

# What Remains of Hansel & Gretel

## Legend

**NARRATIVE:** Note player choice of nightmare or fairytale will create a variable that affects the underlined adjectives/nouns in the next section with increased "madness" or "sugar-coated" variables. The Witch's voice trying to stay as neutral as Edith Finch.

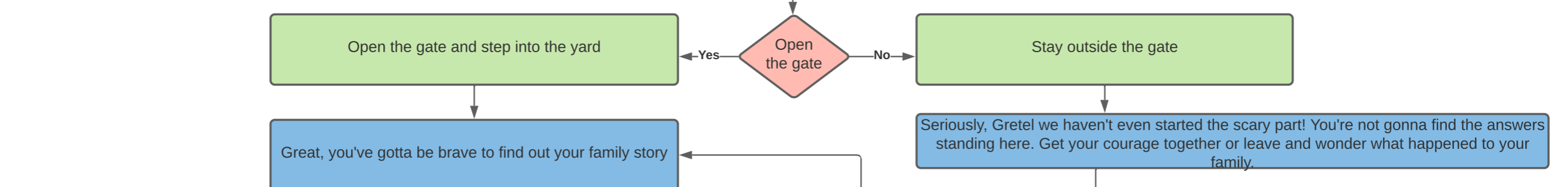
**Nightmare Storybook Text NOTE:** This flowchart intends for each found journal page to have writing on both sides of the page, when held up to the light, the player can read all of the text and know the REAL story. Include some player choice questions in each block of text i.e. Did you do it?

**Fairytale Storybook Text NOTE:** This text will all be written on the front of the journal page with large "gaps" in the text for the real story that is written on the back, only legible if the page is picked up and held up to the light. If this mechanic doesn't work, alternatives could be two different journal pages? Journal pages that require decoding?

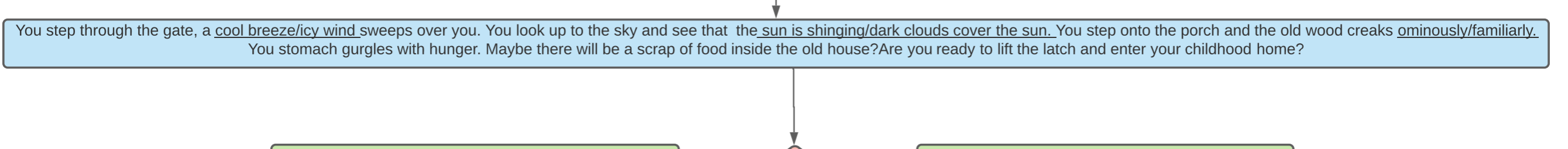


The Remains of the past are the foundation of the future. Establish the story, why you are here: You are Gretel, 17, years old, pregnant, dislocated from your family, starving, trying to remember what happened in your childhood so that you know what to tell your baby, you are looking for what remains of your childhood, you have snippets of a sugar-coated fairy tale story about your family, but it's incomplete, and you've been having nightmares lately, about your family, but they don't make sense either. You've come back to the forest where your childhood home is. You're scared. You want to be a good mother and care for your baby, but you don't know what to do.

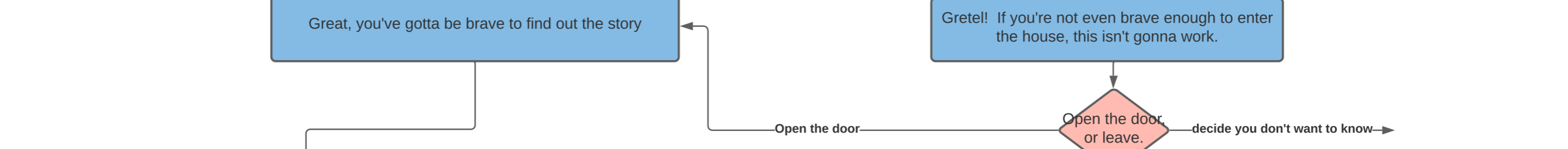
You arrive at the garden gate in front of your childhood home, you lived in this house until you were 11, you haven't been back in six years, you had to come back.... but as you reach for the latch... a flash of memory makes you shudder and freeze. Do you want to try to remember what happened without getting any closer to the house? Or, do you open the gate and proceed?



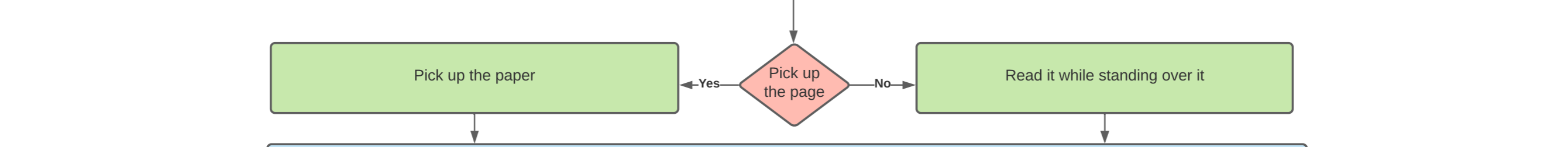
You step through the gate, a cool breeze/cy wind sweeps over you. You look up to the sky and see that the sun is shining/dark clouds cover the sun. You step onto the porch and the old wood creaks ominously/familiarly. Your stomach gurgles with hunger. Maybe there will be a scrap of food inside the old house? Are you ready to lift the latch and enter your childhood home?



You step through the door and the first thing that you notice is the smell of old wood/death. You step over to a simple wooden SHELF and find a page of what looks like a journal on top. The ink is blood red/black and the lettering is shaky/fluid and beautiful. There are strange gaps in the text. The page makes you nervous/excited to see what is written. Do you pick it up, or stand over it to read it on the shelf?



Before you make your decision, I have to say... I don't know whose idea of a fairytale this is, even the sugar-coated version is pretty grim. Yes, that pun was intended. The Grimm brother's wrote this story about a decade long famine in 1315 that killed 25% of the population of Europe and caused people to do terrible things, so it's going to be dark, and even in the cleaned-up fairy tale version, there's going to be at least one murder, so get ready for gross.

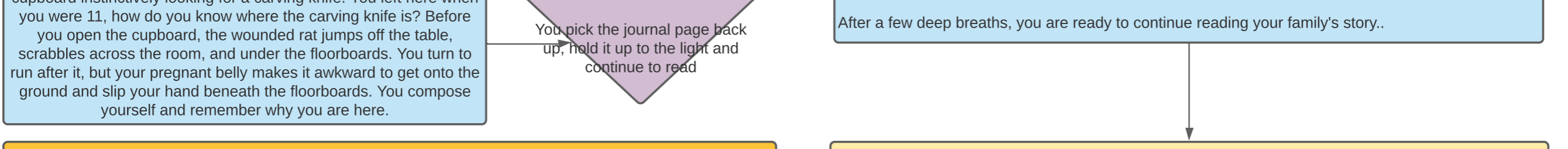


**Nightmare path:** Your beloved mother is dead. Vision of your mother: Plague starvation imagery, paint a terrible picture of your neighbors dying, going into the village with your mother and seeing people robbing graves, eating babies, etc. Your mother knows that you are starving she encourages you to do whatever you have to do to survive. Something scurries across your feet. You look down, it's a large rat. You drop the journal page, pounce on the rat, and grab it by its neck. You're very hungry, and very brave. Decision: 'How do you kill it?'. Yes leads to 'I break it's fat rat neck'. No leads to 'I bite it's head off and eat it raw. My baby needs protein and vitamins to survive.'

**Fairytale path:** Your beloved mother is dead. Blank section on page front, or just ellipsis... to fill in the blank? Suddenly... Something scurries across your feet. You look down, it's a large rat. You SCREAM!!!! The huge rat scurries across the room and under the floor boards. Shaking, you begin to cry. You take a moment to compose yourself and remember why you are here. After a few deep breaths, you are ready to continue reading your family's story.

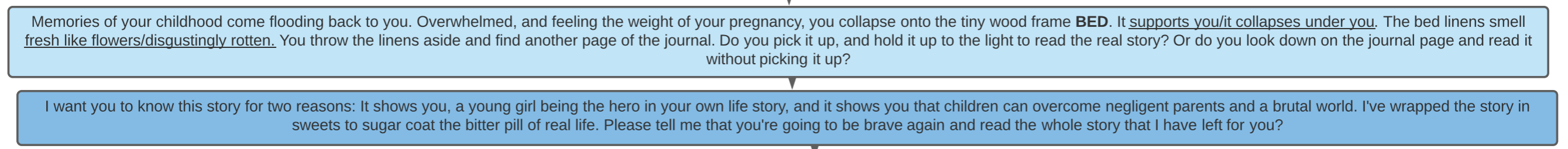
**Nightmare path:** You lay it's bloody carcass down on the table and turn to the kitchen cupboard instinctively looking for a carving knife. You left here when you were 11, how do you know where the carving knife is? Before you open the cupboard, the wounded rat jumps off the table, scurries across the room, and under the floorboards. You turn to run after it, but your pregnant belly makes it awkward to get onto the ground and slip your hand beneath the floorboards. You compose yourself and remember why you are here. You pick the journal page back up, hold it up to the light and continue to read.

**Fairytale path:** Your father a poor woodcutter has married your step-mother, she wants to get rid of you and your brother. your father agrees to this. You and your brother overhear. Blank section of page front. You cry blank section of page front. Hansel says he will protect you. He goes out in the night and gathers white pebbles.



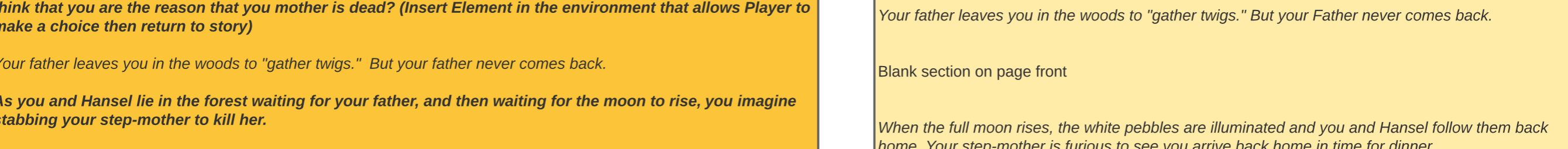
Memories of your childhood come flooding back to you. Overwhelmed, and feeling the weight of your pregnancy, you collapse onto the tiny wood frame BED. It supports you/it collapses under you. The bed linens smell fresh like flowers/disgustingly rotten. You throw the linens aside and find another page of the journal. Do you pick it up, and hold it up to the light to read the real story? Or do you look down on the journal page and read it without picking it up?

I want you to know this story for two reasons: It shows you, a young girl being the hero in your own life story, and it shows you that children can overcome negligent parents and a brutal world. I've wrapped the story in sweets to sugar coat the bitter pill of real life. Please tell me that you're going to be brave again and read the whole story that I have left for you?



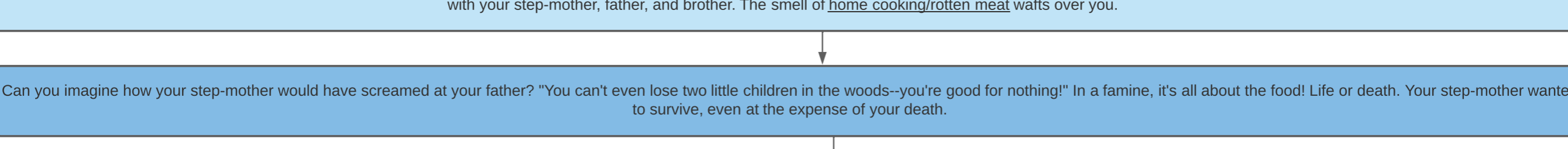
**Nightmare path:** In the morning your step mother sends you and Hansel off with your father. Vision of your mother: showing you the secret "women's business" recipe book that has been handed down through the women in your family. The diagrams are gruesome anatomy studies. The pages are soaked in blood. Hansel leaves a trail of white pebbles behind you. As you wander through the woods, Vision of your mother: remember your mother showing you where to stab her to kill her. "Stab me here, and slice quickly across here." Your mother is prepared for sacrifice. Do you think that you are the reason that your mother is dead? (Insert Element in the environment that allows Player to make a choice then return to story) Your father leaves you in the woods to "gather twigs." But your father never comes back. As you and Hansel lie in the forest waiting for your father, and then waiting for the moon to rise, you imagine stabbing your step-mother to kill her. When the full moon rises, the white pebbles are illuminated and you and Hansel follow them back home. Your step-mother is furious to see you arrive back home in time for dinner. You beg to be let into your own home. Your step-mother must share her meager dinner of stone soup among four of you instead of just with her husband.

**Fairytale path:** In the morning your step-mother sends you and Hansel off with your father. Blank section on page front. Hansel leaves a trail of white pebbles behind you. Blank section on page front. Your father leaves you in the woods to "gather twigs." But your Father never comes back. Blank section on page front. When the full moon rises, the white pebbles are illuminated and you and Hansel follow them back home. Your step-mother is furious to see you arrive back home in time for dinner. Blank section on page front. Your step-mother must share her meager dinner of stone soup among four of you instead of just with her husband.



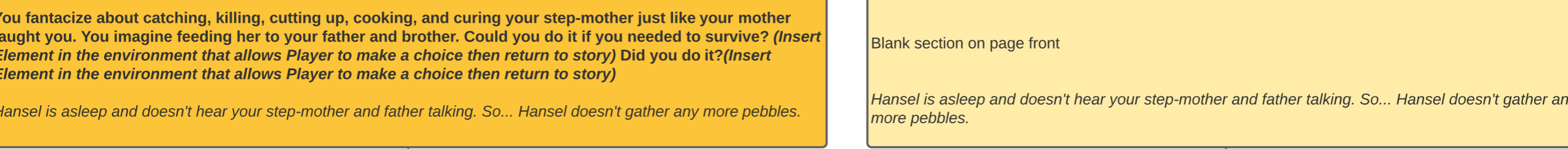
You remember coming home that night. Begging to be allowed into your own home, the home you are in now. From the little bed, you sit up. Remembering being that little girl, so hungry you were ready to faint. You feel the same hunger now. You baby kicks. You feel joy/fear. You stand up, walk over to the little TABLE in the middle of the modest room, and sit down on a simple wooden stool. You remember what it was like to be a little girl in this tiny house with your step-mother, father, and brother. The smell of home cooking/rotten meat wafts over you.

Can you imagine how your step-mother would have screamed at your father? "You can't even lose two little children in the woods--you're good for nothing!" In a famine, it's all about the food! Life or death. Your step-mother wanted to survive, even at the expense of your death.

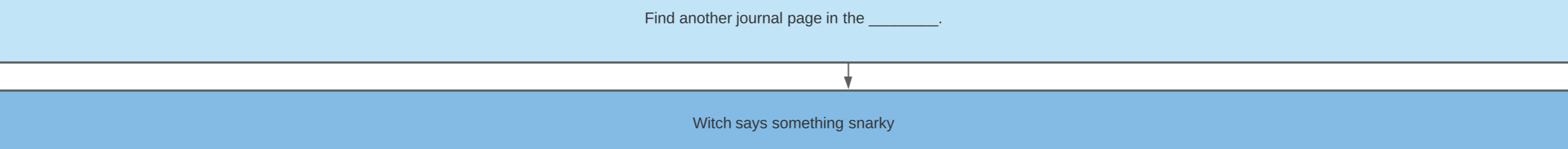


**Nightmare path:** When you go to bed that night, Hansel is tired and falls right to sleep. You stay awake and pray to your dead mother for advice. She comes to you in a vision and tells you must survive and shows you again on herself, how to stab a human body to kill it. Only this time she is really cut open. As her mortal wound purges blood, she looks at you lovingly. Your vision is interrupted when... You overhear as your step-mother demands that your father he must get rid of you tomorrow. You fantasize about catching, killing, cutting up, cooking, and curing your step-mother just like your mother taught you. You imagine feeding her to your father and brother. Could you do it if you needed to survive? (Insert Element in the environment that allows Player to make a choice then return to story) Did you do it?(Insert Element in the environment that allows Player to make a choice then return to story) Hansel is asleep and doesn't hear your step-mother and father talking. So... Hansel doesn't gather any more pebbles.

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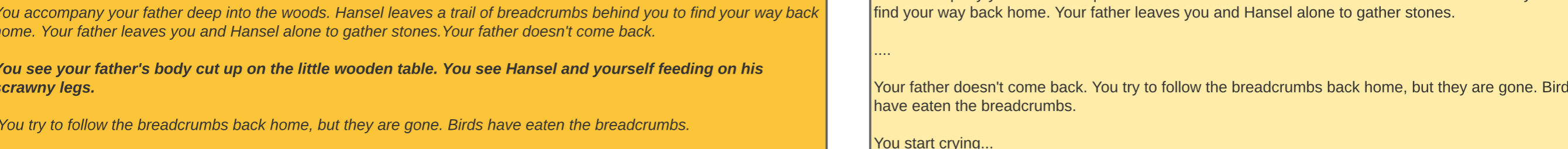


Find another journal page in the \_\_\_\_\_. Witch says something snarky.

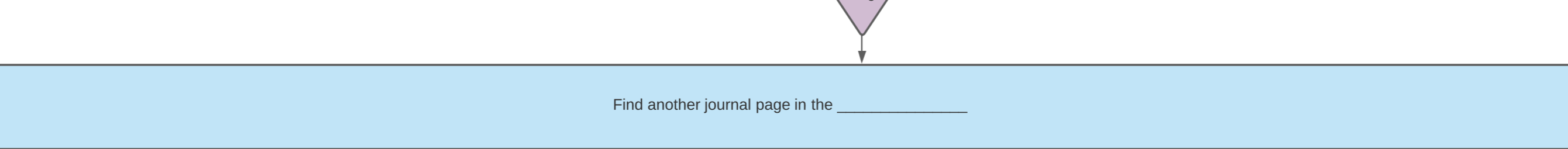


**Nightmare path:** Your step-mother wakes you and Hansel up gives you each a crust of bread, throws you out of the house, and locks the door behind you. You see your step-mother's body cut up on the little wooden table. You see Hansel and your father feeding on her juicy arms. You accompany your father deep into the woods. Hansel leaves a trail of breadcrumbs behind you to find your way back home. Your father leaves you and Hansel alone to gather stones. Your father doesn't come back. You try to follow the breadcrumbs back home, but they are gone. Birds have eaten the breadcrumbs. You start crying... Hansel tells you not to worry, you fall asleep.

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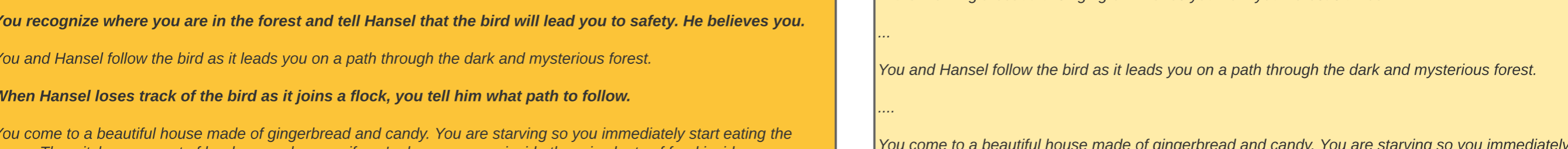


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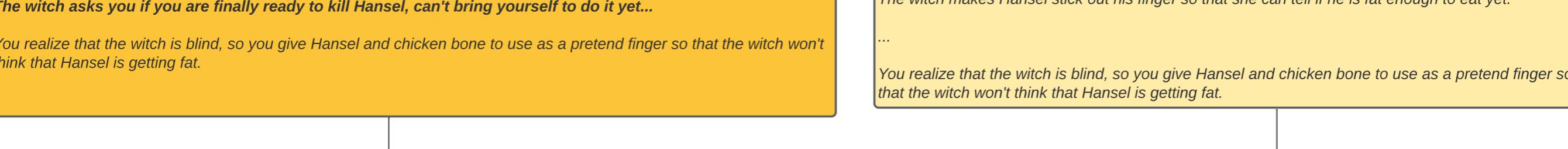
**Nightmare path:** In the morning a beautiful singing bird wakes you from your forest slumber. You recognize where you are in the forest and tell Hansel that the bird will lead you to safety. He believes you. You and Hansel follow the bird as it leads you on a path through the dark and mysterious forest. When Hansel loses track of the bird as it joins a flock, you tell him what path to follow. You come to a beautiful house made of gingerbread and candy. You are starving so you immediately start eating the house. The witch comes out of her house, she says if you're hungry, come inside there is plenty of food inside. You know the witch, you exchange looks, but the two of you don't let Hansel lead her. You and Hansel are starving, and very happy to be invited in. You see a table laid with every food imaginable. The witch says eat anything that you want. And you and Hansel eat freely. You signal (nod? wink?) to the witch that you are ready for her to capture Hansel. The witch captures Hansel and puts him in a cage. The witch tells Hansel that she can't cage you because you must cook meals to fatten up Hansel so that she can eat him. You make beautiful stew to fatten Hansel. The witch makes Hansel stick out his finger so that she can tell if he is fat enough to eat yet. The witch asks you if you are finally ready to kill Hansel, can't bring yourself to do it yet... You realize that the witch is blind, so you give Hansel and chicken bone to use as a pretend finger so that the witch won't think that Hansel is getting fat.

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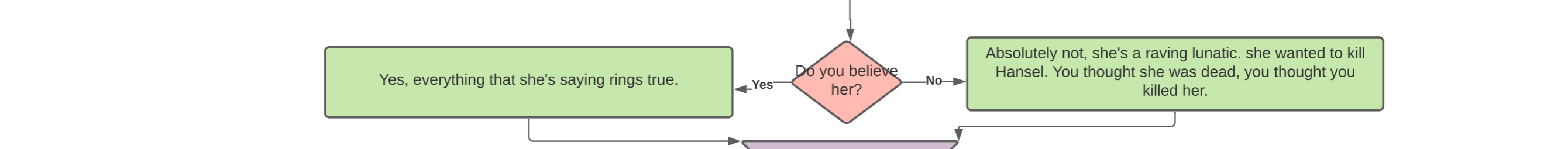
Suddenly filled with terror at these memories, you run out of the house and run all of the way to the witch's house. There, she is waiting for you.

Finally! How could you ever forget me? I am your grandmother, Greta. The matriarch of this family. The one who recognized our curse and taught the women how to survive. Your mother was my daughter. She sacrificed everything to save you. I trained you to survive.



Your fury at what she has done to your family makes you kill her.

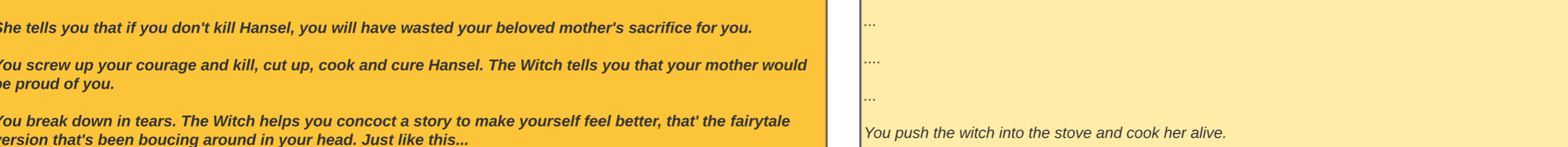
As she's dying she tells you that you are the murderer, you are the one who killed your family. If you don't believe me, read the last page of the journal it's the "women's business" family heirloom COOK BOOK. The book falls open, the loose page is there? Do you want to know the truth, or the fairytale.



**Nightmare path:** Finally, the witch loses her patience with you. She decides you will kill and eat Hansel regardless of how fat he is. You have been dreading this moment since your mother taught you how to slaughter another human being. The witch asks you to light the stove. You tell the witch that you can't get the stove to lit, can she look at it. When she does, you beg her not to make you do this. She tells you that if you don't kill Hansel, you will have wasted your beloved mother's sacrifice for you. You screw up your courage and kill, cut up, cook and cure Hansel. The Witch tells you that your mother would be proud of you. You break down in tears. The Witch helps you concoct a story to make yourself feel better, that the fairytale version that's been baring on your head. Just like this... You push the witch into the stove and cook her alive.

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With her dying breath, the witch asks you what you are going to tell your baby?



Nothing. I'm going to tell her that I have no memory of my family, and we are going to start a new family, just the two of us, without any relatives or history.

