

VRDC
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Building *Reaping Rewards*: An Interactive VR Story About Emotional Choices

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REAPING
REWARDS



Emotional Connection

Technical

Creative



The art challenges the technology,
and the technology inspires the art.

- John Lasseter

REAPING REWARDS



BUILT IN VIRTUAL REALITY WITH THE
LIMITLESS
CREATIVE ENVIRONMENT

REAPING REWARDS

Creative Goals

- Emotional Choices Using Motion Controllers

Technical Goals

- Prototype and Build Really Fast
- Build VR Inside of VR
- Learn in Minutes

A photograph of a person lying in a hospital bed. The person's right arm is in a white cast and is held in a white brace. Their left hand is also in a white brace. The person is wearing a blue hospital gown. The bed has blue and white patterned sheets. A dark brown chair is visible in the foreground. The text "Creative Process" is overlaid in yellow.

Creative Process

Telltale Games



Emotional Choices

Key Insight from Telltale Games:

- Audience Does **Not** Want to Control Story

Audience Wants *Emotional Choices*

- Creates Connection with Characters
- Avoid Fear of Making the Wrong Choice
- Interactivity that Immerses You Into the Story



I got in some trouble, but keep that between us.

I'm not a bad guy.

I... killed someone.

...

INT. HOSPITAL RECEPTION AREA - DAY

We open in a HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM. A receptionist's desk is located in the center swarmed by doctors, patients, and visitors strolling through. The sounds of OVERHEAD MUMBLING and ELEVATOR PINGS fill the air.

In the middle of it all, two GRIM REAPERS materialize from a WALL SHADOW. One of the reapers is TALLER, BIGGER and OLDER, and carrying a large iconic scythe in one hand. The other reaper is SHORTER, more NAIVE, and obviously YOUNGER. They pause and look around the waiting room, invisible to the people walking about.

The OLD REAPER leads the way as the two float down a hallway of rooms.

INT. HOSPITAL BED STATION #1 - DAY

The two REAPERS stand outside a bedside curtain.

The OLDER REAPER pulls back the curtain to reveal an ELDERLY MAN lying asleep, tubes probing his body while a faint BEEP-BEEP sound monitors his slow beating heart. His skin is pale and looks to have been in the hospital bed a good part of his life.

No flowers are on the bedside table. No guests or family are in the room.

Short Film Script to VR Experience

- 3rd Person -> 1st Person
- Observing -> Doing
- Interactivity For Emotional Impact
- But *Don't Force* Viewer to Do Anything
- Alternate Ending

Interactivity & Choices != Video Game

Choices for Reaping Rewards

- Touch Patient Hands
- Open Doors
- Hit Reaper

Why Focus on Touch?

- Touching is Intimate, Visereal, Emotional
- No Need to Teach Controls or Mechanics
- Motivated by the Story & Characters

What We Didn't Add

- Other Objects to Interact With
- Game Mechanics
- Room Scale
- Locomotion
- ...

Emotional Choices

Choices Progress Story, Not Change It

Choices Affects Characters in the World

Choices Affect Viewer

Training

- Using Hands
- Opening Doors



Tutorial



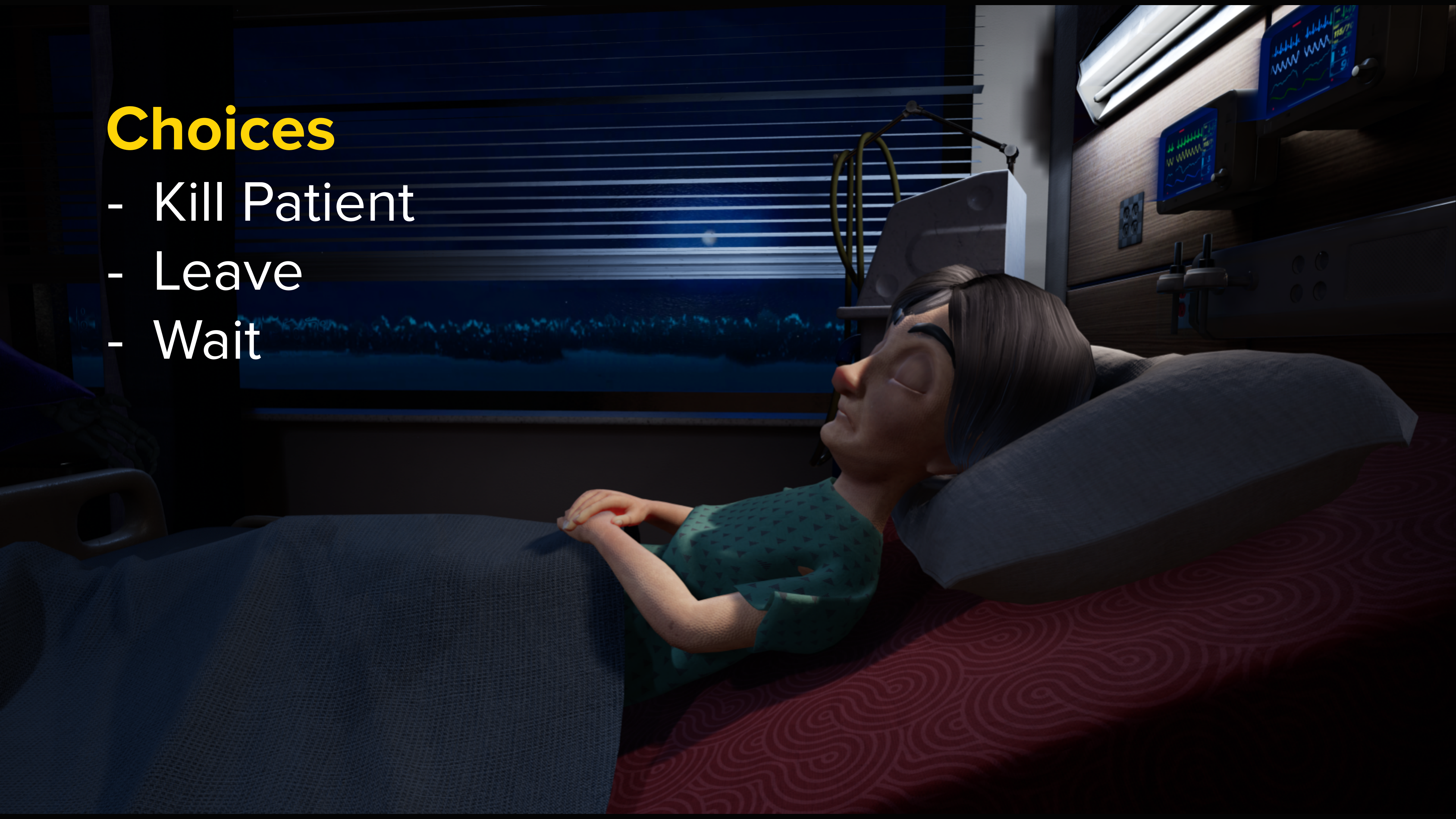
Choices

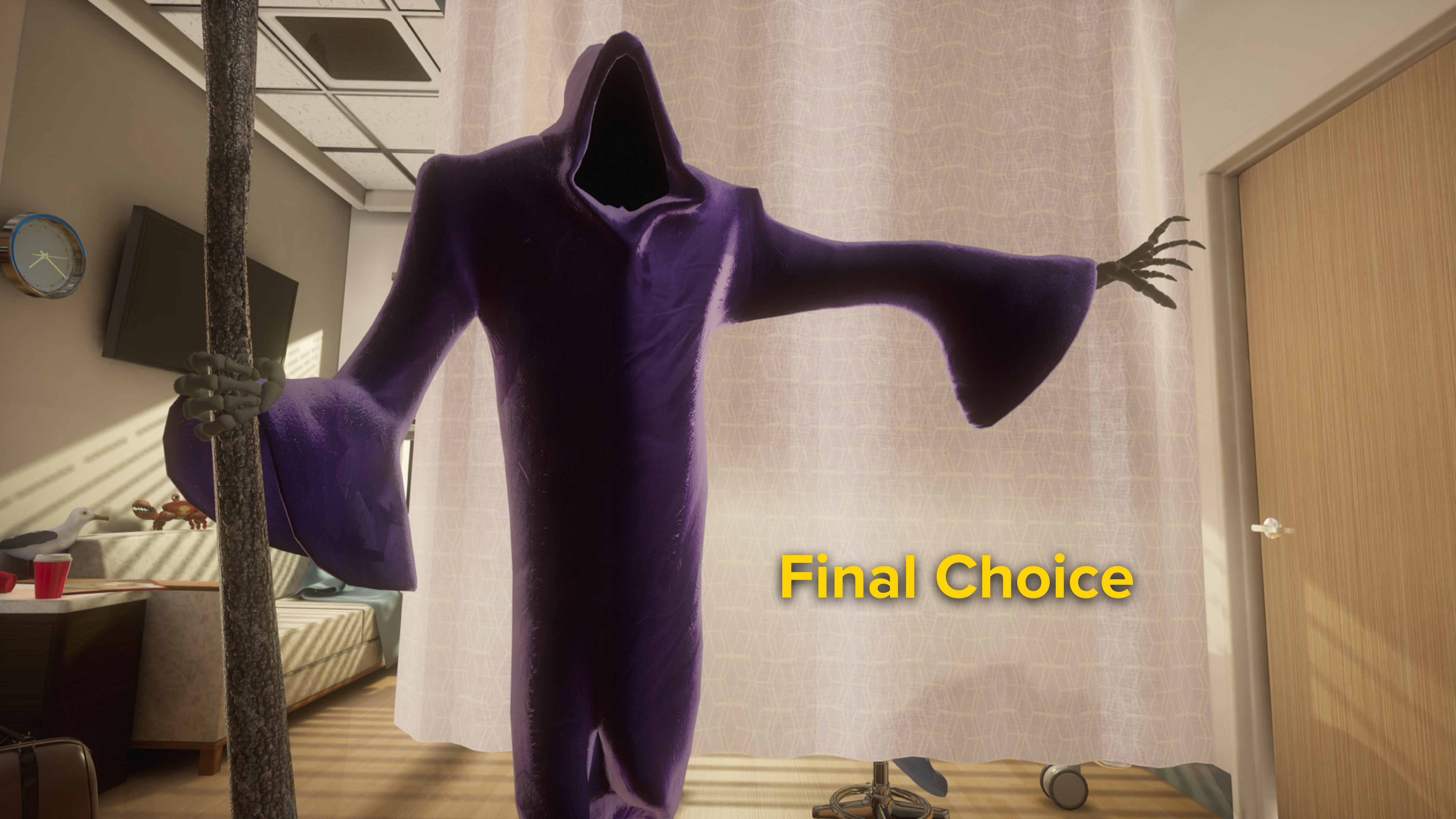
- Kill Patient
- Leave
- Wait



Choices

- Kill Patient
- Leave
- Wait





Final Choice

Technical Process

*“If You Just Told Us What Movie You Wanted,
We Could Make It in 25% of the Time”*

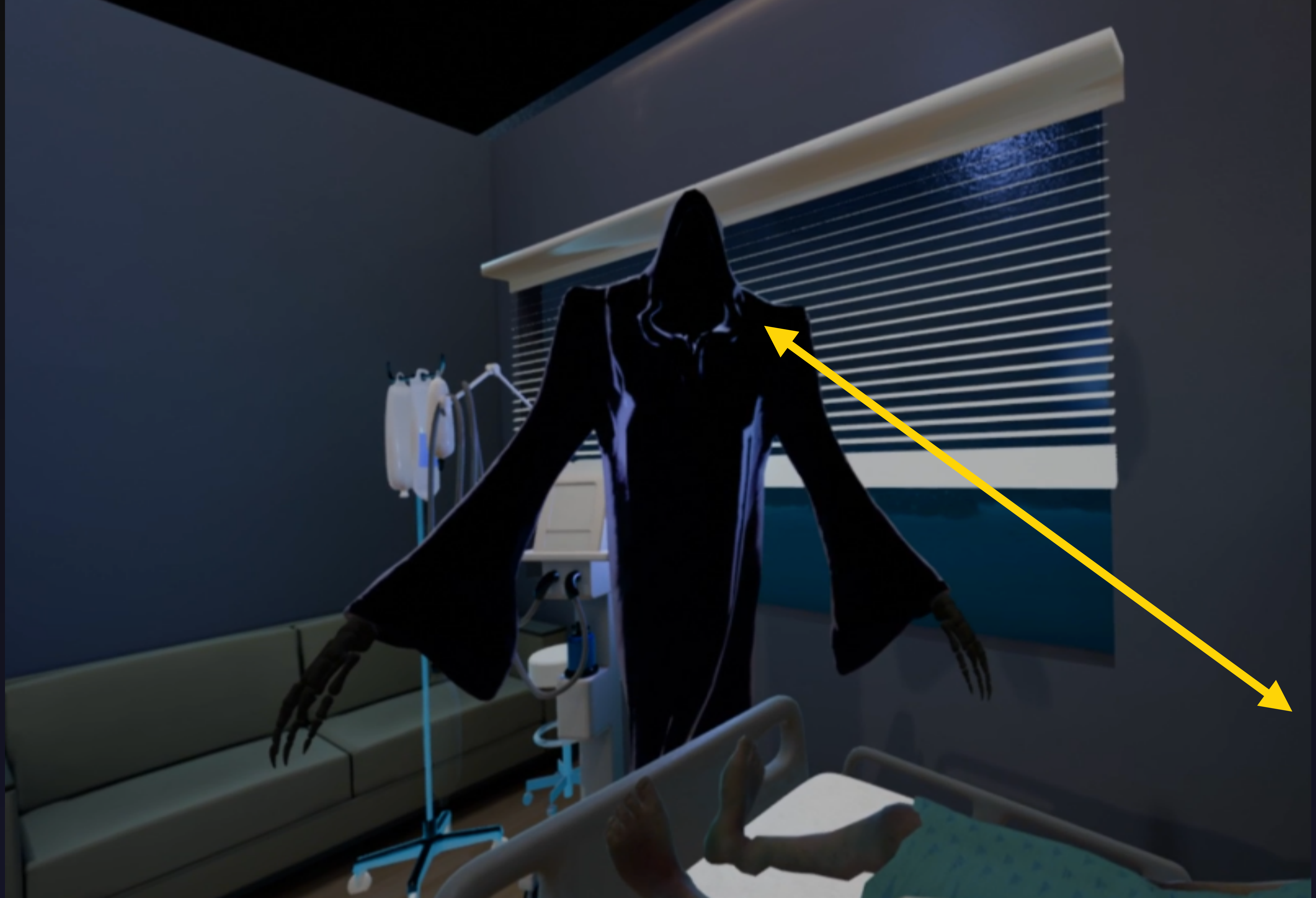
Composition Exploration



2.00









What Didn't Go Well

- Prototyped in the Wrong Way!
 - Testing One at a Time is Too Slow
 - Need to Test Many Ideas in Parallel
 - Distributed Testing is Crucial
- Rushed Development

What Went Well

- Much Faster Iteration with Short Training Time
- Emotional Choices Surprisingly Powerful
- Overall Project Time Much Faster

Future Work

- Multiuser for Creation and Interaction
- Tight Integration with Other VR Tools
- Interactive Character Authoring Inside VR
- Character Rigging inside VR
- Next Stage of Interactive Characters

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