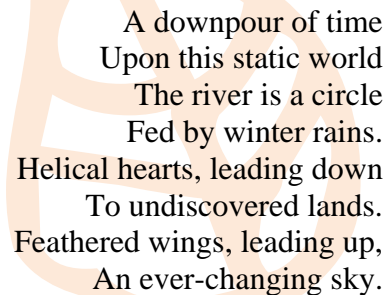


Seasons

Kyawaii RPG #3

By Ewen Cluney



A downpour of time
Upon this static world
The river is a circle
Fed by winter rains.
Helical hearts, leading down
To undiscovered lands.
Feathered wings, leading up,
An ever-changing sky.

Spring/Introduction

This is a weird little role-playing game inspired by *Clannad*, *Air*, *Kanon*, and other series of the same general style. This game is for stories about the everyday lives of young people, often but not always in high school. There's always a little bit of the mysterious that creeps into these stories, but it's subtle, and however entangled in such matters a character might be, he or she will still first and foremost be a person with desires and fears, just like anyone else.

Seasons is a very light and simple game, and the rules are mainly there to give you some basic guidelines for getting into some more or less free-form role-playing. You don't need any dice or anything like that, just something to write on and something to write with.

This game wound up somewhat resembling Elizabeth Shoemaker's game *It's Complicated*, only not as good, so go and check that game out when you get a chance (see <http://dissolutegames.wordpress.com/>). You can use it to do stuff like *Pushing Daisies* too.

Summer/Discussion

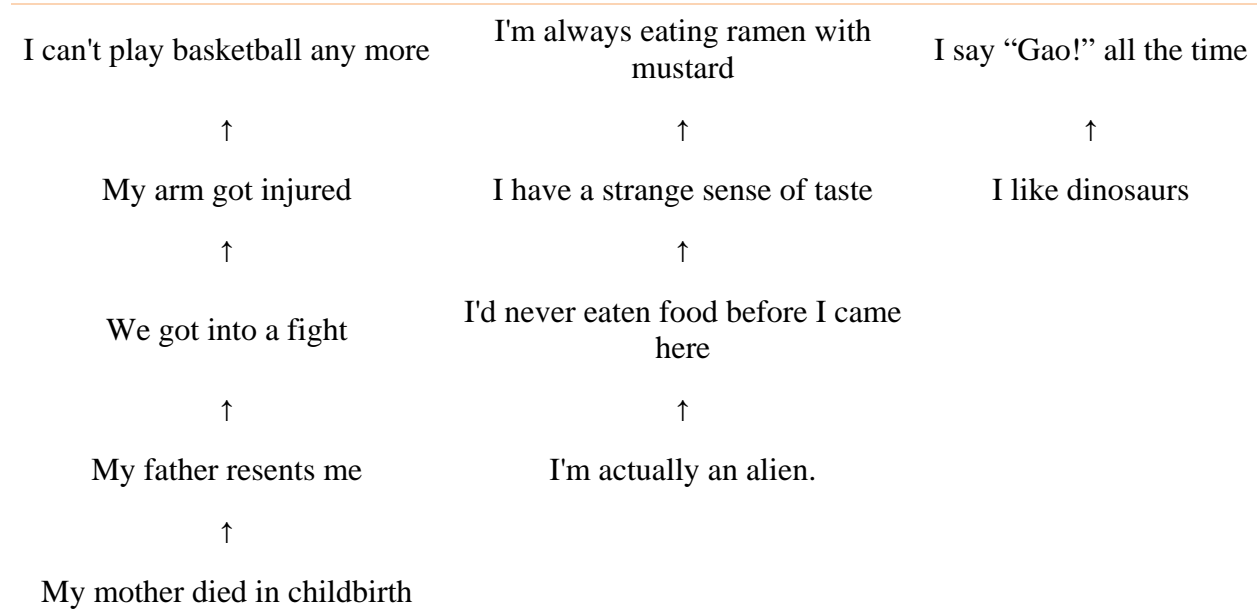
Before you get started, sit down and talk a bit about where your stories will take place, and what kind of situation the characters are all in. The default is for it to be somewhere in Japan, with the characters being mostly high schoolers. Pick one of the four seasons. Decide on some themes you want to play with.

The story should involve some kind of supernatural element, so talk about what kinds of things you want to play with. Angels, aliens, ghosts, psychic powers, and so on are all perfectly good choices.

Autumn/Characters

In this game we define characters in terms of “chains.” A chain is a series of things about your character set up in a chain of cause and effect. You designate something as a surface feature, and then devise a series of intermediate steps leading to the root cause. Each step is a “link” in the chain. The first link is the surface link, which is the bit that's very easily revealed to the world. The links that follow are said to be “deeper” in the chain.

Below are some examples of different styles of chains.



To follow the source material closely, most of the characters should be girls, except for one or two guys, and maybe a quarter to a third of them should have something supernatural about them. There's no real difference between guys and girls in the game, though in the source material guys tend to be a little bit jerky, but nice on the inside. A supernatural element basically makes up one link of a chain, and it should be something subtle.

Each character gets two chains, a “gag” chain and a serious one. The gag chain is there mainly to add some personality to your character, and should have two links. The serious chain is your character's main thing, and it should have three to six links, depending on how long you want the game to run.

Your stories can also have secondary characters who don't belong to any one player. Secondary characters don't have chains, though they can have a lot of personality. They can include parents, siblings, teachers, and pets. If you want a specific secondary character to appear in your stories, say so now.

Winter/Scenes

To play the game, you do a series of scenes. Go around the table taking turns. When it's your turn, you can set up a scene.

Then, pick a chain belonging to another player's character, and decide whether you want to Reveal or Resolve it. That player will tell you the result (read the next link aloud, or tell you how much progress will be made towards resolution). From there, you can decide who appears and the general situation. If the scene needs secondary characters, ask some of your friends whose characters aren't in the scene to role-play those parts.

Revealing brings elements from one chain from one character into public view. You just pick a chain, and the scene will revolve around showing off the next link. You do have to do a scene to reveal the surface link, though in the portrayal it will probably come to the fore very easily.

Resolving is a little more difficult. This is where you try to help someone resolve a problem within one of their chains. This takes some work. You will need multiple people to help out across multiple scenes. You also need the chain to be fully revealed. If you ask to resolve a link and not everything has been revealed, you get a reveal of the next new link for the scene instead.

To fully resolve a link, you need to accumulate “checks” on it. A check is the end result of one person helping to resolve a link during one scene. The total number of checks you need to resolve a link is equal to two times the depth of the link, plus one. However, each check towards resolving a given link that counts towards resolving all of the deeper ones.

If you work towards resolving a link but don't get enough checks, that scene is somehow inconclusive though not necessarily unproductive.

When you do resolve a link, the player of that character gets to decide what resolution entails, however. If one of the characters is actually an angel in human form, resolving her chain might turn out to be her ascending to heaven, with a sad parting you hadn't intended when you started working to resolve it. A resolution can remove a character from the story, but normally it gives you a chance to restructure the chain in question. Whichever link got resolved, you can replace it with something similar but more positive, and alter each link above it accordingly.

New Year's/Coda

And, that's it. You can play for quite a while, as you can see. (The stories in the source material are pretty long too). Making two rounds of the table is enough for a decent session, though you can potentially do a heck of a lot of sessions.

Anything not covered by the above stuff with chains is up to pure narration and role-playing to decide, so it's best to work it in a way that doesn't invite arguing over stuff in the first place. If you want to get fancy, you can do stuff with giving characters more chains, or making up chains as you go along, that kind of thing.