

Visual Novels: Narrative Design in Virtue's Last Reward

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13th Annual Game Developers Choice Awards Best Narrative, The Winner is...

The Walking Dead

GDC Award nominees that caught my eye:

- **Journey**
- **The Walking Dead**
- **The Room**

>> These are all Adventure Games.

A Visual Novel is a sort of Adventure Game.

What exactly is a Visual Novel, then?

What's the **definition** of **Visual Novel**?

**A text-based video game
featuring a narrative
using graphics and sound...?**

Visual Novel without Visuals



Real Sound: Kaze no Regret

Developer : WARP, Inc.

Publisher : SEGA

Designer : Kenji Eno

Platform : Sega Saturn, Dreamcast

Release date (JP) : June 15, 1997

What's the **essence** of **Visual Novel?**

**A video game
featuring a narrative**

What's the **essence** of **Visual Novel**?

A video game with an emphasis on narrative.

Are these sports?



“A Visual Novel is not a game.”

Is it true?

A Visual Novel is a game.

What's the **definition** of a **game**?

- Something with **selectivity**



- Something where the selection made by the player's decision changes the history of events or outcome that takes place within a given set of rules.

For instance...



“A video game that specializes in **selectivity”
is what we call a **Visual Novel**.**

Visual Novels in Japan:



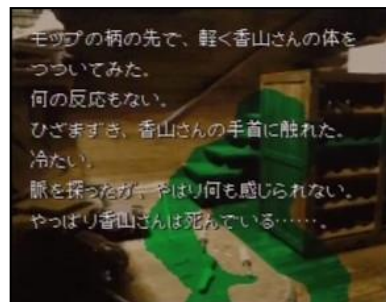
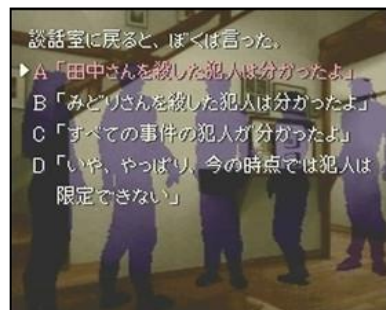
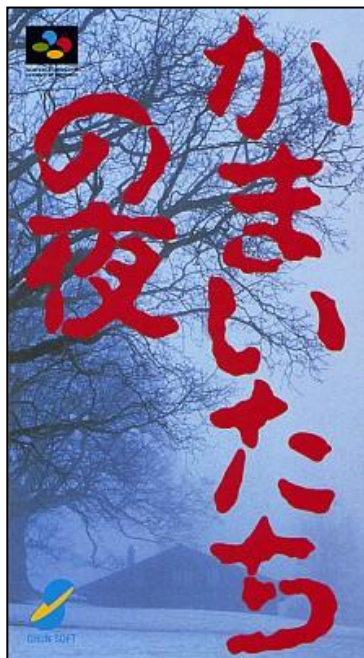
Steins;Gate



Danganronpa:

Academy of Hope and
High School Students of Despair

The pioneer **Visual Novel** in **Japan**:



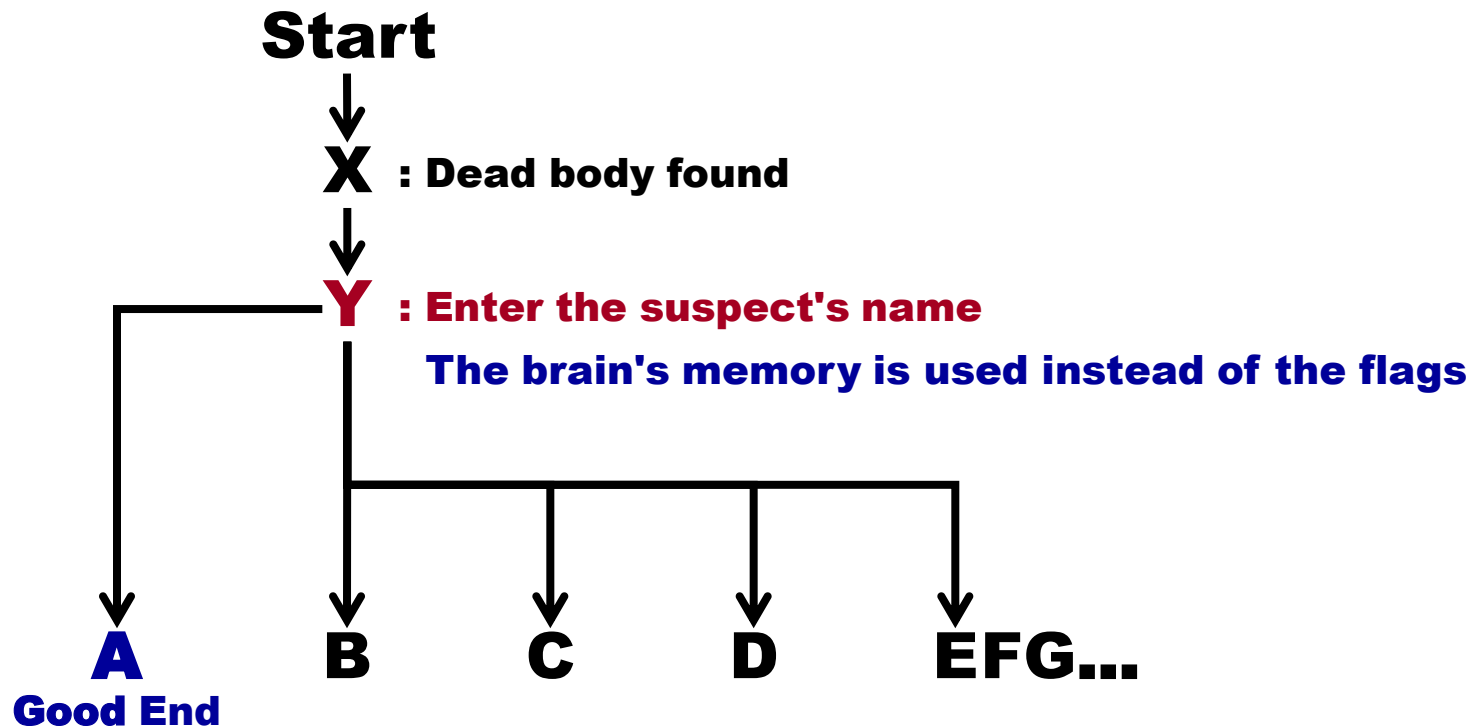
Kamaitachi no Yoru **(Night of the Sick Weasel)** **(The Howl of The Banshee)**

Unique game design of **Kamaitachi**

There are almost no **flags in this game.**

**In Kamaitachi, the flags are embedded
in the player's brain.**

Kamaitachi's event flow example:



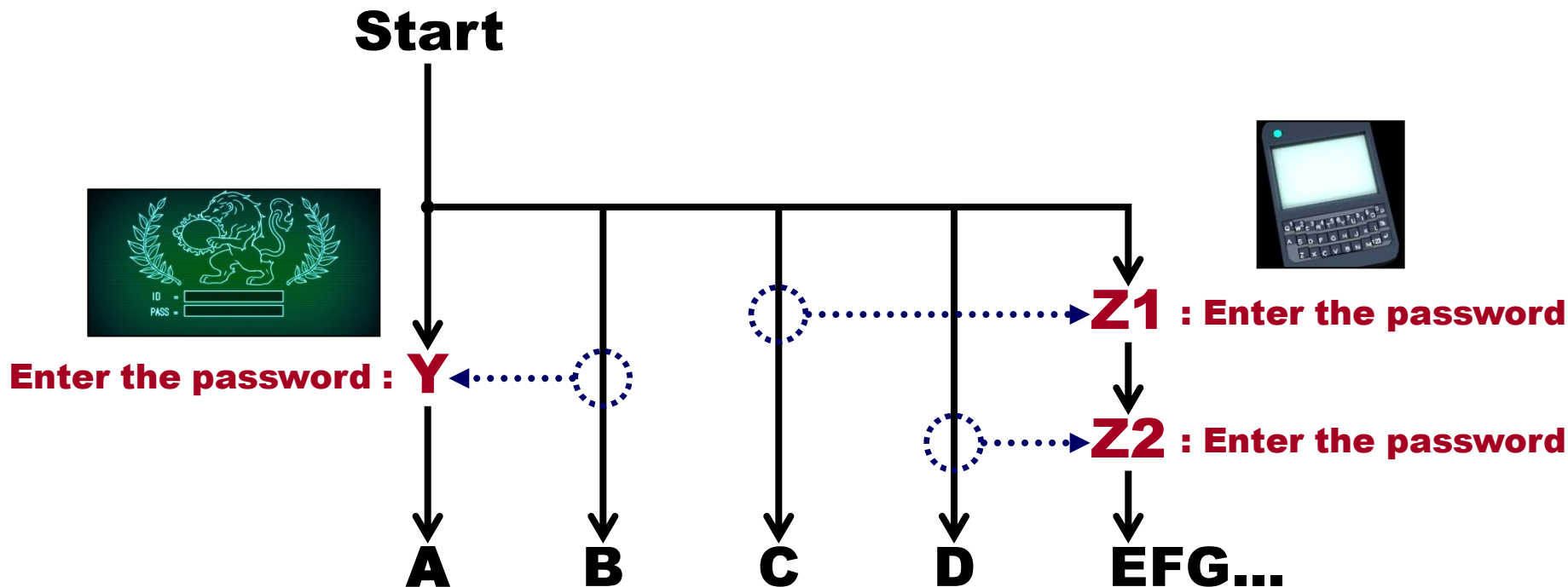
**The player's brain is used
as computer memory.**

on ko chi shin

溫故知新

Discovering new things by studying the past

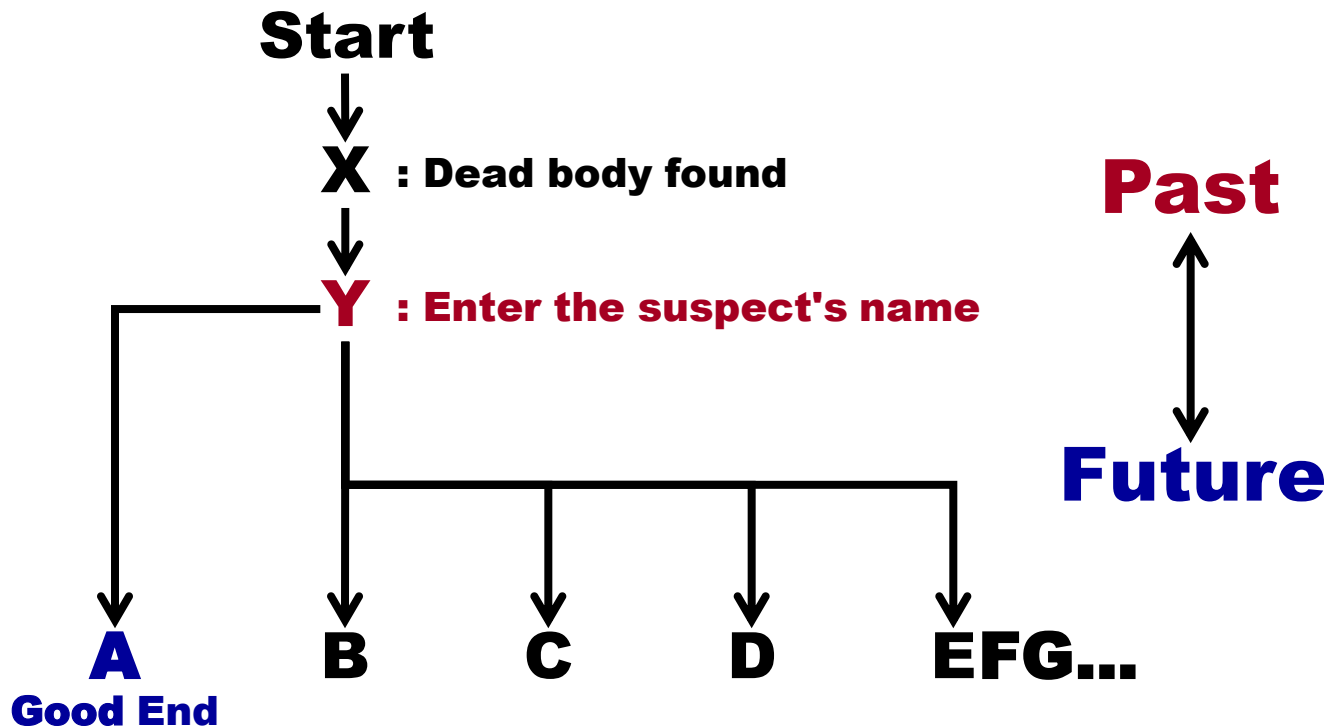
Relation between Kamaitachi and VLR



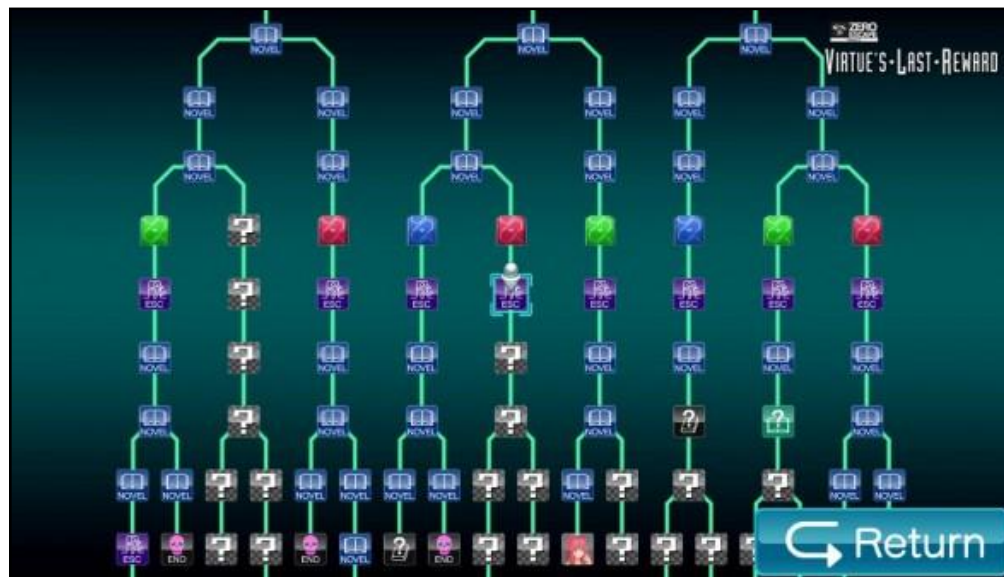
How I write a story:

It begins with a **sense of discomfort.**

What's **discomforting** in Kamaitachi?



That's how **VLR's flow chart system** was invented



Another example:

**What's discomfoting about
The Person's Point of View**

Key elements of writing a story:

- **Have doubts about conventional thought**
- **Do not blindly trust common knowledge**

Reality in video games

**What video games need is
not reality in real life,
but reality for video games.**

Future of Adventure Games

- Journey
- The Walking Dead
- The Room

>> These are all digitally distributed.

◆ Smartphones are a good platform for Adventure Games.

Thank you for listening.