatural grasp and run for the edge of the estate. The groundskeeper calling out after you,

“This is my home, nightmare, you’d do well never to return.”

*Place all cards drawn this turn face up in the discard pile.*

*Return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck.*

Then, turn to the next night.

# ♣ Clubs

#### Ace

The night is calm and deadly silent. Any sound will echo through the manor and you will be caught red handed. For some odd reason the Governor’s Office calls to you tonight. You tiptoe your way to the end of the main hallway, glancing at the historic paints along the walls as you go and into the door just off to the left of the stairs; still on the bottom floor.

The Governor’s person desk should have something..

Nothing in the first or second drawer… Being ever so careful not to unsettle what's inside. On the Right of the desk is a handle obviously more used than the others. Going to pull it, you nearly rip it out Quills, paperweights, and something golden create an unholy sound that could definitely be heard throughout the house. Seems it has gotten slippery and loose over the years! Picking everything up you notice the ring and the emblem upon it. It must be used for wax letter seals! You look back in the same drawer and sure enough is a large pack of deep maroon wax that crumbles at your touch. The warmth of the red pigment flows into you.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a clubs or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another clubs card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Two

As enter the front door, an eerie feel creeps over you as you can feel the history within the building. Paintings line the walls, each filled with great battles and figures in the village of Oxendell. It's a windy night and the leaves from the surrounding trees brush against the large ceiling-to-floor windows. Somewhat near the end you can see a shadow - something is behind the drapery touching the ground to the left.

You decide to take a closer took, bracing yourself for what may come! To your surprise… its a little girls dolly toy. Twine for hair and buttons for eyes. Homemade and full of love. What grabs your attention is the purple dress with the little white flowers imprinted randomly all down the dress. As you touch the fabric the color fades into you and the doll turns to ash; you know you got what you came for.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a clubs or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another clubs card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Three

To the governor's office you go tonight. It is a windy enough night to help mask whatever shenanigans you end up in. Down the hall of the building and to the double doors on the left, next to the stairs. Your initial thought is that this room is not well kept. But after looking around you come to realize it is an “organised” mess. Mostly just books and you find a couple of important documents, but not what you came here for. You have avoided the desks, but now you much search! You reach for a roll of paper, but it crumbles at your touch. Somehow you forgot that happens. What you imagine was a newspaper has turned to ash, and you feel suddenly cooler and lighter as the pigment flows through you.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a clubs or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another clubs card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Four

You have been slowly looking for awhile now. Your instincts lead you to go upstairs. The stairs are ancient and bowed inward. Upon reaching the upper level you look left, look right and then before you know it, you head for the closed door on the left. Nothing out of the ordinary but you might as well start somewhere. Upon entering it, you realize it's a dressing room for a woman of importance. Different fabrics with unique patterns line the room. After a moment you go to leave.

When out of the corner of your eye is a large dresser that rather well kept and organized, unlike the rest of the room. Deciding to walk up and take a look, you discover it holds elegant jewelry of every color and style.In the center drawer, is a sea blue, almost translucent, pearl necklace set. As if it calls to you; you reach out to touch the jewelry. The pearls dissolve and you feel a wave of harsh cold as the pigment becomes you.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a clubs or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another clubs card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Five

You aimlessly wander the upper halls of the Governor's mansion without finding anything of use. None of the drawers or cabinets have anything to help your cause. You venture to the building’s library, surely something must be there.

You walk around the bookcases that tower above you to the ceiling. Carefully, you inspect every book you walk by. Almost as if you are expecting something special to happen and one book will be glowing or something out of the ordinary. Frustrated you shove a pile of books off the table, when one makes an odd sound. You look down and your looks despair turns to curiosity as a light green book catches your eye. The reason it made an odd sound is the metal lock bound around the light green cover. As you grasp it, it falls apart in your hands. Ash tumbles down over the table until you’re holding nothing.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a clubs or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another clubs card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night..*

#### 

#### Six

The Governor is quite an important figure Oxendell the town. And his age shows how long he has been in the office for. His weathered face and patchy gray hair tells a lot of the stress he has endured. His hunched over back requires a cane to walk showing the rest of his body is not in great conditions either. Surprisingly you haven’t the belongings he keeps on himself.

Making your way into his study, you come across the Governor's heavily worn blazer jacket. It is resting on the back of a chair near the fireplace and study desk. In the left coat pocket is a palm sized bell. It must have been used for calling his caretaker from across the manor. Not to be used again as it folds like paper in your hand, and eventually into nothing as the yellow pigment embraces you.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a clubs or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another clubs card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Seven

Tonight you make your way to Governor Clubb’s personal study room. Luckily it is late and all are away for the night. The study room is quite messy. It’s a wonder how he manages to stay organized.

On the desk somewhat too close to the fireplace is an eye catching sight. Amongst the scrolls and tomes is a quill pen. This particular quill is a deep blue color, from no bird you have ever seen. It must be foreign. When you reach out to gasp it, it crumbles and transfers the pigment into you.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a clubs or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another clubs card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Eight

The Governor's Mansion is a mess tonight. It must have been a busy day in the office as there are documents everywhere and little to go organization.

You make your way over the books on the floor and seemingly randomly placed chairs and stools; careful not to knock anything over and raise an alarm.

Upon entering the side room near the Mansion entrance you come across a bag hanging on the right shoulder of an elegant chair near the center of the room. Wondering what could possibly beside, you move to take a look. To your touch, the brown messenger bag grants you the brown pigment and falls to dust.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a clubs or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another clubs card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Nine

When you reach the back door, you can tell something is off. There are patches of grass missing and a trail by something other than human leads to the back entrance. You decide to pursue, and peer inside.

You are half expecting to find a beast of some kind inside, but to your luck, the muddy trail continues on deeper into the abode. On the floor or this mudroom is something circular in the shadows in the middle of the dirt trail that leads to the inner part of the mansion. Upon reaching for it you realize it is a rough material. It is the hounds Dark Green collar! It begins to lose its strength and tact, eventually falling into nothing.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a clubs or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another clubs card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Ten

The Governor’s mansion, a historical building in the middle of town. It calls to you tonight. You find yourself in the back halls of the mansion. An open door has a warming light coming from within and you decide to pursue it. It seems you have found yourself in the personal study of the Governor. A quaint and warming fire is beginning to die out as everyone has gone to sleep for the night.

You are entranced by the dancing flames and cannot help yourself, but walk closer. Without much thought you bend to grab a piping hot coal. But to your touch it cools and fades to gray, then white, then a small pile of ash. You feel your form growing stronger, more tangible as the black pigment embraces you.

*Draw a face card and place it face up below the face deck.*

*If it is a clubs or joker card, turn to its corresponding page now.*

*Otherwise, continue below.*

*If you wish to continue the night, draw another clubs card, place it above your run, and turn to the corresponding page.*

*Otherwise, add all of the number cards you have drawn this turn to your run (discarding any redundancies) and return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Jack

You are searching the empty halls of the Governor’s Mansion when you hear a “ding, ding, ding” off in the distance. It has been eerily quiet so this sound is extremely alarming to say the least.

The Governor has had a long life as the legislative overseer of Oxendell. With time, his capabilities have taken a toll and now relies on a caretaker. He seems to make due with this trustworthy family caretaker, Mr. Vich, a foreign fellow.

Due to the sound of the bells from earlier, the caretaker has found you wandering the halls! You use your pigments from tonight to knock him out and escape the mansion.

*Place the Jack of Clubs face up behind the clubs deck. Place all cards drawn this turn face up in the discard pile.*

*If this is the third clubs card to be placed here, turn to E.*

*Otherwise, return all other face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Queen

“Who are you?” a voice shouts out. You turn around, and it feels as if you just entered the manor. And it was definitely the case! Mrs. Clubb, the Governor’s wife is up and about during a restless night. She was obviously not prepared for an unexpected visitor, but she is more than awake to deal with one!  
 “Help, an intruder is here!” Mrs. Clubb howls out to anyone in earshot. You stare at one another for a moment. Then, you strike, sending the pigment you’ve collected tonight shooting towards here. She falls to the ground unconscious, but you can already hear footsteps approaching, so you make your retreat.

*Place the Queen of Clubs face up behind the clubs deck. Place all cards drawn this turn face up in the discard pile.*

*If this is the third clubs card to be placed here, turn to E.*

*Otherwise, return all other face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### King

As you step into a room you hear: “A… A… gh… ghost!” An old man, leaning on his shaky cane stares and points a finger at you. You presume this man must be Governor Clubb, the man in charge all these years.

“Wh.. who are you? What do you want with me?” the Governor mutters. Having no other course of action, you raise your arm towards him and unleash your collected pigment from the night. The Governor’s cane tumbles to the floor, and a moment later he does the same. You decide to retreat before anyone else sees you.

*Place the King of Clubs face up behind the clubs deck. Place all cards drawn this turn face up in the discard pile.*

*If this is the third clubs card to be placed here, turn to E.*

*Otherwise, return all other face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck. Then, turn to the next night.*

#### 

#### Joker

You aimlessly wander the halls, nothing out of the ordinary. Checking each room, being careful not to wake anyone. Eventually you hear some gnawing. What could that possibly be? Whether it will help or harm you, you cautiously move towards the sound. At the end of the hallway is an open door.

It would seem the Governor's mansion is well guarded. The hound of the mansion has seem you and seems very upset at the sight of you. Immediately it begins to gnarl its teeth and makes an unholy sound, looking straight into you. It lunges and you barely manage to duck its bite. You summon the pigment you have collected tonight and fire its energy at the attacking hound, but all it does is push the animal backwards a bit. Out of options, you run, barely making it out of the mansion unharmed.

*Place all cards drawn this turn face up in the discard pile.*

*Return all face cards drawn this turn randomly (for each card, roll a 4-sided die and insert the card at that position from the bottom of the deck) to the bottom half of the face deck.*

*Then, turn to the next night.*

A

The sun rises on the eleventh day since the death of your father. You are taken down from the wall and covered with a sheet. When the sheet is removed you are in London, on display in an exhibition. You are purchased for a new home just outside the city and hung in a drawing room. Occasionally someone will make a remark about the beautiful painting over the mantle, but mostly you are ignored. The months pass, blurring into years which blur into decades. After forty years you stop keeping track.

On one particular night several decades later, when the house is deserted and plane engines roar incessantly overhead, a bomb falls on the house. The explosion starts a fire which burns away the painting, and you with it.

The End

B

The sun rises on a new day as the final pigments set. Cautiously, you reach out of the painting and feel the sunlight on your skin for the first time in days. You step out of the painting, feeling its surface seal shut behind you. You’re free.

You take a moment to look through your father’s will and find a letter addressed to you.

Evie,

If you are reading this it means that I passed on before I could tell you the truth about yourself. For that I am truly sorry. There are many things you deserved to know that I was too cowardly to tell you, so I will start at the beginning.

Most children are born; you were not. Your mother and I were never able to conceive a child. So, after years of trying, she painted one instead. She painted you, and through our love you became real. We never told anyone about this, not even our own families. We didn’t understand how such a thing could happen, and I won’t pretend to understand it even now. We were so overjoyed to have you we didn’t much care how it happened. I know not what will become of you upon my death. I hope that this is a just enough world to allow you life and freedom in my absence. I dare not think of the alternative.

I am sorry to have left you so alone in this world. I’m afraid there is nothing more for you in the life I left behind. All I can do is help you start a new one. My wealth and property are yours. Use them to go out into the world like you always dreamed. Find your true freedom, and take full advantage of your one miraculous life.

Be well and be good. Love forever,

Nicholas Ward

The End

C

The next morning, you hear a knock at the door, which Edgar’s valet answers.

“Morning, sir,” the visitor says, “I’m with the local constabulary, here with some questions about some recent incidents at Hart manor. Are the property owners available?”

A few minutes later, Edgar and Adelaide arrive in the hall.

“Morning, sir, ma’am,” the investigator greets them as they enter, “I’m sure you’ve heard of the business at the Hart residence these last few days.”

“I’m afraid not,” Edgar replies, “We’ve been rather busy here.” The investigator shakes his head.

“It’s a right mess. The Baron, his wife, and their son have all been afflicted with some kind of sleeping poison. The only lead we have is a bunch of piles of ash scattered around the house, so not much to go on.”

“Well I can assure you we’ve had no involvement in this,” Adelaide says.

“I believe that, ma’am,” the investigator says, leaning in and lowering his voice. “Not for nothin’, but none of us had ever seen anything like this sleeping poison. If you ask me, I think it’s related to that ghostly figure we’ve been hearing rumors about. That’s why I’m-” He stops suddenly, squinting at you. “That’s an odd painting,” he says, “the ashes on her feet and dress look just like the ones we found in the manor.”

“Ashes?” Adelaide laughs. She turns to glance at you and suddenly stops laughing. Confusion and fear creep across her face. Your mind is racing. You had no idea the ashes were clinging to you. You hadn’t felt a thing. You’re trying to come up with a way out but at this point you’re entirely at their mercy. Unfortunately for you, they’re afraid.

The constable returns later that day with a local priest. The priest performs an exorcism ritual, which has no effect on you. Then, they carry the you out in front of the manor and throw you into a bonfire, and nothing remains but ash.

D

The next morning, you hear a knock at the door, which Edgar’s valet answers.

“Morning, sir,” the visitor says, “I’m with the local constabulary, here with some questions about some recent incidents at the chapel. Are the property owners available?”

A few minutes later, Edgar and Adelaide arrive in the hall.

“Morning, sir, ma’am,” the investigator greets them as they enter, “I’m sure you’ve heard of the business at our local chapel these last few days.”

“I’m afraid not,” Edgar replies, “We’ve been rather busy here.” The investigator shakes his head.

“It’s a right mess. The bishop, a priest, and a nun have all been afflicted with some kind of sleeping poison. The only lead we have is a bunch of piles of ash scattered around the grounds, so not much to go on.”

“Well I can assure you we’ve had no involvement in this,” Adelaide says.

“I believe that, ma’am,” the investigator says, leaning in and lowering his voice. “Not for nothin’, but none of us had ever seen anything like this sleeping poison. If you ask me, I think it’s related to that ghostly figure we’ve been hearing rumors about. That’s why I’m-” He stops suddenly, squinting at you. “That’s an odd painting,” he says, “the ashes on her feet and dress look just like the ones we found at the chapel.”

“Ashes?” Adelaide laughs. She turns to glance at you and suddenly stops laughing. Confusion and fear creep across her face. Your mind is racing. You had no idea the ashes were clinging to you. You hadn’t felt a thing. You’re trying to come up with a way out but at this point you’re entirely at their mercy. Unfortunately for you, they’re afraid.

The constable returns later that day with a local priest. The priest performs an exorcism ritual, which has no effect on you. Then, they carry the you out in front of the manor and throw you into a bonfire, and nothing remains but ash.

The End

E

The next morning, you hear a knock at the door, which Edgar’s valet answers.

“Morning, sir,” the visitor says, “I’m with the local constabulary, here with some questions about some recent incidents at the Governor’s mansion. Are the property owners available?”

A few minutes later, Edgar and Adelaide arrive in the hall.

“Morning, sir, ma’am,” the investigator greets them as they enter, “I’m sure you’ve heard of the business at the Governor’s home these last few days.”

“I’m afraid not,” Edgar replies, “We’ve been rather busy here.” The investigator shakes his head.

“It’s a right mess. The Governor, his wife, and his caretaker have all been afflicted with some kind of sleeping poison. The only lead we have is a bunch of piles of ash scattered around the house, so not much to go on.”

“Well I can assure you we’ve had no involvement in this,” Adelaide says.

“I believe that, ma’am,” the investigator says, leaning in and lowering his voice. “Not for nothin’, but none of us had ever seen anything like this sleeping poison. If you ask me, I think it’s related to that ghostly figure we’ve been hearing rumors about. That’s why I’m-” He stops suddenly, squinting at you. “That’s an odd painting,” he says, “the ashes on her feet and dress look just like the ones we found in the Governor’s mansion.”

“Ashes?” Adelaide laughs. She turns to glance at you and suddenly stops laughing. Confusion and fear creep across her face. Your mind is racing. You had no idea the ashes were clinging to you. You hadn’t felt a thing. You’re trying to come up with a way out but at this point you’re entirely at their mercy. Unfortunately for you, they’re afraid.

The constable returns later that day with a local priest. The priest performs an exorcism ritual, which has no effect on you. Then, they carry the you out in front of the manor and throw you into a bonfire, and nothing remains but ash.

The End

F

The next morning, you hear a knock at the door, which Edgar’s valet answers.

“Morning, sir,” the visitor says, “I’m with the local constabulary, here with some questions about some recent incidents at Gladstone Manor. Are the property owners available?”

A few minutes later, Edgar and Adelaide arrive in the hall.

“Morning, sir, ma’am,” the investigator greets them as they enter, “I’m sure you’ve heard of the business with the Gladstones these last few days.”

“I’m afraid not,” Edgar replies, “We’ve been rather busy here.” The investigator shakes his head.

“It’s a right mess. Doctor Gladstone, his son, and his assistant have all been afflicted with some kind of sleeping poison. The only lead we have is a bunch of piles of ash scattered around the house, so not much to go on.”

“Well I can assure you we’ve had no involvement in this,” Adelaide says.

“I believe that, ma’am,” the investigator says, leaning in and lowering his voice. “Not for nothin’, but none of us had ever seen anything like this sleeping poison. If you ask me, I think it’s related to that ghostly figure we’ve been hearing rumors about. That’s why I’m-” He stops suddenly, squinting at you. “That’s an odd painting,” he says, “the ashes on her feet and dress look just like the ones we found in the manor.”

“Ashes?” Adelaide laughs. She turns to glance at you and suddenly stops laughing. Confusion and fear creep across her face. Your mind is racing. You had no idea the ashes were clinging to you. You hadn’t felt a thing. You’re trying to come up with a way out but at this point you’re entirely at their mercy. Unfortunately for you, they’re afraid.

The constable returns later that day with a local priest. The priest performs an exorcism ritual, which has no effect on you. Then, they carry the you out in front of the manor and throw you into a bonfire, and nothing remains but ash.

The End

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The sun rises on a new day as the pigments set. Somehow you managed to get all of the pigments you needed in one night. You can barely believe your luck. It almost seems like some higher being has bent the laws of the universe in your favor. You step out of the painting, feeling its surface seal shut behind you. You’re free.

You take a moment to look through your father’s will and find a letter addressed to you.

Evie,

If you are reading this it means that I passed on before I could tell you the truth about yourself. For that I am truly sorry. There are many things you deserved to know that I was too cowardly to tell you, so I will start at the beginning.

Most children are born; you were not. Your mother and I were never able to conceive a child. So, after years of trying, she painted one instead. She painted you, and through our love you became real. We never told anyone about this, not even our own families. We didn’t understand how such a thing could happen, and I won’t pretend to understand it even now. We were so overjoyed to have you we didn’t much care how it happened. I know not what will become of you upon my death. I hope that this is a just enough world to allow you life and freedom in my absence. I dare not think of the alternative.

I am sorry to have left you so alone in this world. I’m afraid there is nothing more for you in the life I left behind. All I can do is help you start a new one. My wealth and property are yours. Use them to go out into the world like you always dreamed. Find your true freedom, and take full advantage of your one miraculous life.

Be well and be good. Love forever,

Nicholas Ward

The End