

GDC

March 20-24, 2023
San Francisco, CA

The Secret Lives of NPCs

Jason Bakker and Georgia Symons
Narrative Co-directors,
Wayward Strand (Ghost Pattern)

#GDC23

Bunurong Land Council





ASSOCIATION OF
RAMAYTUSH OHLONE

<https://www.ramaytush.org>

⏸ Pause

You want to know my inner-most secrets, I can tell.

JAN 27
11:07
AM

The Secret Lives of NPCs



Overview

- Introductions & game overview
- Values & first principles
- Consultation
- Tools for plotting simultaneous stories
- Finding the Narrative interest
- Bringing structure to life
- Lessons



We're going on a bear hunt.
We're going to catch a big one.
What a beautiful day!
We're not scared.



Oh-oh! Grass!
Long, wavy grass.
We can't go over it.
We can't go under it.

Oh, no!
We've got to go through it!



Wayward Strand



Our Team

developed by

Tfer Newsome
Kyra Bellamy
Olivia Haines
Crys Kirk
Alex Griffin
Alan P. Robinson
Rory Sampson
Charlie Renwick
Cameron Hopkinson
Joshua Laurence
Matthew Dobrich

Jason Bakker
Maize Wallin
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Georgia Symons
Russell Dilley
Kalonica Quigley
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Josh Tatangelo
Cherie Davidson

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Allison Walker
Victor Mahnic
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Joe Toole
Thomas Ingram
Lychee_Sodapop
Jack Kirby Crosby
David Thor Fjalarsson
Alexander Perrin
Cécile Richard



Our Team

Core collaborators



Maize Wallin
Audio



Jason Bakker
Writing & Programming



Susan Dang
Art & Animation



Georgia Symons
Writing



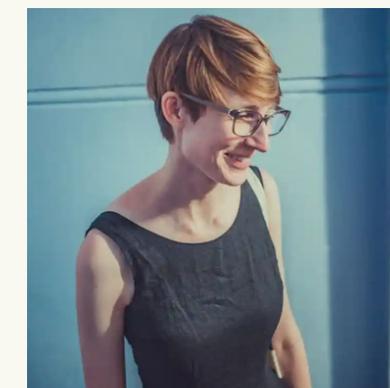
Aspen Forster
Technical Art



Russell Dilley
Programming



Goldie Bartlett
Art

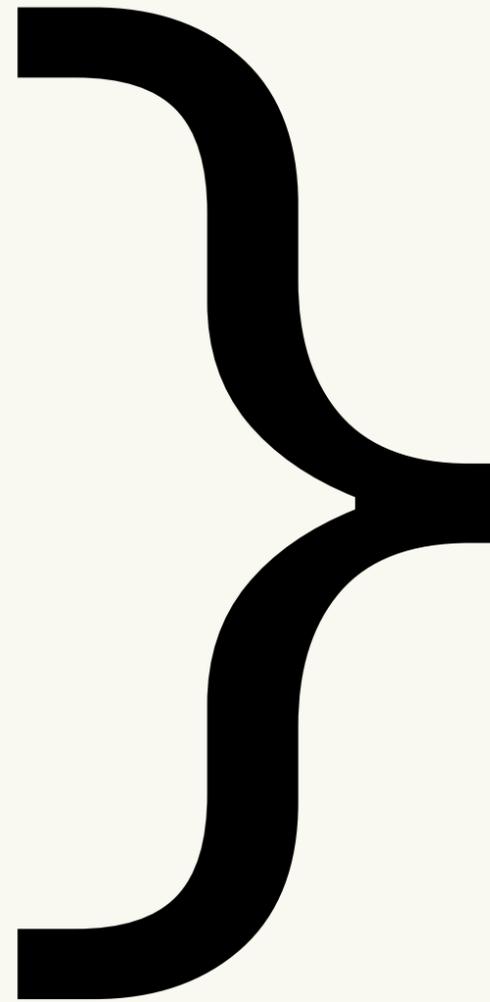


Kalonica Quigley
Animation

We come from outside of games

Our team is made up of:

- non-binary people
- musicians
- theatre-makers
- people of colour
- comics artists
- women
- new parents
- Vtubers
- writers
- neurodiverse people
- people from working-class backgrounds



Games are
not made by,
about, or for
us.

Our Team

Core collaborators



Maize Wallin
Audio



Jason Bakker
Writing & Programming



Susan Dang
Art & Animation



Georgia Symons
Writing



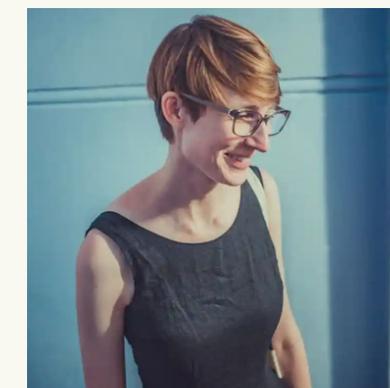
Aspen Forster
Technical Art



Russell Dilley
Programming



Goldie Bartlett
Art



Kalonica Quigley
Animation

Us



Jason Bakker
Writing & Programming



Georgia Symons
Writing

Us



10+ years game dev experience



Once played Portal
2 on her MacBook
with her trackpad.
10+ years theatre
experience

Our Team



Georgia Symons
Writing



Russell Dilley
Programming



Jason Bakker
Writing & Programming

Concept - Values & Feelings

- Inspired by personal relationships with older people
- Nuanced representations of older people with full lives in the present



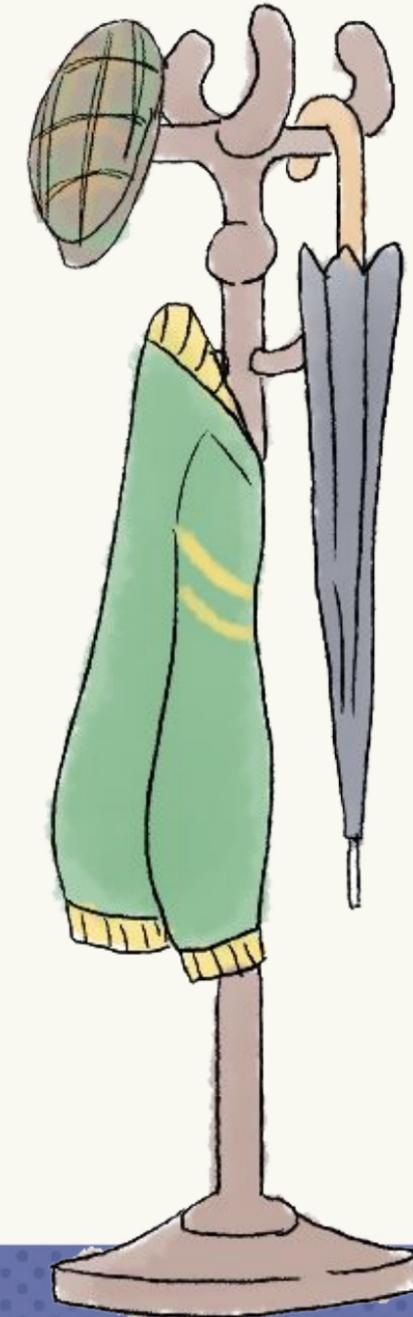
Concept - Values & Feelings

- NPCs aren't just participants in PC's story - they are **active agents** in their own lives
- Less **player agency** allowed for more **NPC agency**



Concept - Values & Feelings

- Rhythms of **daily life**
- Exploring how stories take place in real life
- Reflecting the **messiness of reality**



Consultation

- Stories of aging, of immigrant and Indigenous experiences, queer experiences.
- Set in a different time, and on country we have only spent limited time on.
- Consultation from the start - not in the last 10% of the journey.
- Honouring relationships.
- Different consultants at different stages of the journey.

Consultation

Bunurong Land Council

- Engaged from the start
- Creating not correcting
- Involvement from concept to execution
- Listening before agenda



Consultation

- Other consultants:
 - Dementia Australia
 - Family members who worked in the healthcare system
 - Team members with lived experience
 - Our wonderful actors!



Simultaneous Stories

Inspired by interactive/immersive theatre

- Audience curate their own story
- Overlaps; fully realised world



Simultaneous Stories

How do we guarantee a satisfying narrative journey, if we can't guarantee the narrative?

- Is satisfaction the goal?
- Does a narrative take only one shape?



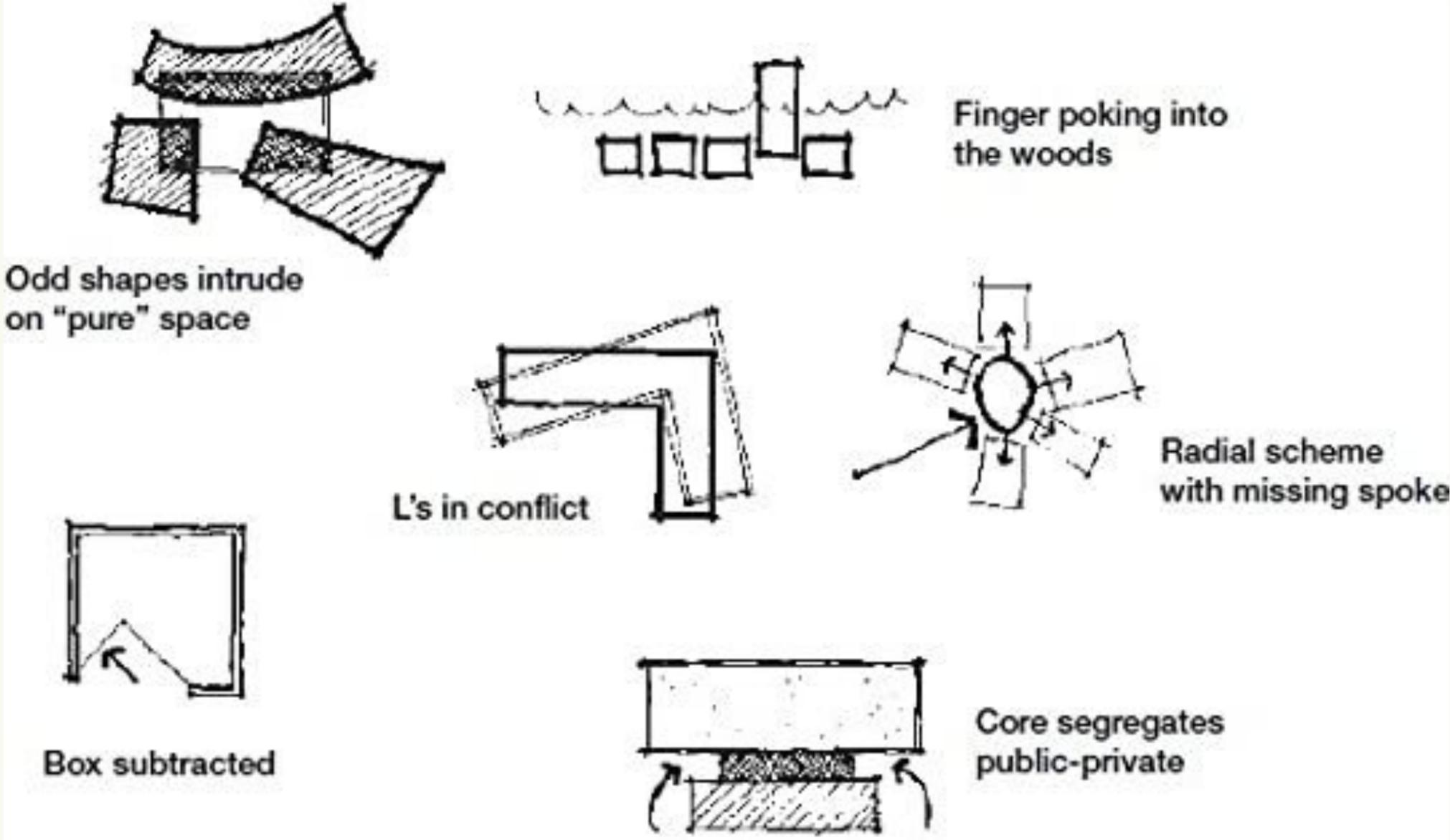
Simultaneous Stories

How do we guarantee a satisfying narrative journey, if we can't guarantee the narrative?

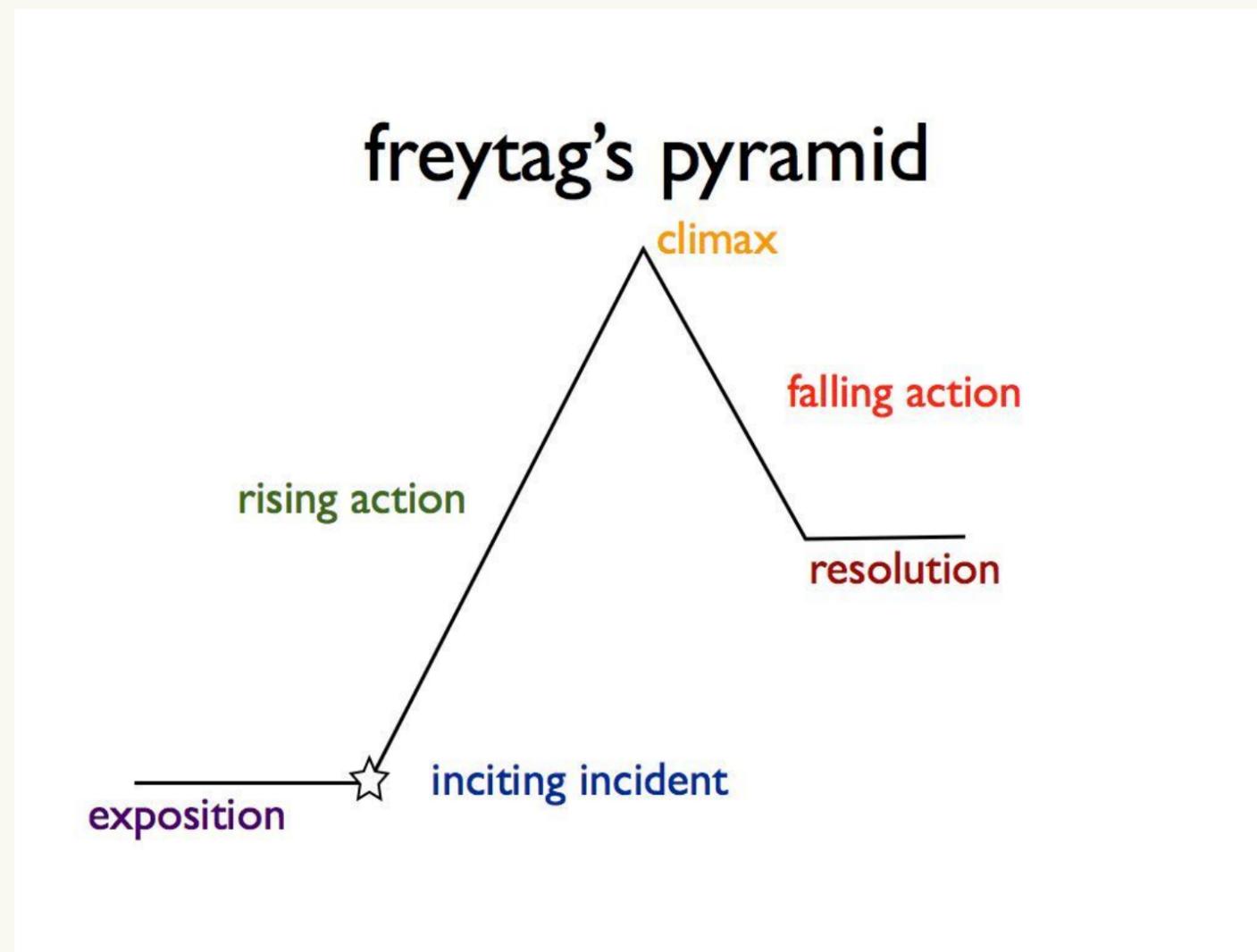
- Is satisfaction the goal?
- Does a narrative take only one shape?

"there were some small moments where I was unsure of what to do... While this did leave me wandering the halls aimlessly for a brief time, it ultimately felt like this added to the overall feeling that you really are Casey; wanting to help, but unsure how." - Emily Spindler, Games Hub

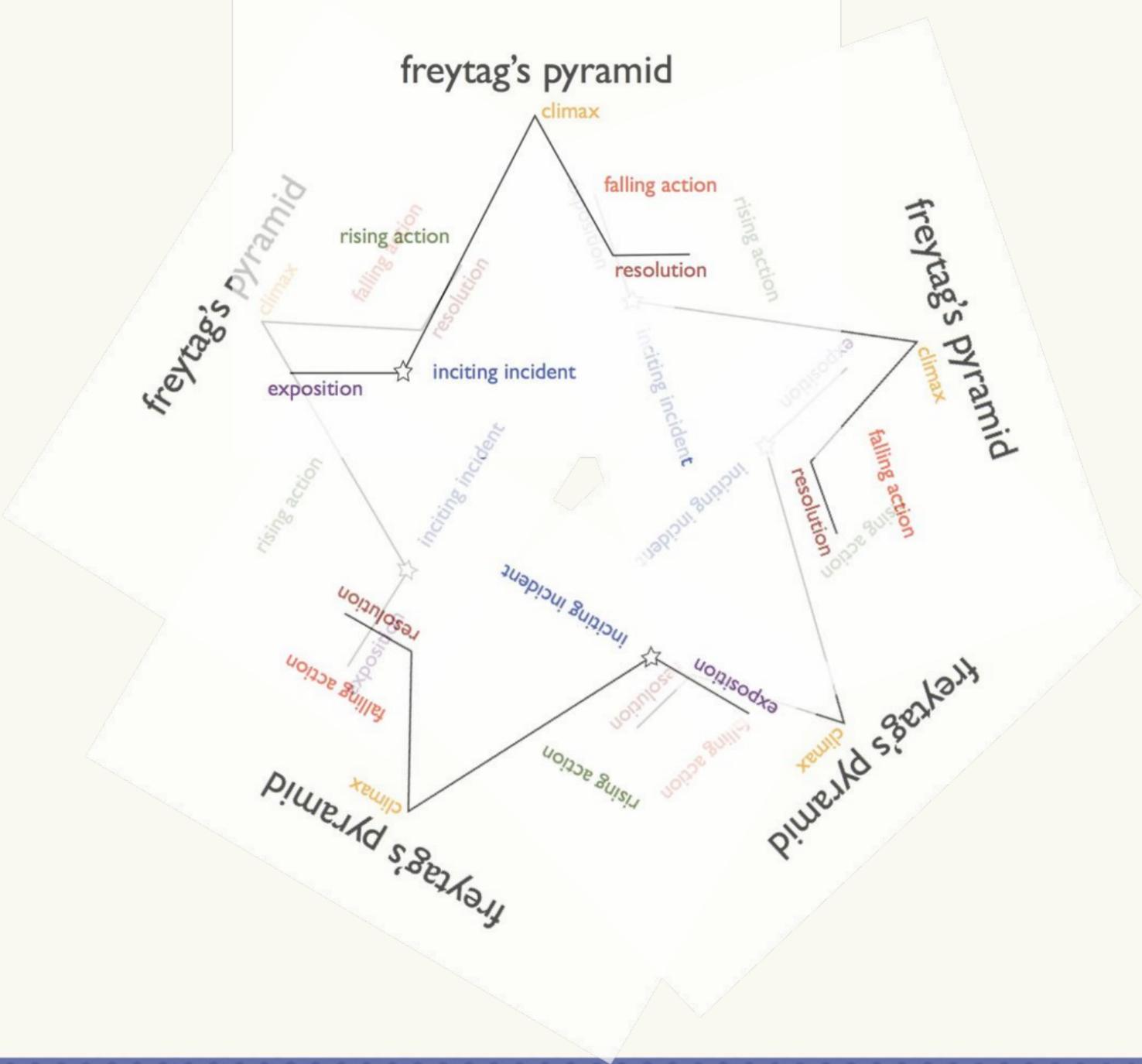
Simultaneous Stories



Simultaneous Stories



Simultaneous Stories



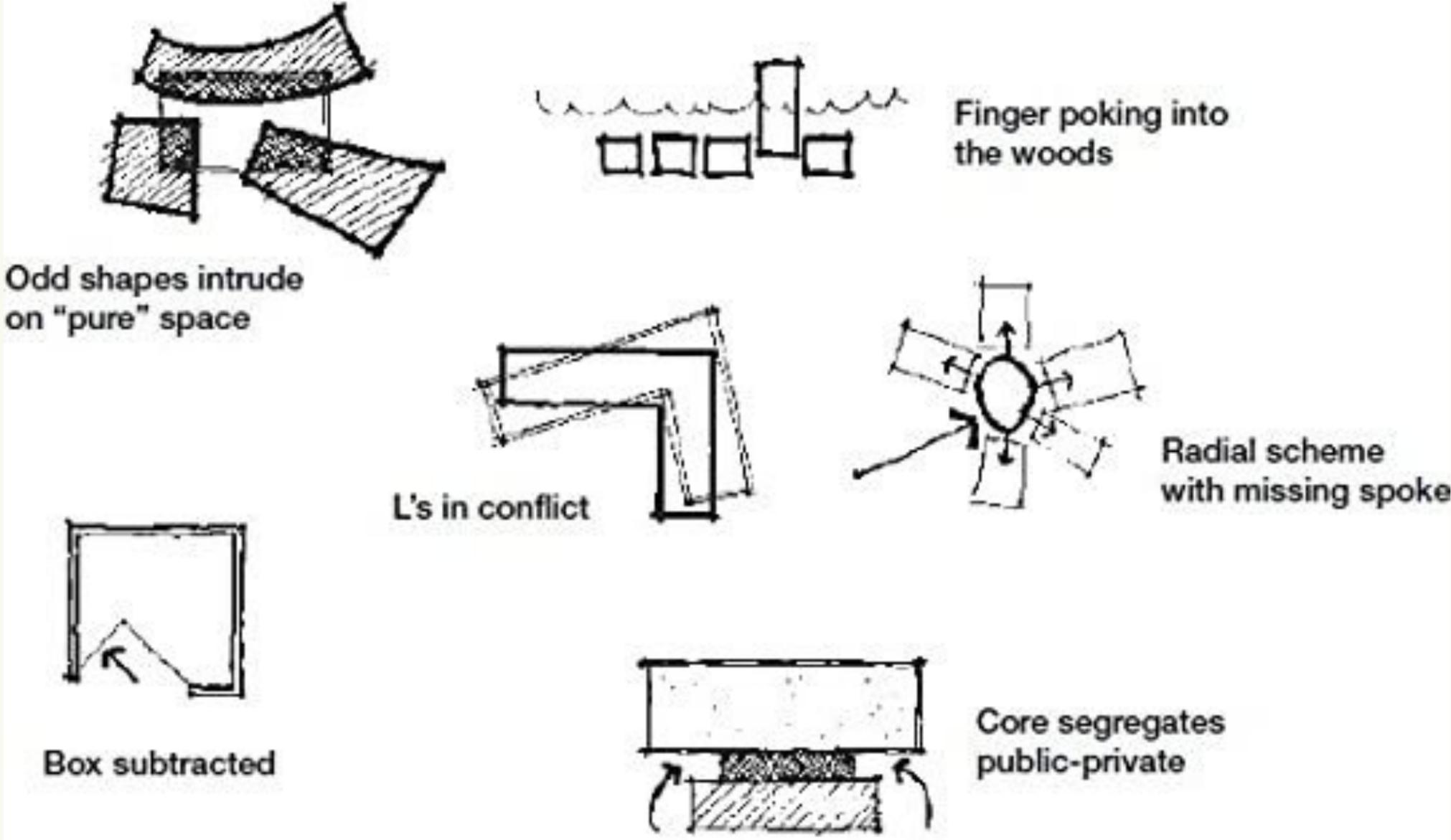
Simultaneous Stories



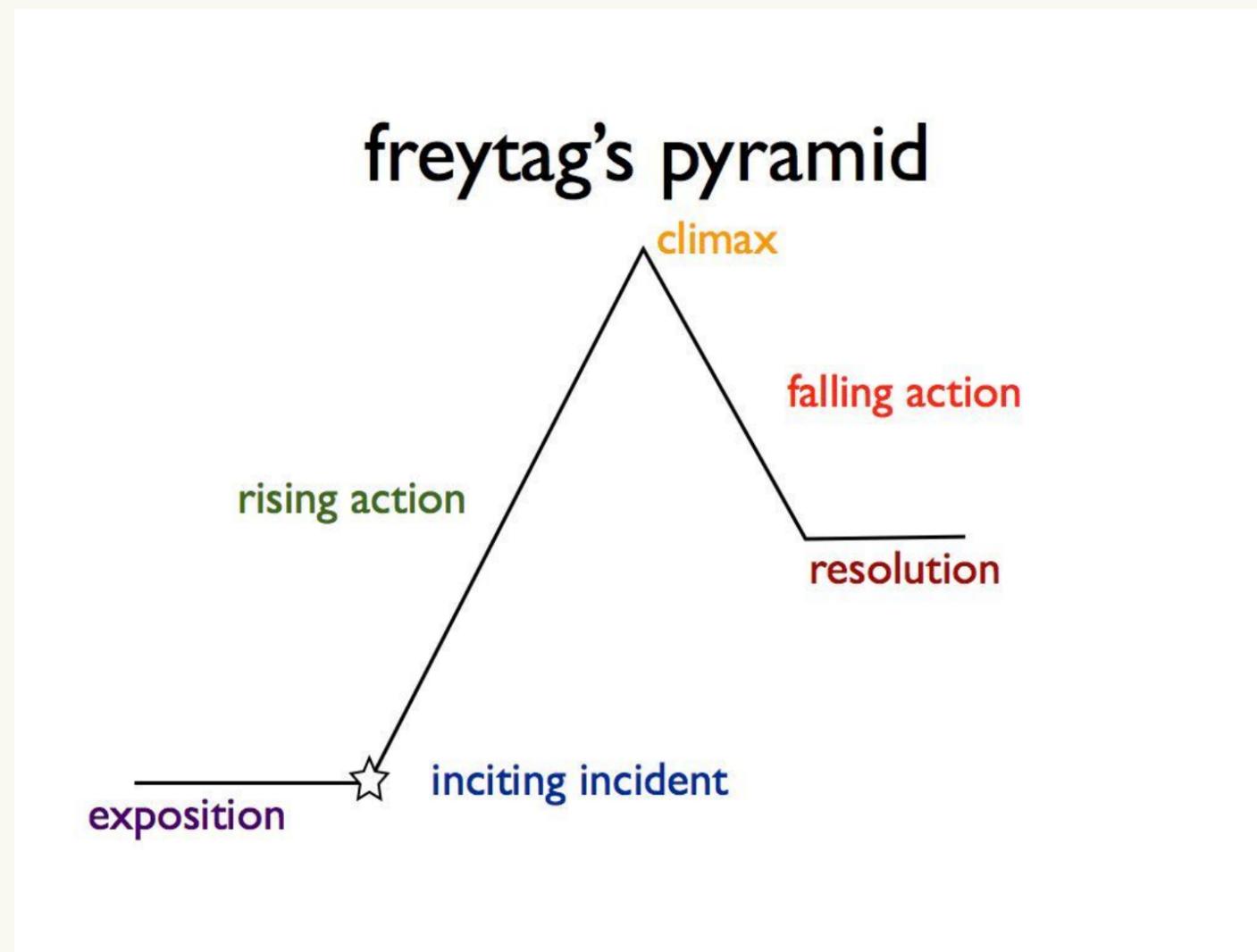
Simultaneous Stories

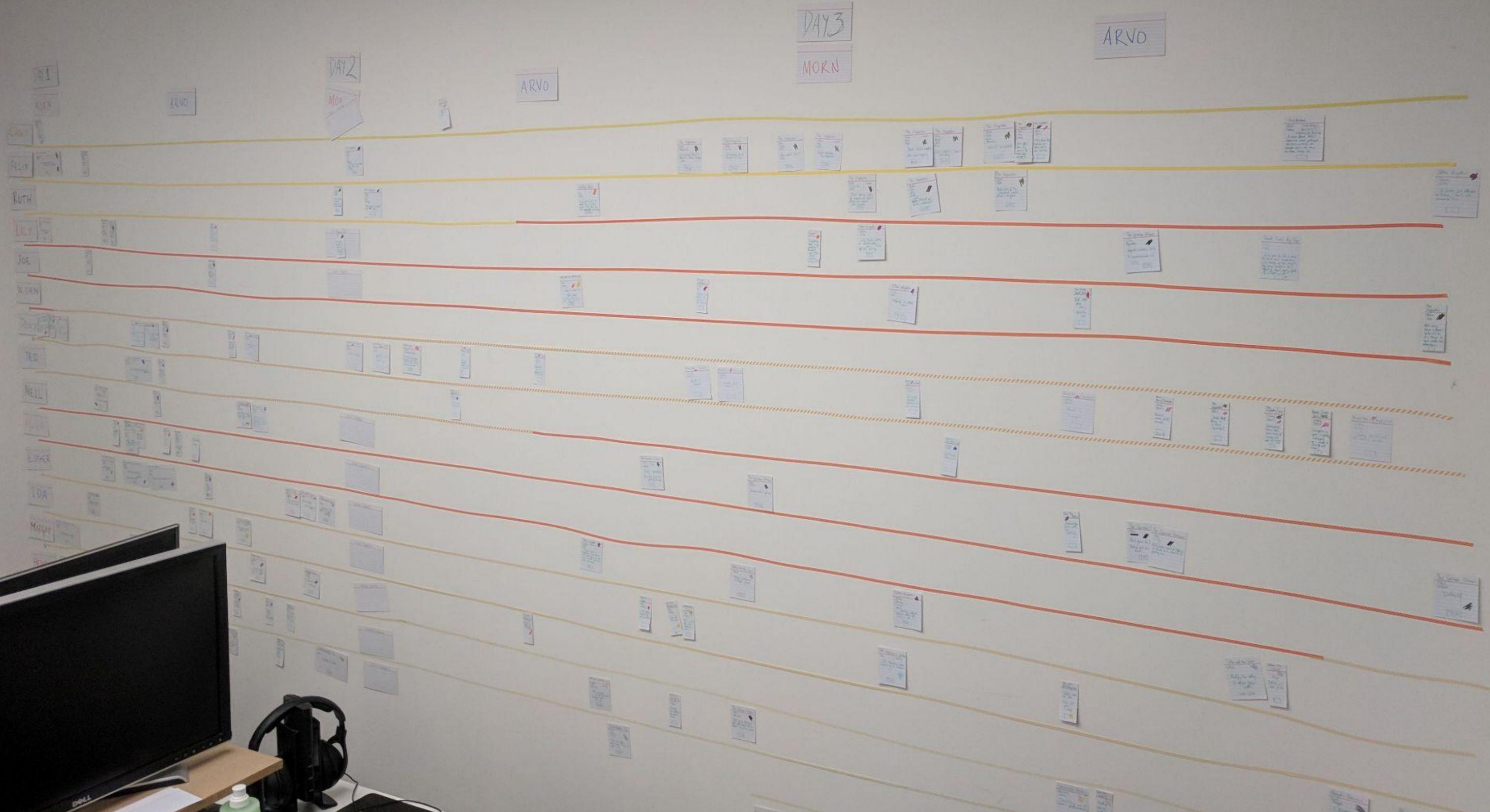


Simultaneous Stories



Simultaneous Stories





DAY 2

DAY 3

MORN

ARVO

ARVO

ME

ARVO

MI

LEX

RELY

RUTH

LILY

ICE

W. SHAN

ZAY

TED

NELL

LISA

EYACK

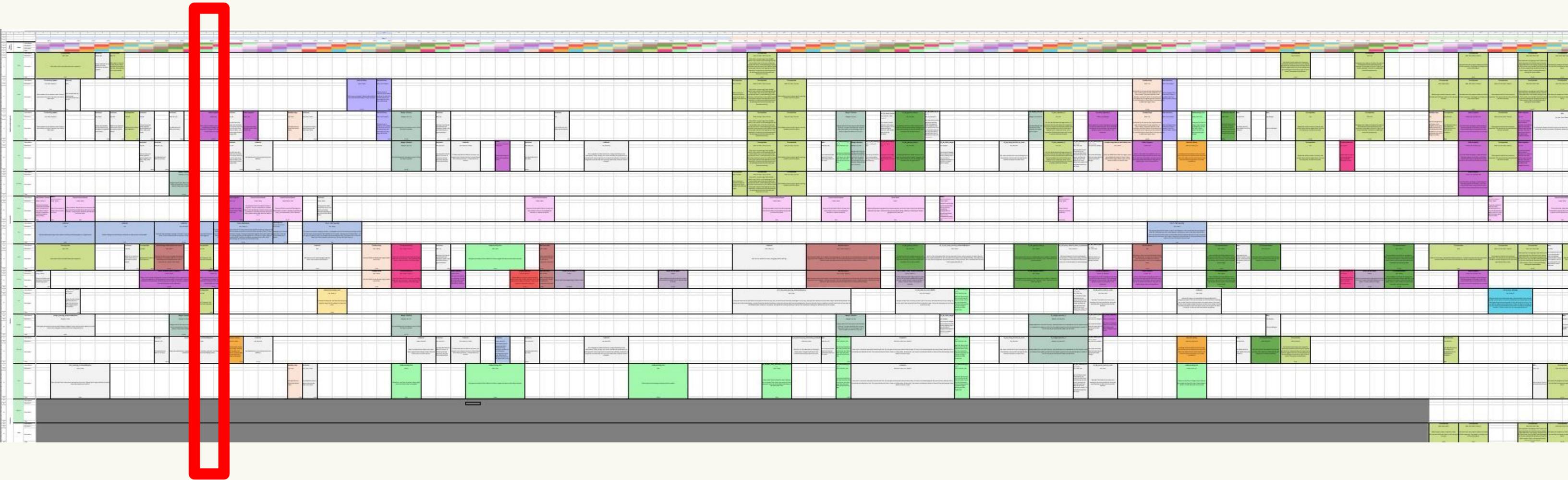
IDA

MARTIN

Simultaneous Stories



Simultaneous Stories



Simultaneous Stories

heinrich_morning_room_incidentals&options
 Heinrich, Casey

Casey sits with Heinrich, keeping him company. He's quite a quiet man, but Casey can find out a little about him by sticking around and being patient.

10:30

The Inspection
 Neil, Ida

Neil "reassures" Ida about the inspection

10:51

The Inspection
 Neil, Ida

Neil "reassures" Ida about the inspection

10:54

Esther Forgot

10:54 11:06

Esther Forgotten
 Esther, Lily

Esther calls Lily into her room and does lots of complaining, including asking for pain medication. Lily rejects the request, but agrees to fetch Esther an orange juice.

10:54

Esther Forgotten
 Esther, Lily

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10:54

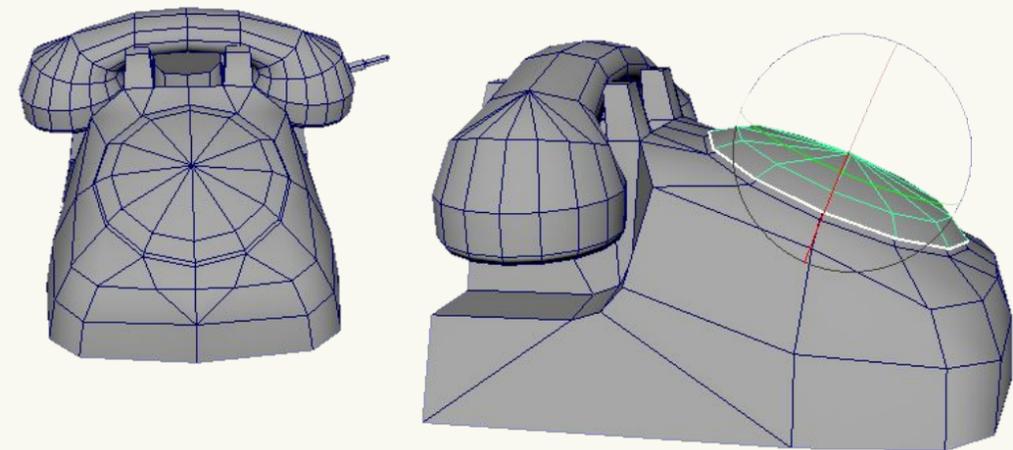
Incidental
 Ted, who else?

Ted reads the newspaper silently to himself. If any patients come by, he can read it aloud to them. If Casey comes by and no one else is there, the next scene can be triggered.

10:18

Plotting

- Constant evolution throughout development
- Built up relationships after initial storylines were defined.



Plotting - Relationship Matrix

	Casey	Ruth (Casey's Mother)	Ida Vaughan (Room #212)	Neil Avery (Room #213)	Margot Bouchard (Room #206)
Casey	Is a kid, unsure of herself.	Feels her mother is controlling her life.	Becomes friends with through spending time in conversation.	Is overly friendly, talks too much, but ultimately harmless.	Is dismissive of and can be abrasive to Casey.
Ruth (Casey's Mother)	Loves her daughter.	Holds herself to a high standard, and feels she is coming up short.	Is a good patient, friendly and calm, which is good for the other patients.	Is overly friendly, talks too much, but ultimately harmless.	Is respectful of, as she knows about her past work as a doctor.
Ida Vaughan (Room #212)	Possible friend.	Respects Ruth's kindness and hard work.	Knows that she is a friendly and good person, and is old enough to just accept that.	Neil's room is right next to Ida's, between Ida's room and Hugo's, so he interrupts her all the time.	Understands that Margot is going through hardship and doesn't want contact, and respects that.
Neil Avery (Room #213)	Neil is very friendly and open with Casey, constantly trying to talk to her, to tell her stories, or to give her advice.	Has noticed other people having respect towards Ruth, and emulates it, even though he hasn't really internalized the reason for the respect.	Ida's friendly, and Neil knows he's friendly, so they must be friends.	Neil is a well-known and respected author, entrepreneur, and businessman. You'd be lucky to have met him. He's so nice and friendly, for being so famous.	Neil doesn't like Margot and is scared of her, because she bluntly shuts him down when he tries to talk to her. He speaks about her badly behind her back.
Margot Bouchard (Room #206)	Doesn't see what Casey is doing as helpful to her - is dismissive of Casey.	Feels all hospital staff are blocking her choice to spend her last days at home.	Thinks Ida is nice, but isn't interested in friendship.	She doesn't care for Neil, and doesn't interact with him.	Feels very conflicted - on the one hand, she doesn't want to continue living because of her body failing her - on the other, has had a great, fulfilling life before now, and doesn't want it to end.
Tomi Hummel (Room #215)		Sees Ruth is doing what she can, but			Respects Margot as a strong woman who

Plotting - Relationship Matrix

	Ida Vaughan (Room #212)	Neil Avery (Room #213)
Ida Vaughan (Room #212)	Knows that she is a friendly and good person, and is old enough to just accept that.	Neil's room is right next to Ida's, between Ida's room and Hugo's, so he interrupts her all the time.
Neil Avery (Room #213)	Ida's friendly, and Neil knows he's friendly, so they must be friends.	Neil is a well-known and respected author, entrepreneur, and businessman. You'd be lucky to have met him. He's so nice and friendly, for being so famous.

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Our plots are boring



Our plots are boring

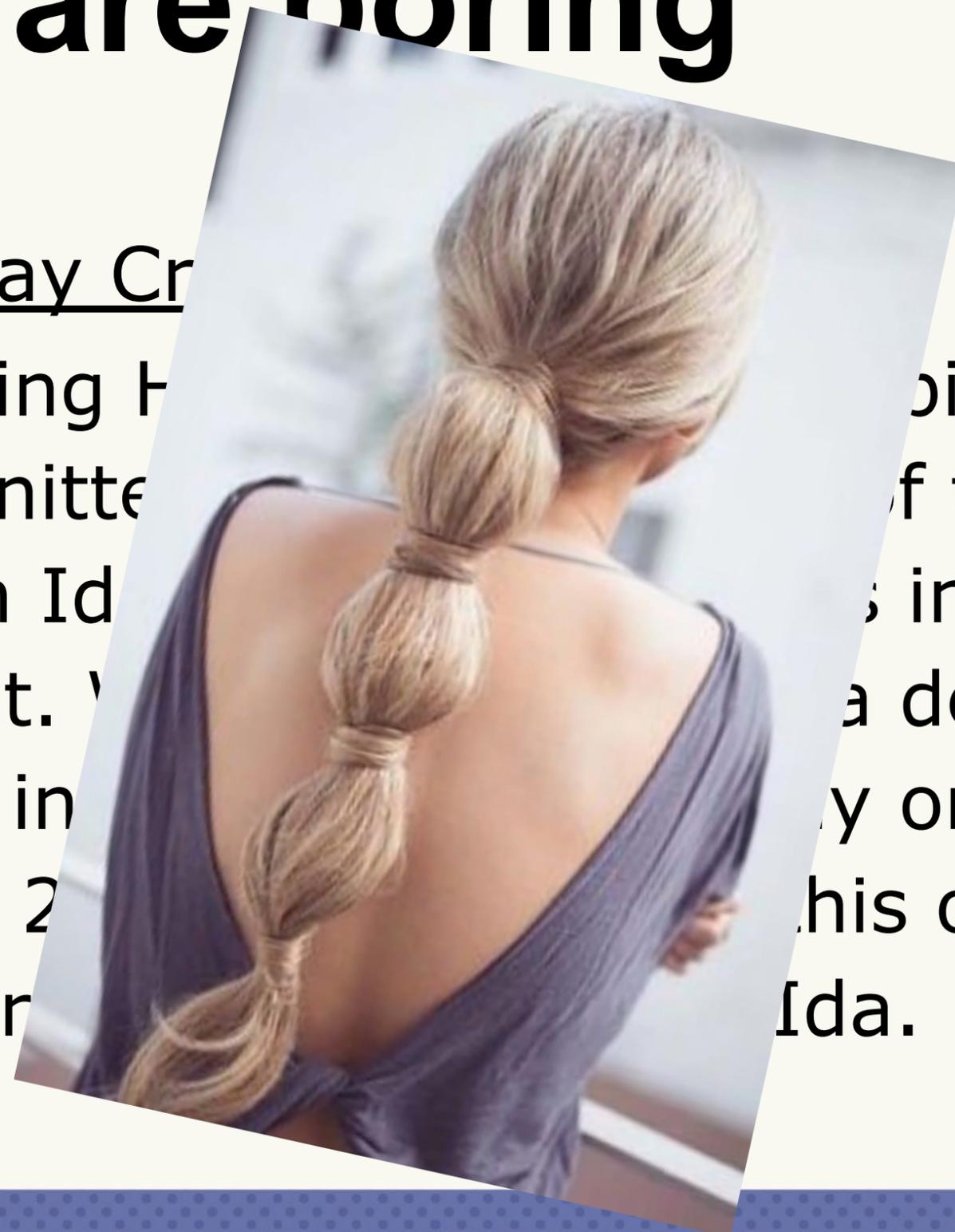
Ida and the Birthday Crest

Ida has been knitting Hugo a scarf for his birthday on Sunday - a surprise gift. Knitted into the pattern of the scarf is Hugo's family crest, which Ida sometimes sneaks into Hugo's room to get a better look at. When Hugo dies, Ida decides she must finish off the scarf in time for his birthday on the third day of the game. On Day 2, Casey can figure this out, and get the crest from Hugo's room, and give it to Ida.

Our plots are boring

Ida and the Birthday Cr

Ida has been knitting for Hugo's birthday - a surprise gift. Knitting the scarf with the family crest, which Ida has never seen, she gets a better look at it. She decides to finish off the scarf in the middle of the game. On Day 2, she goes to get the crest from Hugo's room.



Ida's birthday is on Sunday. She goes into Hugo's room to get the crest. She decides she must finish the scarf on the third day of the game. She goes to get the crest from Hugo's room. Ida.

Dramatic Narrative Structure

	<i>Before</i>	<i>Day 1 Morning</i>	<i>Day 1 Lunch</i>	<i>Day 1 Afternoon</i>
Ida's Story	-	-	-	-
	<i>Overnight 1</i>	<i>Day 2 Morning</i>	<i>Day 2 Lunch</i>	<i>Day 2 Afternoon</i>
Ida's Story	-	-	-	-
	<i>Overnight 2</i>	<i>Day 3 Morning</i>	<i>Day 3 Lunch</i>	<i>Day 3 Afternoon</i>
Ida's Story	-	-	-	-

Dramatic Narrative Structure



	Before	Day 1 Morning	Day 1 Lunch	
Esther's Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Esther moved to the hospital from a town in the region, a couple of hours drive away. - Esther and Neil get along pretty well – they're gossip and conspiracy theory partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After wandering around, Esther is doing a crossword in their room. - Esther starts to feel pain, and thinks that the staff haven't provided the morning meds – Esther calls Lily and they argue about it. - <i>New scene between Heinrich and Esther?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feeling a bit better, Esther goes to lunch and meets Neil there, who tells Esther about Hugo's death. - They gossip about various things, but the seeds are planted for Esther thinking about Hugo's ghost. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Esther - Heinrich - Ghost - that H
Esther & Casey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Esther and Casey haven't met before. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Casey and Esther meet by chance near the elevator – Esther says something cryptic. - Casey can help Esther with a crossword in their room. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Casey can't sit with Neil and Esther, but she can sit nearby and overhear their conversation – there are a lot of things they speak about that are noteworthy, that she can ask questions about later. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If Case - close - Esther - pain n
Esther's Attitude	<p><i>Esther + Hugo fight about horoscopes</i> <i>DISTANT w/ HUGO — has a continuing perspective, more literal/factual</i> <i>(his relationship to Ida)</i></p> <p><i>ACTIVE MIND, "SCATTER BRAIN" HYPER FOCUSING ON DIFFERENT THINGS, FLUSTERED</i> <i>THREE BIG "STRANDS" — HUGO, PAIN, GERMAN WOMAN</i> <i>CAN BE OVERWHELMING + CONFUSING TO CASEY/THE PLAYER</i> <i>Overnight 1 (doesn't always understand their intention)</i></p>			
		Day 2 Morning	Day 2 Lunch	
Esther's Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Esther has a difficult night's sleep, due to the pain. - They have more strange encounters with Hugo's ghost, which they can relay to Casey in the morning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neil interviews Esther for his book, and Esther lets loose about all the things that frustrate them about the hospital. - Before and after the interview, Esther tries various ways of communicating with Hugo's ghost. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neil gossips to Esther about the German woman to investigate. - Neil leaves Esther at the table – she is in too r - She's abandoned there by Lily, who has to rush 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Event - becau - Neil v - woma
Esther & Casey		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Esther will get Casey's assistance for the various ways of communicating with Hugo's ghost. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Casey can spend time with Esther. - She can also try to get help for Esther from the who busy to help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Esthe - If Cas - Hugo - Casey - don't
Esther's Attitude		<p><i>ARGUMENT WITH HUGO</i> <i>(ESTHER ONLY TALKS ABOUT IT w/ CASEY, NOT NEIL)</i> <i>ESTHER ASKS CASEY TO DO THINGS RE: HUGO + GERMAN WOMAN</i> <i>CASEY HAS ACCESS TO HUGO'S BELONGINGS — ESTHER ASKS HER TO DO THINGS RELATIVE TO THAT.</i></p>		
			<p><i>FLUSTERED, HYPER FOCUSING</i> <i>CASEY BRINGING UP A TOPIC THAT ESTHER ISN'T CURRENTLY THINKING ABOUT</i> <i>FLUSTERS THEM</i> <i>(i.e. Casey leaves to retrieve something from Hugo's room, returns with it but Esther's already moved on)</i></p>	



8

CAN BE OVERWHELMING
Overnight 1 *↳ doesn't always understand their intention*

Day 2 Morning

Esther's Story

- Esther has a difficult night's sleep, due to the pain.
- They have more strange encounters with Hugo's ghost, which they can relay to Casey in the morning.

- Neil interviews Esther for his book, and Esther lets loose about all the things that frustrate them about the hospital.
- Before and after the interview, Esther tries various ways of communicating with Hugo's ghost.

Esther & Casey

- Esther will get Casey's assistance for the various ways of communicating with Hugo's ghost.

Esther's Attitude

ARGUMENT WITH HUGO
 (ESTHER ONLY TALKS ABOUT IT ^W CASEY, NOT NEIL)

ESTHER ASKS CASEY TO DO THINGS RE: HUGO + GERMAN WOMAN

CASEY HAS ACCESS TO HUGO'S BELONGINGS - ESTHER ASKS HER TO DO THINGS RELATING TO THAT.

TIME
 OPENING TITLE
 L Time
 Setting
 Relatable moment
 DAY 1 UP INTRO
 sets Casey's mood for the day?

DAY 1 MORNING

DAY 1 ARVO

DAY 1 DOWN ~~DAY 2 MORN~~

DIARY
 dynamic? branching
 - mixed of predefined + influenced by player interactions during the day.
 Can hear and/or see elements of her Casey's life (eg. called down for dinner)

CASEY'S ATTITUDE

EXCITED
 SHORT TOWARDS RUTH

UNSURE
 CURIOUS

HIGH ENERGY
 EXCITED
 INDEPENDENT

!REVERSAL!

DEFIANT
 INFANTILISED

PLOT CASEY

RUTH TAKING CASEY TO SHIP FOR THE FIRST TIME

CASEY MEETS CHARACTERS FOR THE FIRST TIME
 EVEN WITH 'GOAL' OF DIARY/PROJECT
 NERVOUS
 A BIT SPOOKED ABOUT THE REALITY OF IT?
 EXPLAINED CASEY ONLY HAS 3 DAYS.

MOMENT OF EMPOWERMENT - ENCOURAGED

RUTH TAKING CASEY HOME
 RUTH'S PREOCCUPIED
 TENSION BETWEEN CASEY + RUTH
 DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON THE DAY — ADVENTURE FOR CASEY
 "JUST A KID" AGAIN WORK/ REALITY FOR RUTH

REFLECTIVE.
 STARTS OFF FRUSTRATED/EXHAUSTED
 PROGRESSES TO EXCITED
 ENDS WITH INTEREST// THE NEXT DAY.

PLAYER MOTIVATIONS/ GOALS

CUTSCENE!
 LEARN WHO CASEY IS
 LEARN ABOUT SHIP
 LEARN CASEY/RUTH RELATIONSHIP
 LEARN HOW TO INTERACT

NAVIGATE SHIP
 MEET CHARACTERS - ENCOURAGED TO MEET IDA FIRST

(careful not to overwhelm player)
 BE CURIOUS

CUTSCENE - PLAYER LOSES CONTROL AS CASEY DOES.

REFLECT ON THE DAY.
 NOTES DOWN PLANS/INTENTIONS FOR THE NEXT DAY.

MECHANICS

ASK CASEY/PLAYER TO MEET BEFORE/ FOR LUNCH.

L player meet someone: they meet Casey at elevator, 2nd day support intro. (brief encounter)

CASEY/PLAYER IS ASKED TO REFLECT ON WHICH CHARACTER THEY'D LIKE TO FOLLOW

RUTH COLLECTS CASEY

EACH CHARACTER MENTIONS SOMEONE ELSE FOR CASEY TO MEET (eg. 'if you like writing, you should meet Neil!')
 NURSES STATION IS PLACE PLAYER CAN

LUNCHTIME ANNOUNCEMENT - ENCOURAGE CASEY TO CAFETERIA

REFLECT ON THE DAY
 LEARN MORE ABOUT CASEY'S INTERNAL THOUGHTS
 INFORM THE GAME OF INTERESTS?
 Leg chooses to write about Ida - Ship, Patients, Staff, Ted, Casey.

BEDROOM AT NIGHT,



CASEY'S
ATTITUDE

EXCITED
SHORT TOWARDS RUTH

UNSURE
CURIOUS

HIGH ENERGY
EXCITED

INDEPENDENT

REVERSAL

PLOT
CASEY

RUTH TAKING CASEY
TO SHIP FOR THE
FIRST TIME

CASEY MEETS CHARACTERS
FOR THE FIRST TIME

EVEN WITH 'GOAL' OF DIARY/PROJECT
NERVOUS

A BIT SPOOKED ABOUT THE REALITY OF IT?

EXPLAINED CASEY ONLY HAS 3 DAYS.

MOMENT OF EMPOWERMENT -
ENCOURAGED

'CUTSCENE'

LEARN WHO CASEY IS

NAVIGATE SHIP

??????

PLAYER
MOTIVATIONS /
GOALS

'OUTSCENE'
LEARN WHO CASEY IS
LEARN ABOUT SHIP
LEARN CASEY/RUTH RELATIONSHIP
LEARN HOW TO INTERACT

MECHANICS

NAVIGATE SHIP
MEET CHARACTERS -
ENCOURAGED TO MEET IDA FIRST

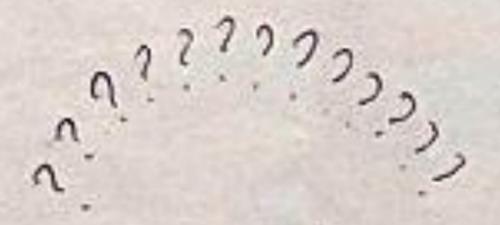
ASK CASEY / ^{PLAYER} TO MEET BEFORE / FOR LUNCH.

EACH CHARACTER MENTIONS SOMEONE ELSE FOR CASEY TO MEET (eg. 'If you like writing, you should meet Neil!')

NURSES STATION IS PLACE PLAYER CAN RETURN TO FOR DIRECTION (eg. 'Have you met Margot yet?')

BASELINE, CLASSIC SUNNY BLUE DAY
WHITE YELLOW

↳ don't meet solutions: they meet Casey at elevator, 2nd day
↳ suggest intros. brief encounter.



(Careful not to overwhelm player)
BE CURIOUS

CASEY / PLAYER IS ASKED TO REFLECT ON WHICH CHARACTER THEY'D LIKE TO FOLLOW

LUNCHTIME ANNOUNCEMENT - ENCOURAGE CASEY TO CAFETERIA

DAWN, COLD MORNING
PARK
DESATURATED
BROWNS + ORANGES. 70's

COLOURS /
LIGHTING

Dramatic Narrative Structure

- Afforded group discussion per character
- Helped identify 'quiet sections' for characters
- Ensured important characteristics have scenes/moments that highlight them
- Team process helped identify where consultation was needed

	Before	Day 1 Morning	Day 1 Lunch	Day 1 Afternoon
Ted's Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ted has been working as the shuttle operator since the ship started up. - He's been home-schooled, both to help pass down his Indigenous heritage, but also to keep him from being taken by Native Welfare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ted takes Ruth and Casey up on the shuttle, then goes to read to Heinrich. - He disappears below decks for a while, then comes up to hang out at the bar near the cafeteria for a while, before going back down. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He comes back just before lunch ends, to grab a sandwich from Devin, before heading back downstairs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ted does the midday shuttle run around 1:30pm, taking Joe down. - Ted should be involved in something with another character in the afternoon.
Ted & Casey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ted and Casey haven't met before - Ted's family is further out, near a different town. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Casey can come and find Ted at the bar, and ask him about the ship. - He doesn't invite Casey down yet, but he suggests that there's a lot more to the ship than up here. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Casey can briefly run into Ted while he grabs lunch, and watch as he disappears amongst the junk at the back of the cafeteria, and write in her notebook about it. 	
Ted's Attitude	<p>- Something is happening that is on Ted's mind</p> <p><i>sense of obligation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - someone being born/pregnant - someone leaving to be famous footballer - been told to find job for someone - community activism, big positive rise. 	<p>Everyone is passing him by, he overhears about Hugo.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do Bunurony deal w death. - Change in routine 	<p>Casey asks Ted why he's downstairs, he says he's avoiding extra work the inspectors brought.</p>	

	Overnight 1	Day 2 Morning	Day 2 Lunch	Day 2 Afternoon
Ted's Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talks to parents about Hugo's death and Traditional funerals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nobody wants to hear the news, so Ted reads the newspaper by himself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ted grabs lunch and disappears somewhere on the ship, then does the midday shuttle run. 	
Ted & Casey		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If Casey finds Ted, he will take her down to the lower decks. - They explore various abandoned rooms, and make up ghost stories together - they can do this any time they are down there together. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ted isn't available to speak to during this time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If Casey goes downstairs again, she discovers Ted working on his comic books. - Casey and Ted talk about the comic book character. - Ted and Casey chat about various things, including parents, at the end of the day at the shuttle, waiting for Ruth to arrive.
Ted's Attitude	<p>PRIDE</p>	<p>Reflecting on who to be when grown</p> <p>"Not like these people on the ship"</p> <p>The classifieds... and the sport section"</p> <p>Hurt what the Ida hasn't talked to him about Hugo</p>	<p>Activism in the news. "we're gonna have a merry next year"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lit up about interests. - Ted gives Casey a comicbook (and picture in journal)

	Overnight 2	Day 3 Morning	Day 3 Lunch	Day 3 Afternoon
Ted's Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - maybe make design on boomslang to commemorate Hugo - vessel 	<p>previous day -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ted reads the paper to Heinrich, then disappears downstairs (or sticks around a bit, if he hasn't shown Casey how to access downstairs yet). - Around 11am, he heads down to do a special shuttle for the V.I.P. - He comes to the nurse's station just before 12 - there was no visitor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ted grabs lunch and disappears somewhere on the ship, then does the midday shuttle run. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If Casey goes downstairs again, she finds Ted, who takes her to the

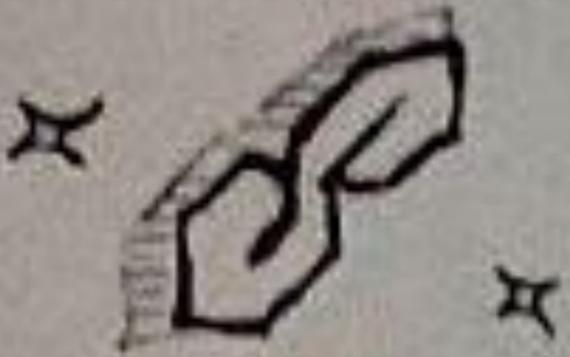
Ted &
Casey

- Ted and Casey haven't met before - Ted's family is further out, near a different town.

Ted's
Attitude

- Something is happening that is on Ted's mind
- sense of obligation

- someone being born/pregnant
- someone leaving to be famous footballer
- been told to find job for someone
- community activism, big positive etc.



Day 1 Lunch - usually with IPA + Hugo

Before

Day 1 Morning

Tomi's Story

- Tomi has been brought to the airship by her family, who now live in Melbourne.
- She has slowly declined over the years, to her current non-communicative state.

- Tomi spends the early part of the morning in bed.
- She gets up to do some gardening mid-morning.
- Late morning, she wanders down to the stairwell and lies down, looking out the big cafeteria windows.

- After Lily finds Tomi in the stairwell, she'll take her to lunch.
- Tomi sits quietly, and eats after a while. Lily talks with her to keep her company.

Tomi & Casey

- Tomi and Casey have never met before.

- If Casey comes across Tomi, she doesn't know what to expect.
- They have some strange interactions, until Casey asks someone else and they let Casey know about Tomi's condition.
- If Casey finds Tomi in the stairwell, she can go to get help.

- Casey can sit with Lily and Tomi, and ask Lily about Tomi.

Tomi's Attitude

- DEMENTIA
- VOCAL SOUNDS

- Moving objects around
- Researching
- Cutting paper
- Writing

NOTICES SOMETHING IS DIFFERENT
- Confused

Overnight 1

Day 2 Morning

Day 2 Lunch

Tomi's Story

- Tomi awoke early and came to Heinrich's room.
- She will spend the morning in Heinrich's room, with Heinrich speaking to her.
- Ida comes to collect her for lunch. - waiting for her maybe?

- Tomi eats with Ida - Ida chats with her like she used to, but not about Hugo.

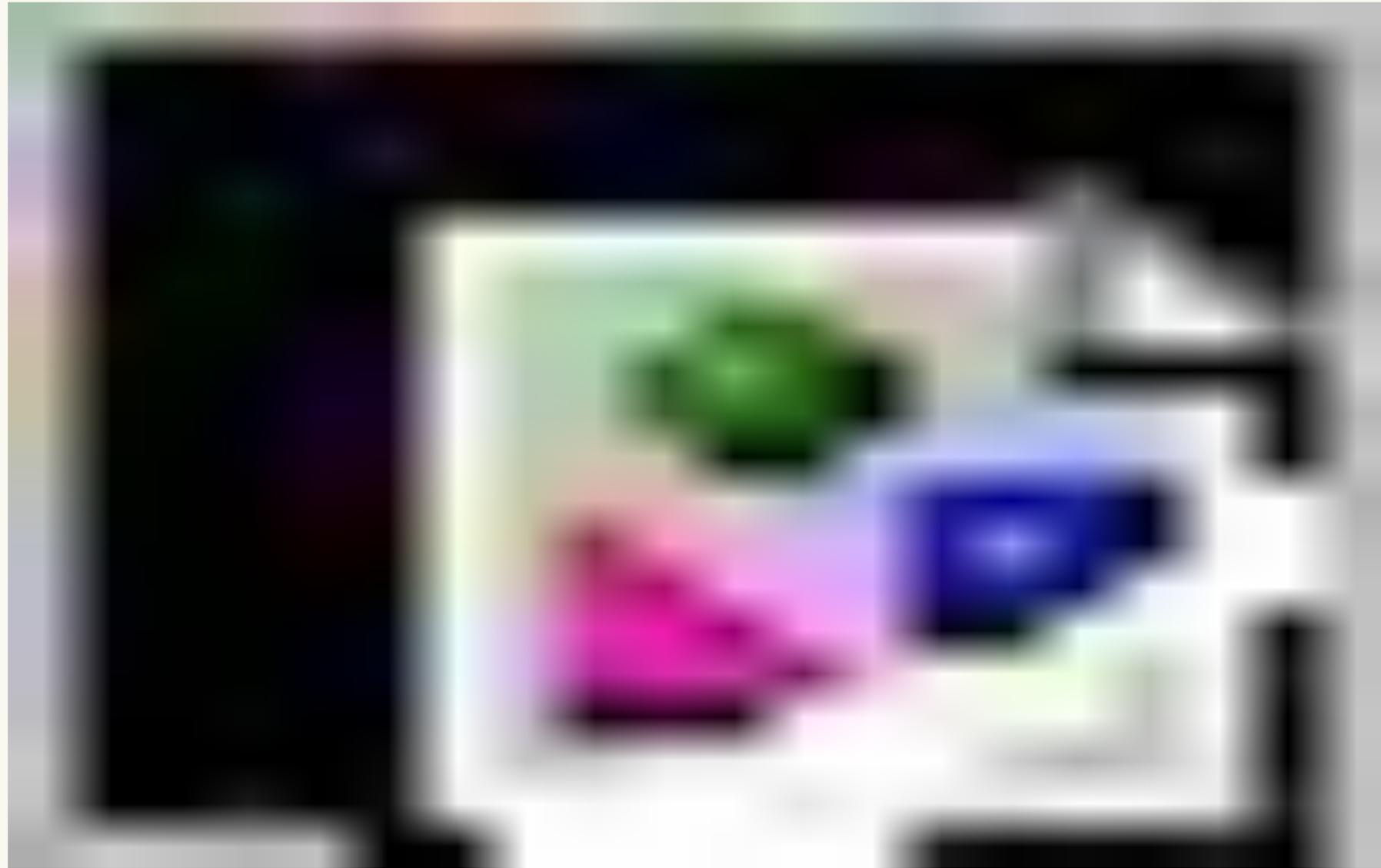
Tomi & Casey

Tomi's Attitude

CHANGE
REACTION - STRESSED.

WARM FRIENDSHIP
BUT NOTICES CHANGE IN IDA

Now we have to write the damned thing...



Now we have to write the damned thing...

- This was our homework
- We constantly had to iterate and compromise on what we thought the scenes would be
- Making sure that Casey was always actively involved, despite not being caught up in (many) fixed plots of her own
- Always referring back to narrative structure diagrams

How we did the dialogue

How did we keep character voice so consistent with two writers?

- Major/minor stake in characters
- Thinking of people we knew
- Two writers, one editor



Revision after VO recording

- Modifying when and why a scene can play
- Splitting scenes into smaller scenes
- Line-by-line changes - cutting, moving
- Creating alternative pathways into scenes



How did the experiment go?

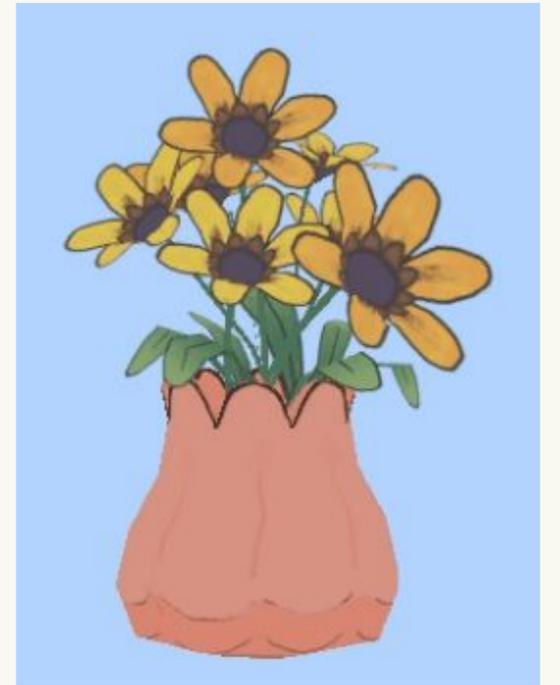
- “Clear-eyed... about the complexities and the hardships of being alive”^{*}
- “Unlike any game before it, *Wayward Strand* finds a unique way to tap into the human condition”[†]
- “You will come away from *Wayward Strand* a better person”[†]

^{*} Steven Nguyen Scaife, UpperCut Crit, “Review: *Wayward Strand* is a New Classic of Video Game Storytelling”

[†] Matt Gardner, Forbes, “‘*Wayward Strand*’ Review: A Slow-Burning, Emotional Work Of Art”

Takeaways

- Less player agency can allow for more dynamic, vibrant and alive NPCs, and a fundamentally different player experience.
- You can experiment without being a master already
- Value-driven dev leads to team motivation and cohesion
- Simultaneous Stories: more than the sum of their parts



Takeaways

- Less player agency can allow for more dynamic, vibrant and alive NPCs, and a fundamentally different player experience.
- You can experiment without being a master already
- Value-driven dev leads to team motivation and cohesion
- Simultaneous Stories: more than the sum of their parts
- Ponytail is a real narrative structure that everyone knows about



Wayward Strand



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