

Love/Hate Relationships: New Approaches to Game Romances

Chris Dahlen
@savetherobot

ICEBREAKER

MASS EFFECT

PERSONA 4

DRAGON AGE

(ANY OF THEM)

FIRE EMBLEM: AWAKENING



Old woman

You have to keep telling her exactly what it is she wants to hear. That's a surefire way to win her heart!

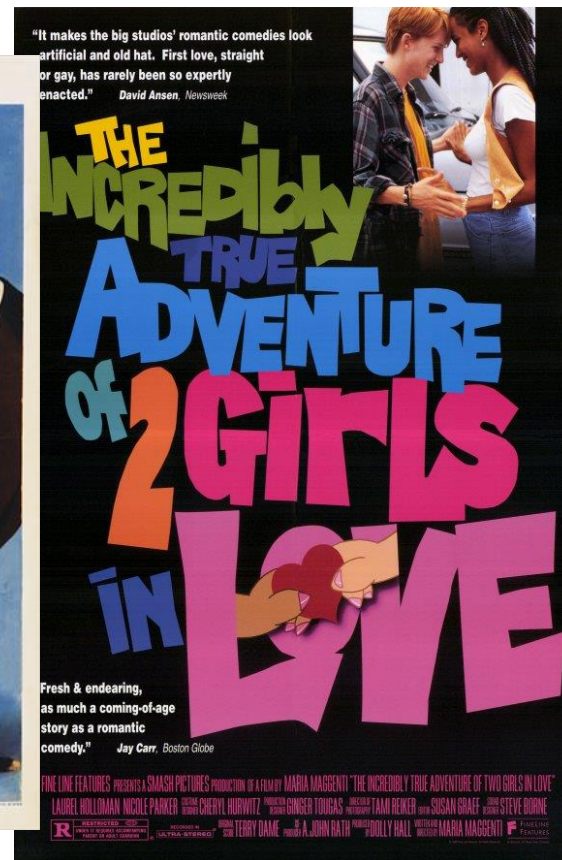




THE FORMULA

They Meet Cute
They're Drawn Together
They're Pulled Apart
They End Up Together

- HAPPY ENDING -







```
1  *comment Copyright 2010 by Dan Fabulich.
2  *comment
3  *comment Dan Fabulich licenses this file to you under the
4  *comment ChoiceScript license, Version 1.0 (the "License"); you may
5  *comment not use this file except in compliance with the License.
6  *comment You may obtain a copy of the License at
7  *comment
8  *comment http://www.choiceofgames.com/LICENSE-1.0.txt
9  *comment
10 *comment See the License for the specific language governing
11 *comment permissions and limitations under the License.
12 *comment
13 *comment Unless required by applicable law or agreed to in writing,
14 *comment software distributed under the License is distributed on an
15 *comment "AS IS" BASIS, WITHOUT WARRANTIES OR CONDITIONS OF ANY KIND,
16 *comment either express or implied.
17
18 "Trust me," he says.
19
20 *page_break
21
22 She says, " ... Okay?"
23
24 *page_break
25
26 "Okay!" he says. "Now open your eyes."
27
28 She does. And she's shocked - and not just by the sight of her boyfriend down on one knee in front of her.
29
30 *choice
31     #He needs to hold the ring higher.
32     *set coordination +tiny_change
33     *goto pitchers_mound
34     #He should smile more!
35     *set street-smarts +tiny_change
36     *goto pitchers_mound
37     #Stop fussing. This ... this is just beautiful.
38     *set confidence +tiny_change
39     *goto pitchers_mound
40
41 *label pitchers_mound
42
43 The Girl looms above him, and of course - she's standing on the pitcher's mound, smack in the middle of her favorite ballpark, the man of
44 her ... dreams? Well, this damn sure feels like a dream - popping the question, here and now.
45
46 She stammers.
47
48 And she stammers again.
```

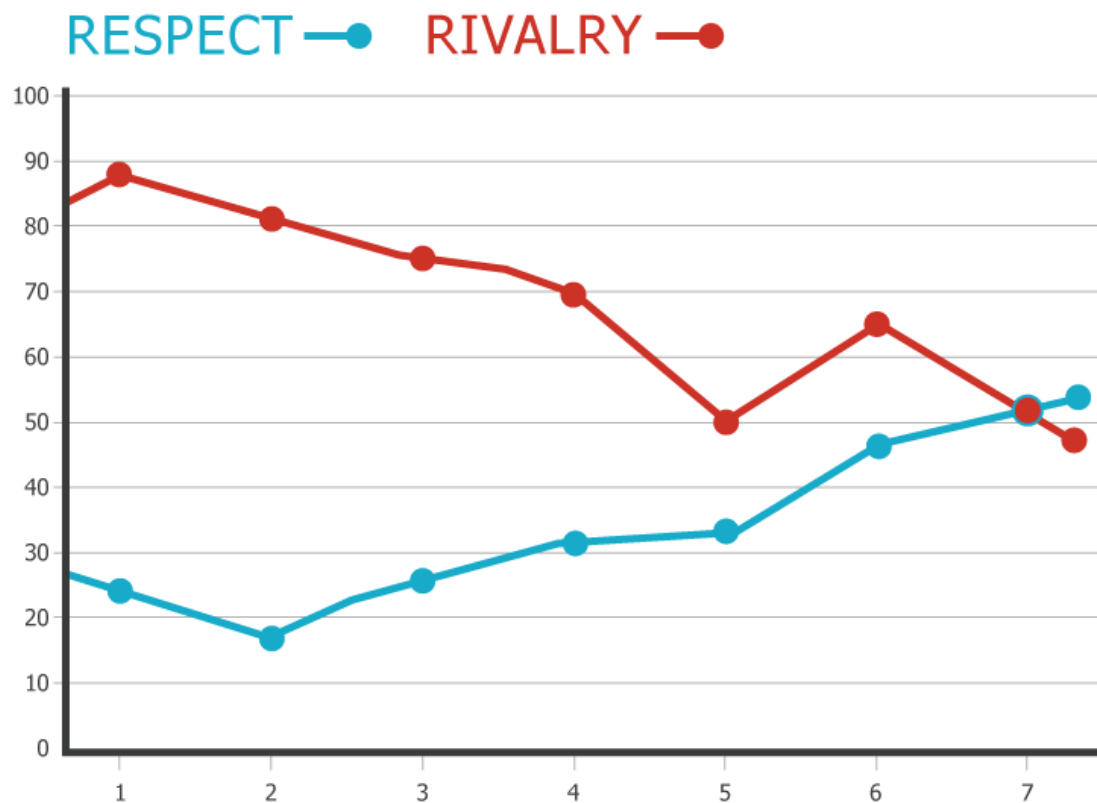

TEAMWORK SURPRISE CHOICE

Teamwork

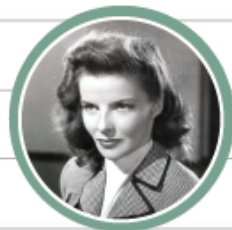


“What's needed, from a gameplay perspective, is a romantic partner who is sometimes also functionally the villain.”

- Emily Short, 2009, *GameSetWatch*



RIVALRY



RESPECT



Action Challenges

- Player is stronger in:
 - Street smarts
- Love interest is stronger in:
 - Hacking
- ... and they're evenly matched in:
 - Athleticism
 - Impulsiveness

Banter Ideas

- Push-Pull
 - Rank the player as aggressive vs. introverted; adapt the rival's style accordingly
- Putdowns
 - Trade insults and cheap shots to stoke rivalry
- Trust exercises
 - Challenge the player to trust the rival right when they think they shouldn't
 - Violate that trust, but for good reasons
- Intimacy opportunities
 - Start with awkwardness and flirting; end with ... look, we're all adults

You're Stuck Together (Mostly)



Surprise (!)



A Simple Way to Mess With Your Players



Choice




```
*****Seed 1
title *choice 32#5 (line 41) #Memory 1
memory1 *choice 34#1 (line 35) #Do it.
ch2 *choice 32#3 (line 41) #Just prop a broom against the door to keep it from opening. I mean, why overthink this?
ch2 *choice 50#1 (line 51) #This is Dog Week - the week when people bring their pets to work, to dinner, and onto the trains, and I have twenty of them lined up to mob her train.
ch2 *choice 68#2 (line 81) #I paid some kids on rocketskates to be ready to careen across the dock. Set 'em loose!
ch2 *choice 94#3 (line 113) #Tell her I lost a thing! She has to help or ... I don't even know what!
ch2 *choice 117#3 (line 120) #moving van!
ch2 *choice 137#1 (line 138) #"I just - I don't know what to do without it, my diary was in there, pictures of my dead grandmother - "
ch2_2 *choice 26#3 (line 34) #Carter.
ch2_2 *choice 77#1 (line 78) #Well, sure. I could have dressed up today, but my mind is on the work.
ch2_2 *choice 87#1 (line 88) #"Matchmaker Match-Up: ${name_rival} Makes Hearts Quiver, ${name}'s Rep is About to Wither"
ch2_2 *choice 94#3 (line 106) #I can't decide - I don't know - what's ${he} going to do?
ch2_2 *choice 119#2 (line 150) #Act chilly and say ${his} name.
ch2_2 *choice 154#1 (line 155) #"You wish."
ch2_2 *choice 255#2 (line 265) #"That's my client."
ch2_2 *choice 282#4 (line 295) #Don't try to match quips with ${him}. You're wasting your time.
ch2_2 *choice 329#3 (line 332) #"I don't know, I'll think of something. I'm not a professional revenge-maker. I just hate ${him} so much!"
ch2_2 *choice 340#3 (line 346) #"Okay ... maybe ${he} and I had the idea at the same time."
ch2_2 *choice 354#2 (line 358) #"Maybe. If I say it is."
memory2 *choice 26#1 (line 27) #Hide well.
memory2 *choice 31#2 (line 35) #Maybe shake the tunnel a little.
memory2 *choice 37#2 (line 43) #Don't kiss ${him}.
ch3 *choice 19#3 (line 28) #Well - it sounds dicey, following a stranger around, spying on him, all to mess with his life and maybe get in the way of the girl of his dreams ...
ch3 *choice 41#3 (line 62) #Run up, tug his arm, smile and ask for directions.
ch3 *choice 87#3 (line 104) #Look sad and hapless.
ch3 *choice 123#4 (line 135) #Choose the right moment to walk past them on the way to the bathroom.
ch3 *choice 150#1 (line 151) #Okay. Take the photo. Take a moment to get a good shot.
ch3 *choice 173#1 (line 174) #No. No! Wow! Who would have believed it?
ch3 *choice 204#2 (line 207) #"Can I help you?"
```

SO, LIKE I WAS
SAYING ...

Get in touch!

Chris Dahlen

Freelance Writer

savetherobot@gmail.com

<http://www.savetherobot.com>