GAME NARRATIVE SUMMIT

The Narrative Innovation Showcase 2019

Clara Fernández-Vara, NYU Game Center
Matthew Weise, Empathy Box

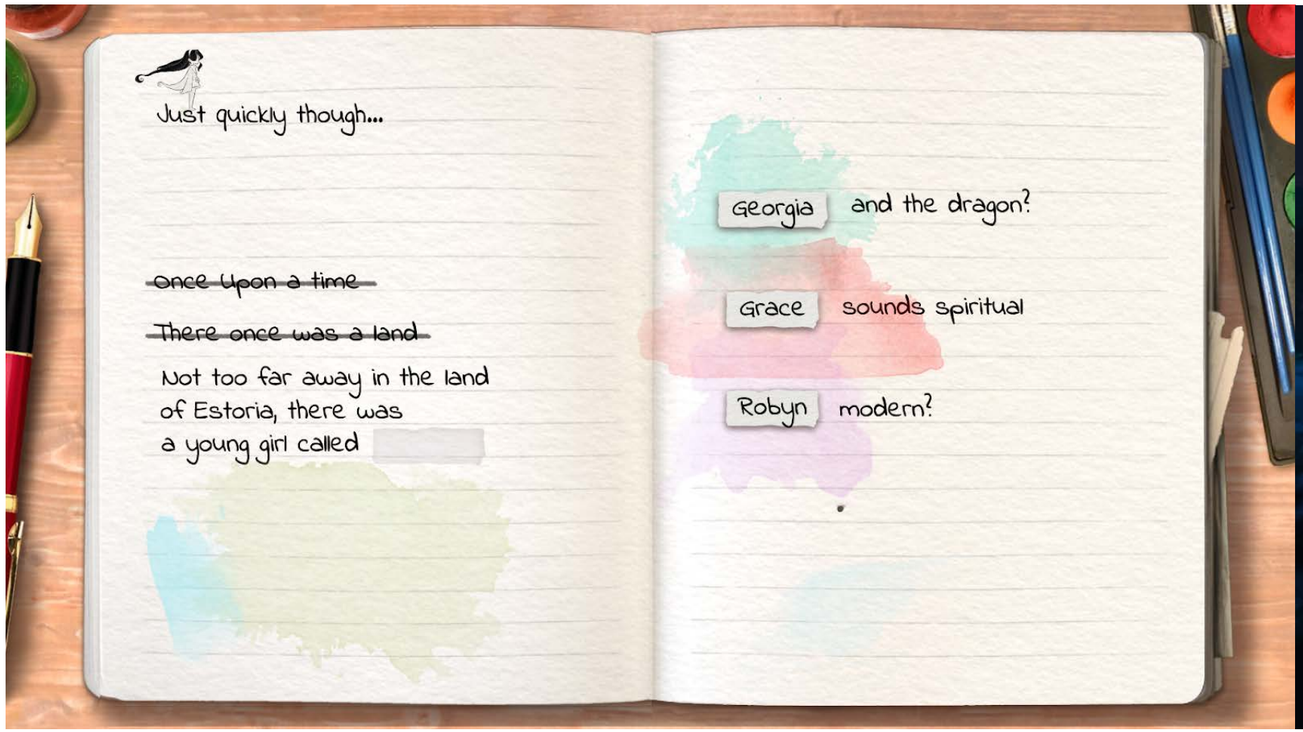
GDC
GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE
MARCH 18–22, 2019 | #GDC19

Welcome

Using Words as Game Mechanics

Mark Backler
Founder, Sketchbook Games

Intro


Just quickly though...
~~Once Upon a time~~
~~There once was a land~~
Not too far away in the land of Estoria, there was a young girl called
Georgia
and the dragon?
Grace
sounds spiritual
Robyn
modern?

She took a deep breath...
...and leapt

The Challenge

Using words as game mechanics to help tell an emotionally moving story

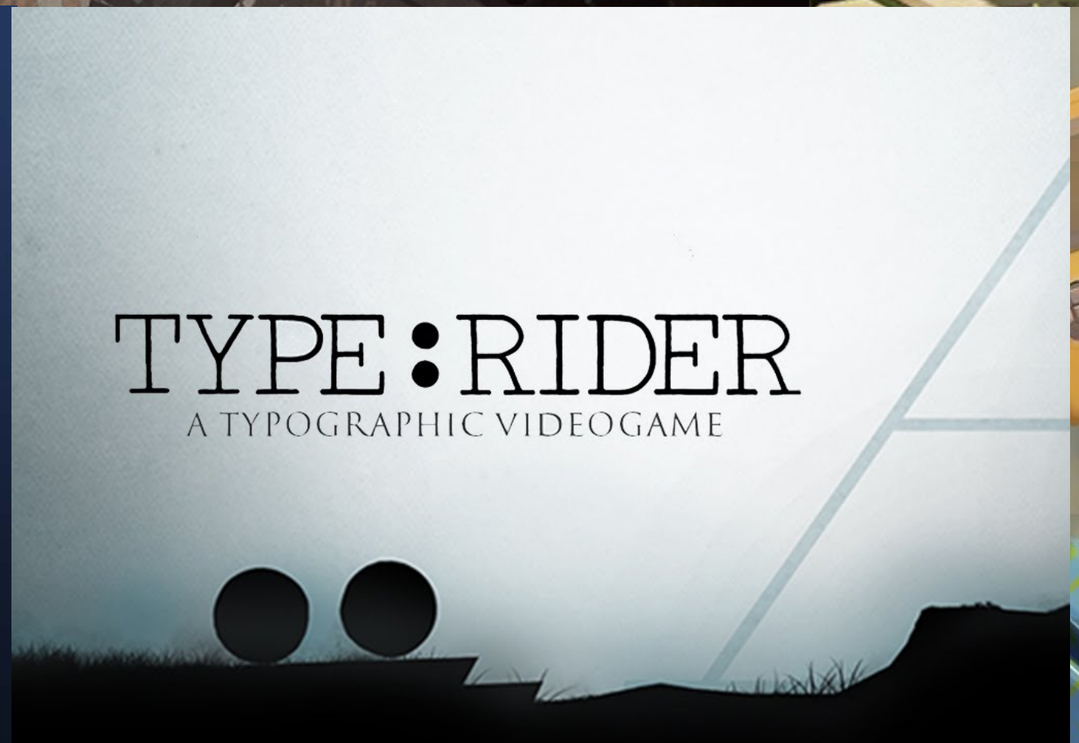
The Challenge

Using words as game mechanics to help tell an emotionally moving story, *while remaining localizable for other languages*

TYPOMAN
REVISED

EPISTORY
TYPING CHRONICLES

FEARSOME WORLD
FULL OF SHADOWS
TODAY I SHINE
DARK
HOPELESS


TYPE:RIDER
A TYPOGRAPHIC VIDEOGAME

DEAR PEN PAL
MY NAME IS Sarah Frei
AND I'M VERY GLAD TO MEET YOU!
I'M FROM Switzerland
I'M IN fifth GRADE
LETTERS
a written adventure
color IS / ARE blue
animals IS / ARE birds
hobby IS / ARE drawing
PLEASE WRITE SOON!

Solution

1. Aligning the Gameplay and the Story

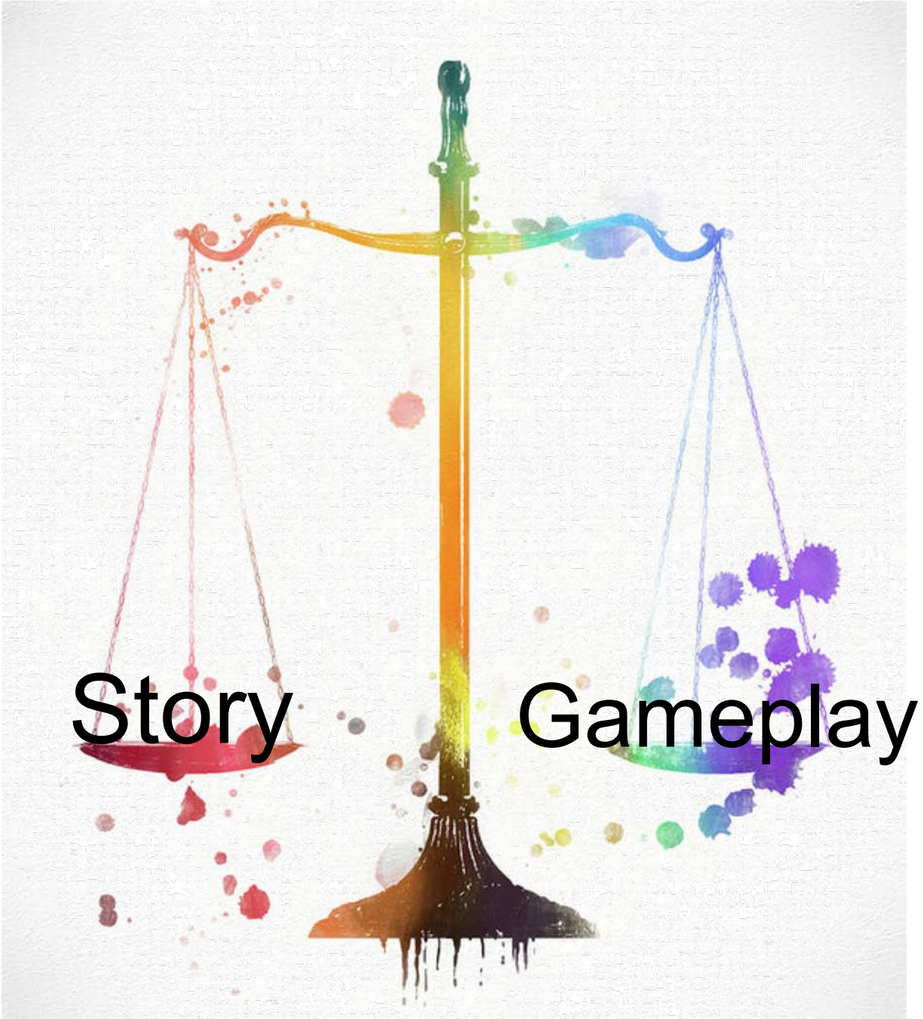
Solution

1. Aligning the Gameplay and the Story
2. Game Mechanics as Metaphors

Solution

1. Aligning the Gameplay and the Story
2. Game Mechanics as Metaphors
3. Smart Localization System

1. Aligning Gameplay and Story



2. Metaphors with Meaning

2. Metaphors with Meaning

Anything we ask the player to **DO**

2. Metaphors with Meaning

Anything we ask the player to **DO**
is something they will **FEEL**,

2. Metaphors with Meaning

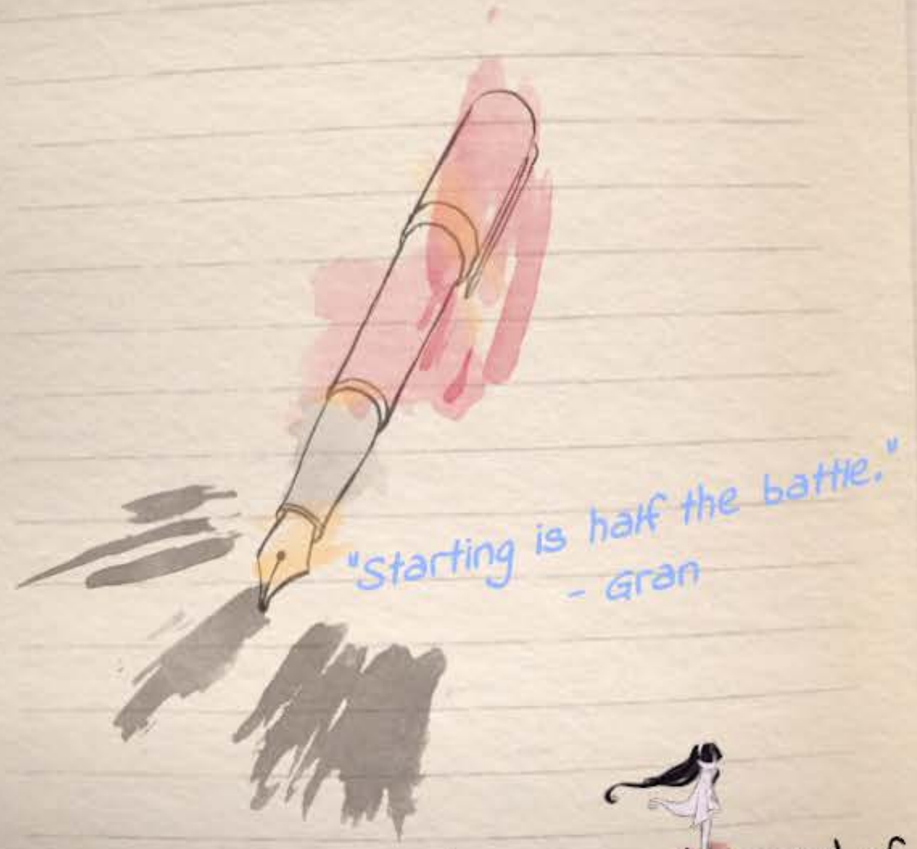
Anything we ask the player to **DO**
is something they will **FEEL**,
and so it carries **MEANING.**

"Starting is half the battle."
- Gran

Since I was little I've always dreamed of

becoming a writer

This is where you come in, Journal!



Since I was little I've always dreamed of

becoming

a

writer

This is where you come in, Journal!

I got our old photo album out.

I wanted to see Gran

like I remember her.

STEP BY STEP THROUGH

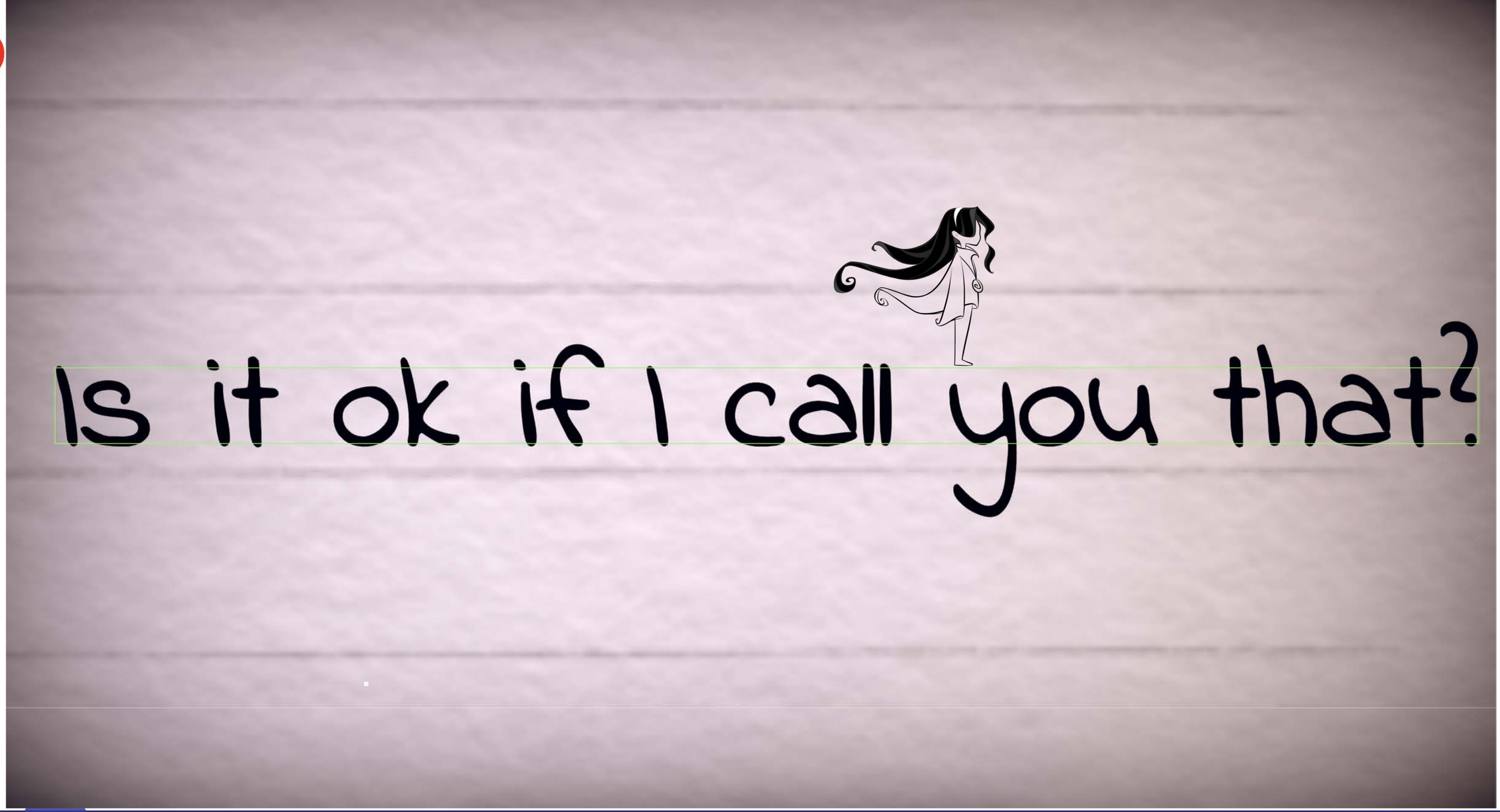
STROKE

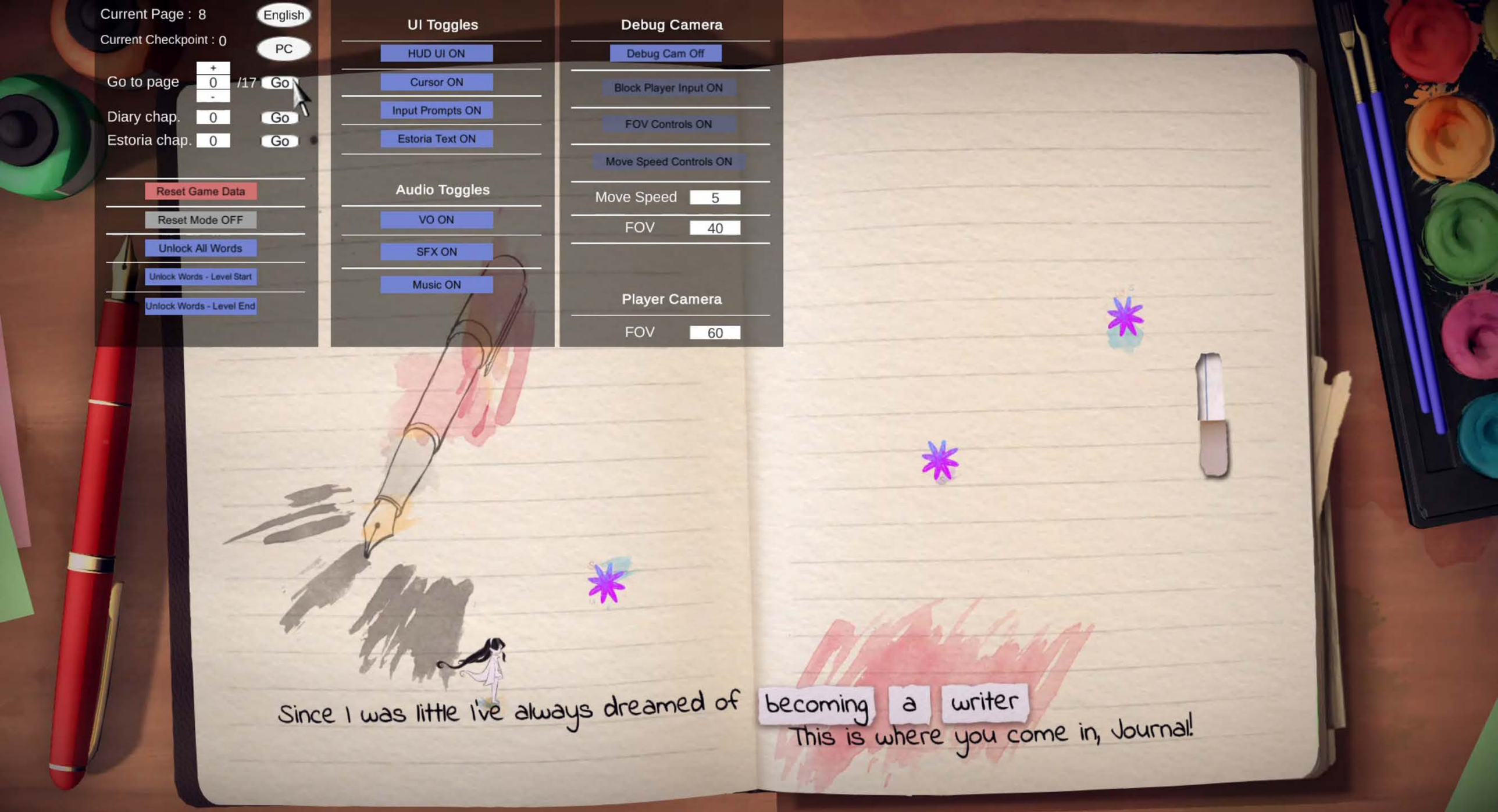
A GUIDE FOR THE RELATIVES OF THOSE AFFECTED BY STROKE

we just heard that Grandma has had a stroke. I don't want to believe it.

I can't lose her.

3. Localization
Lokalisierung
Localizzazione
Localización
本土化
локализация
ローカライゼーション


Is it ok if I call you that?


Current Page : 8
Current Checkpoint : 0
English
PC
Go to page
0
/17
Go
Diary chap.
0
Go
Estoria chap.
0
Go
Reset Game Data
Reset Mode OFF
Unlock All Words
Unlock Words - Level Start
Unlock Words - Level End
UI Toggles
HUD UI ON
Cursor ON
Input Prompts ON
Estoria Text ON
Audio Toggles
VO ON
SFX ON
Music ON
Debug Camera
Debug Cam Off
Block Player Input ON
FOV Controls ON
Move Speed Controls ON
Move Speed
5
FOV
40
Player Camera
FOV
60
Since I was little I've always dreamed of
becoming
a
writer
This is where you come in, Journal!

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1o

Lost Words Localisation

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Add-ons Help Lost Words Last edit was 9 minutes ago

locID

	locID	Localised Text (locText)	Audio Event	Convention	Chapter	Page/Section	Line/Occasion	Estoria Line	Variation	Char
124	D1.9.4	writer	LW_VO_D1_0904	LW_VO_	D1	09	04			Izzy
125	D1.9.5	writes	LW_VO_D1_0905	LW_VO_	D1	09	05			Izzy
126	D1.9.6	No one ever got {anything} just by wanting it.	LW_VO_D1_0906	LW_VO_	D1	09	06			Izzy
127	D1.9.7	I guess that birthday wish was a waste then!	LW_VO_D1_0907	LW_VO_	D1	09	07			Izzy
128	D1.10.1	Gran said writing is about {exploring} your thoughts.	LW_VO_D1_1001	LW_VO_	D1	10	01			Izzy
129	D1.10.2	It helps you [unlock] your {feelings}.	LW_VO_D1_1002	LW_VO_	D1	10	02			Izzy
130	D1.10.3	Now, where should I start?	LW_VO_D1_1003	LW_VO_	D1	10	03			Izzy
131	D1.11.1	I'd like to write something that will make Gran smile.	LW_VO_D1_1101	LW_VO_	D1	11	01			Izzy
132	D1.11.2	She always talks about little acorns {growing} into big trees.	LW_VO_D1_1102	LW_VO_	D1	11	02			Izzy
133	D1.11.3	Is that to make me feel {better} about my height?	LW_VO_D1_1103	LW_VO_	D1	11	03			Izzy
134	D1.11.4	Or about my writing?	LW_VO_D1_1104	LW_VO_	D1	11	04			Izzy
135	D1.12.1	I want to write a story.	LW_VO_D1_1201	LW_VO_	D1	12	01			Izzy
136	D1.12.2	But what kind?	LW_VO_D1_1202	LW_VO_	D1	12	02			Izzy
137	D1.12.3	A {romance?}	LW_VO_D1_1203	LW_VO_	D1	12	03			Izzy
138	D1.12.4	Yuck! Yuck! Yuck!	LW_VO_D1_1204	LW_VO_	D1	12	04			Izzy
139	D1.12.5	{Science fiction?}	LW_VO_D1_1205	LW_VO_	D1	12	05			Izzy
140	D1.12.6	Maaaaaybe? I do love science!	LW_VO_D1_1206	LW_VO_	D1	12	06			Izzy
141	D1.12.7	A {comedy?}	LW_VO_D1_1207	LW_VO_	D1	12	07			Izzy
142	D1.12.8	Is my humor too weird?	LW_VO_D1_1208	LW_VO_	D1	12	08			Izzy
143	D1.12.9	A {drama?}	LW_VO_D1_1209	LW_VO_	D1	12	09			Izzy
144	D1.12.10	Yawn-o-rama!	LW_VO_D1_1210	LW_VO_	D1	12	10			Izzy
145	D1.12.11	{Fairy tales!}	LW_VO_D1_1211	LW_VO_	D1	12	11			Izzy
146	D1.12.12	Aren't those for kids?	LW_VO_D1_1212	LW_VO_	D1	12	12			Izzy
147	D1.12.13	Wait, we're getting {somewhere}	LW_VO_D1_1213	LW_VO_	D1	12	13			Izzy
148	D1.12.14	A {fantasy story}!!	LW_VO_D1_1214	LW_VO_	D1	12	14			Izzy
149	D1.12.15	Eureka!	LW_VO_D1_1215	LW_VO_	D1	12	15			Izzy

English French Italian Spanish German Instructions

D1.10.1	Gran said writing is about {exploring} your thoughts.
D1.10.2	It helps you [unlock] your {feelings}.
D1.10.3	Now, where should I start?

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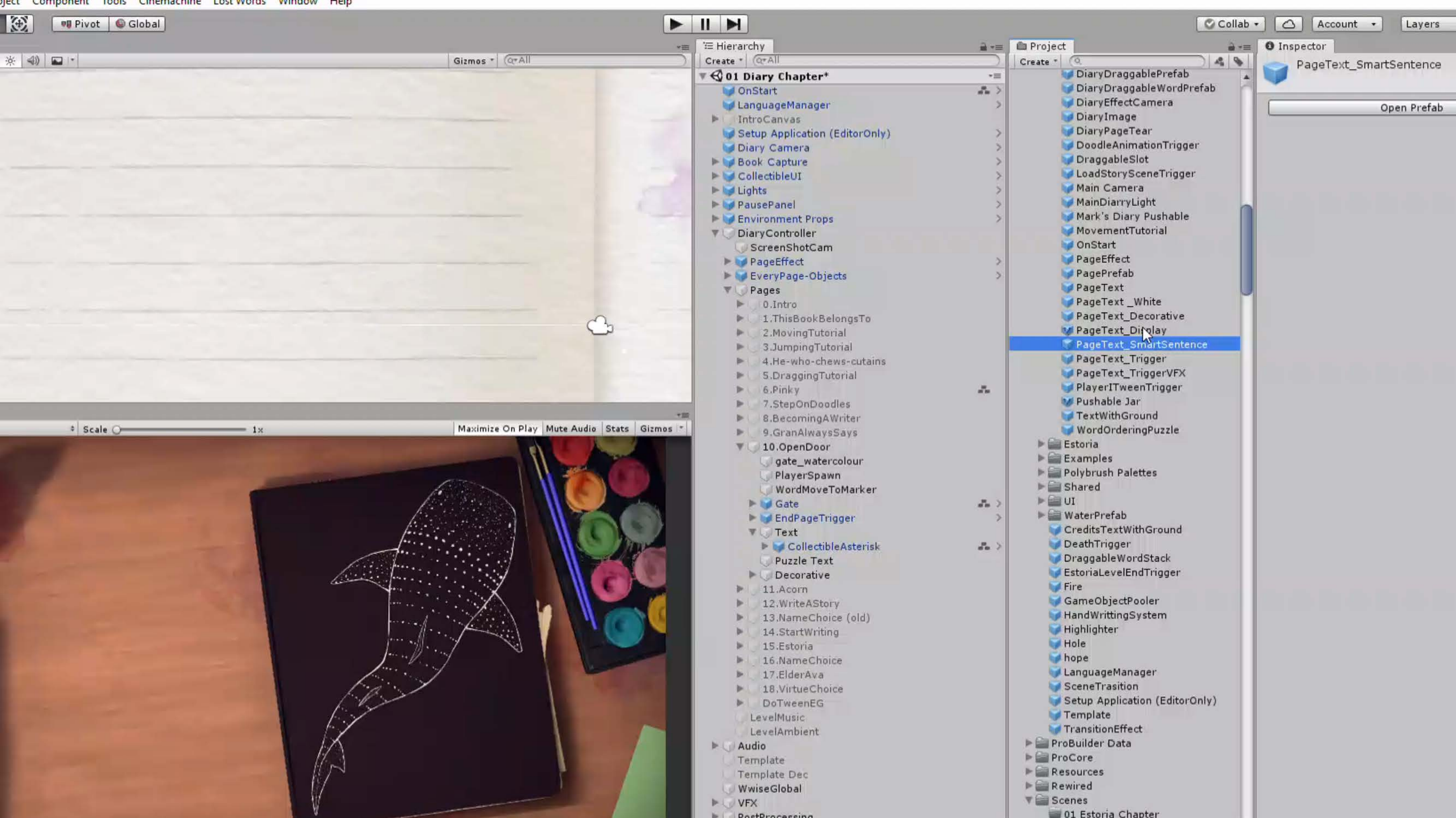
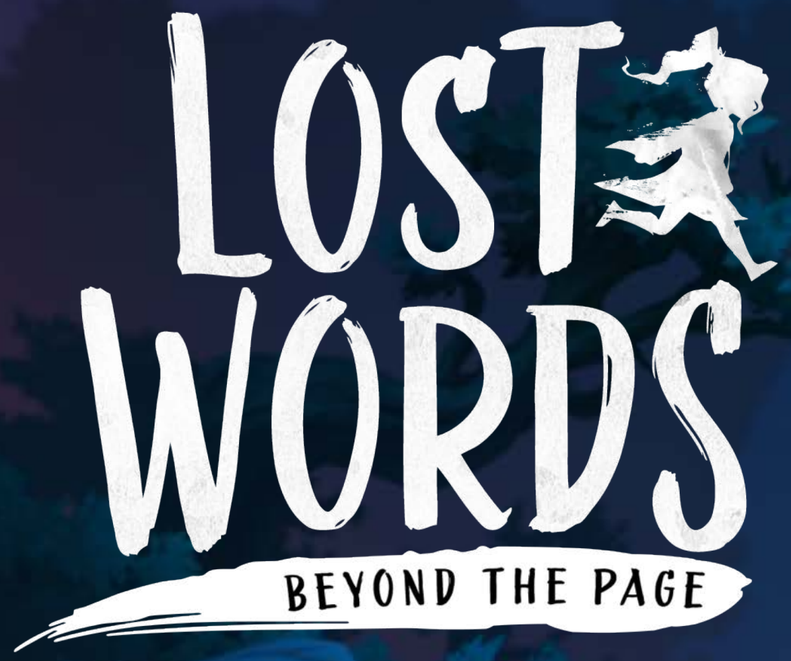

Component Tools Cinemachine Lost Words Window Help
Pivot
Global
Collab
Account
Layers
Gizmos
Hierarchy
Create
01 Diary Chapter*
OnStart
LanguageManager
IntroCanvas
Setup Application (EditorOnly)
Diary Camera
Book Capture
CollectibleUI
Lights
PausePanel
Environment Props
DiaryController
ScreenShotCam
PageEffect
EveryPage-Objects
Pages
0.Intro
1.ThisBookBelongsTo
2.MovingTutorial
3.JumpingTutorial
4.He-who-chews-cutains
5.DraggingTutorial
6.Pinky
7.StepOnDoodles
8.BecomingAWriter
9.GranAlwaysSays
10.OpenDoor
gate_watercolour
PlayerSpawn
WordMoveToMarker
Gate
EndPageTrigger
Text
CollectibleAsterisk
Puzzle Text
Decorative
11.Acorn
12.WriteAStory
13.NameChoice (old)
14.StartWriting
15.Estoria
16.NameChoice
17.ElderAva
18.VirtueChoice
DoTweenEG
LevelMusic
LevelAmbient
Audio
Template
Template Dec
WwiseGlobal
VFX
Project
DiaryDraggablePrefab
DiaryDraggableWordPrefab
DiaryEffectCamera
DiaryImage
DiaryPageTear
DoodleAnimationTrigger
DraggableSlot
LoadStorySceneTrigger
Main Camera
MainDiarryLight
Mark's Diary Pushable
MovementTutorial
OnStart
PageEffect
PagePrefab
PageText
PageText _White
PageText_Decorative
PageText_Display
PageText_SmartSentence
PageText_Trigger
PageText_TriggerVFX
PlayerITweenTrigger
Pushable Jar
TextWithGround
WordOrderingPuzzle
Estoria
Examples
Polybrush Palettes
Shared
UI
WaterPrefab
CreditsTextWithGround
DeathTrigger
DraggableWordStack
EstoriaLevelEndTrigger
Fire
GameObjectPooler
HandWrittingSystem
Highlighter
Hole
hope
LanguageManager
SceneTrasition
Setup Application (EditorOnly)
Template
TransitionEffect
ProBuilder Data
ProCore
Resources
Rewired
Scenes
01 Estoria Chapter
Inspector
PageText_SmartSentence
Open Prefab
Scale
1x
Maximize On Play
Mute Audio
Stats
Gizmos

Our Solution to the Challenge

1. Aligning the Gameplay and the Story
2. Game Mechanics as Metaphors
3. Smart Localization System

But…

Other ways



Thanks!

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Facebook.com/LostwordsGame

GAME NARRATIVE SUMMIT

The Narrative Innovation Showcase

Allen Turner
Designer/Owner, Council Of Fools, LLC

Elizabeth LaPensée
Assistant Professor, Michigan State University

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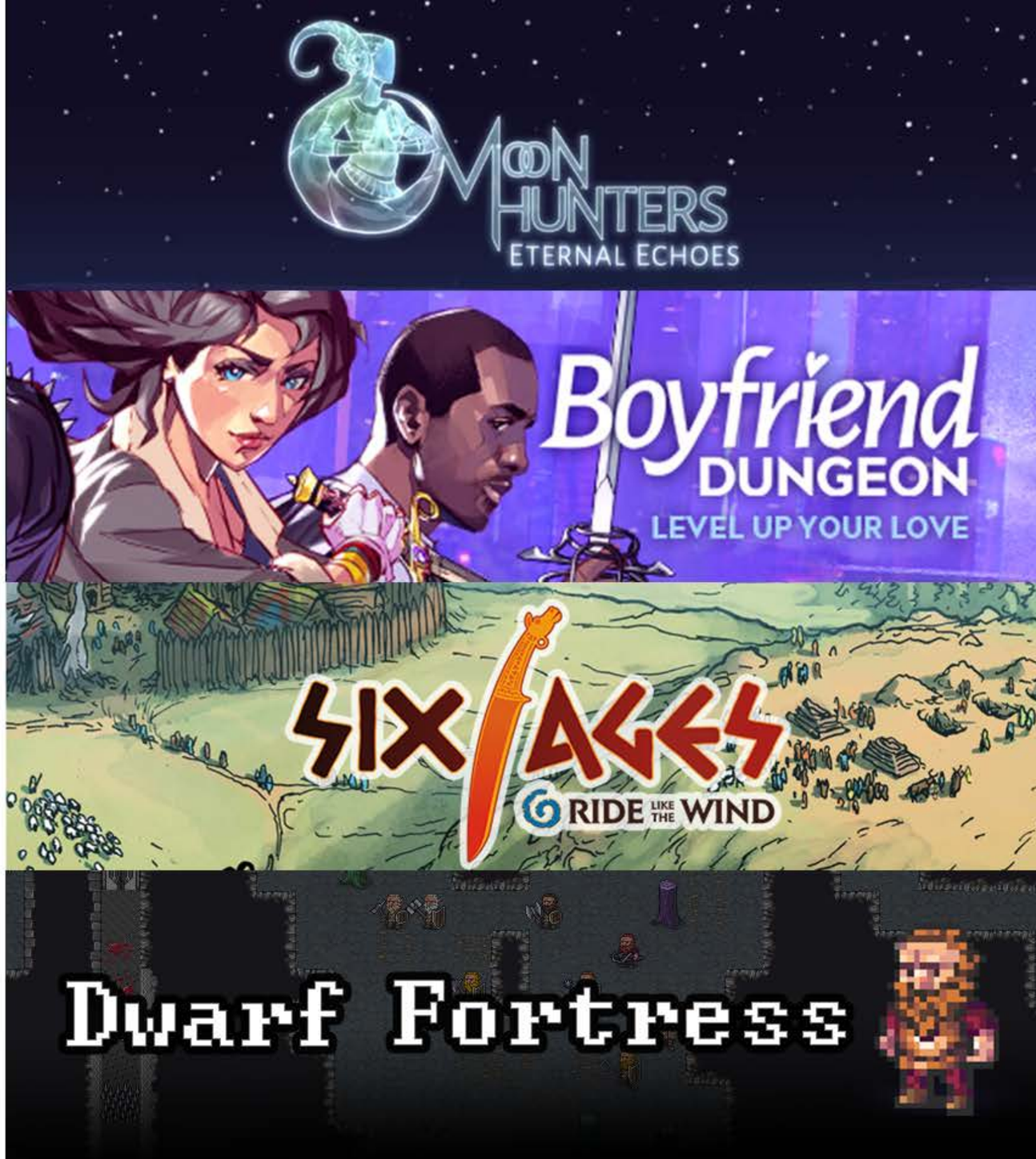
Making Dungeons Intimate

Tanya X. Short
@kitfoxgames

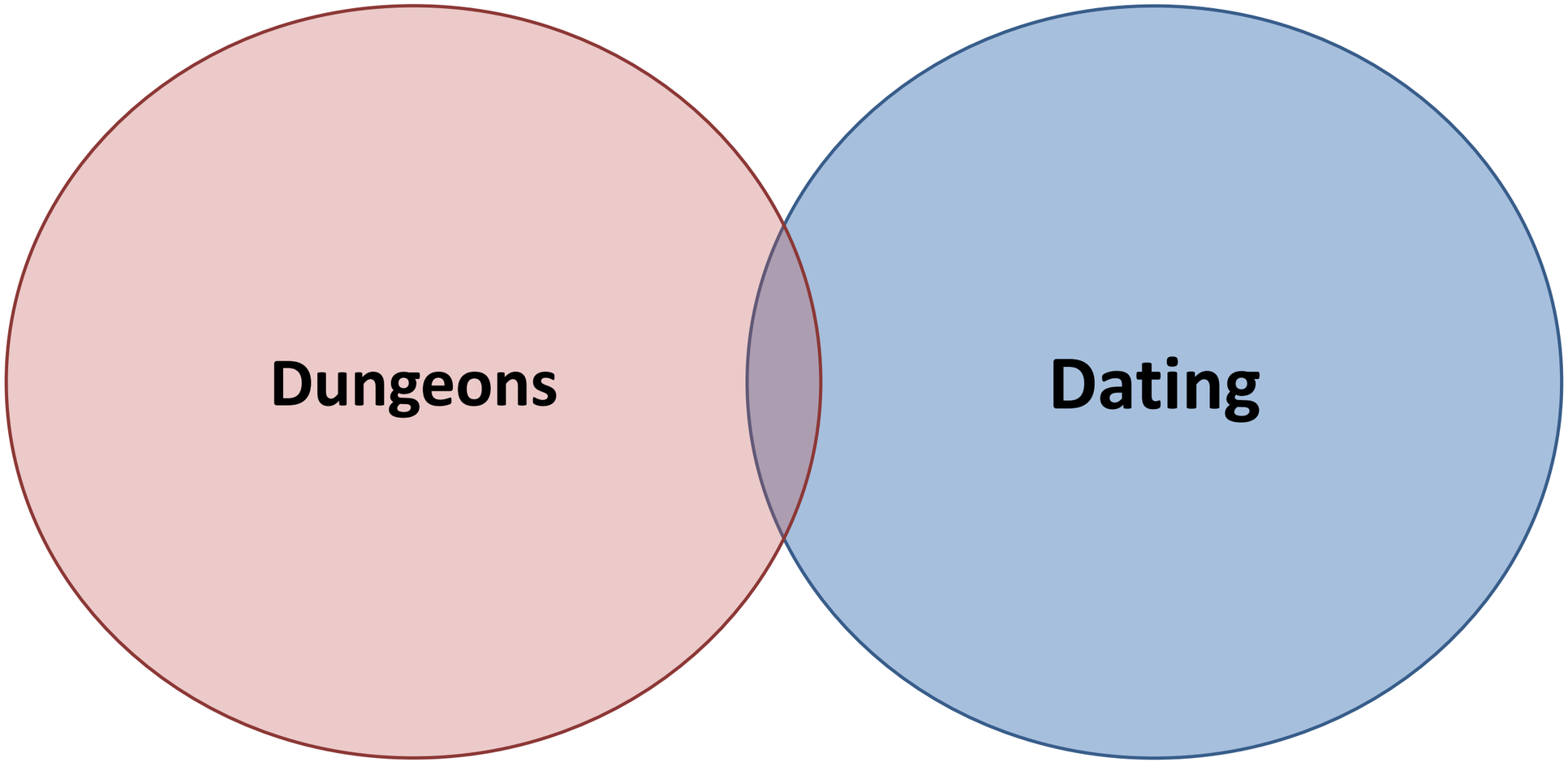
Kitfox Games



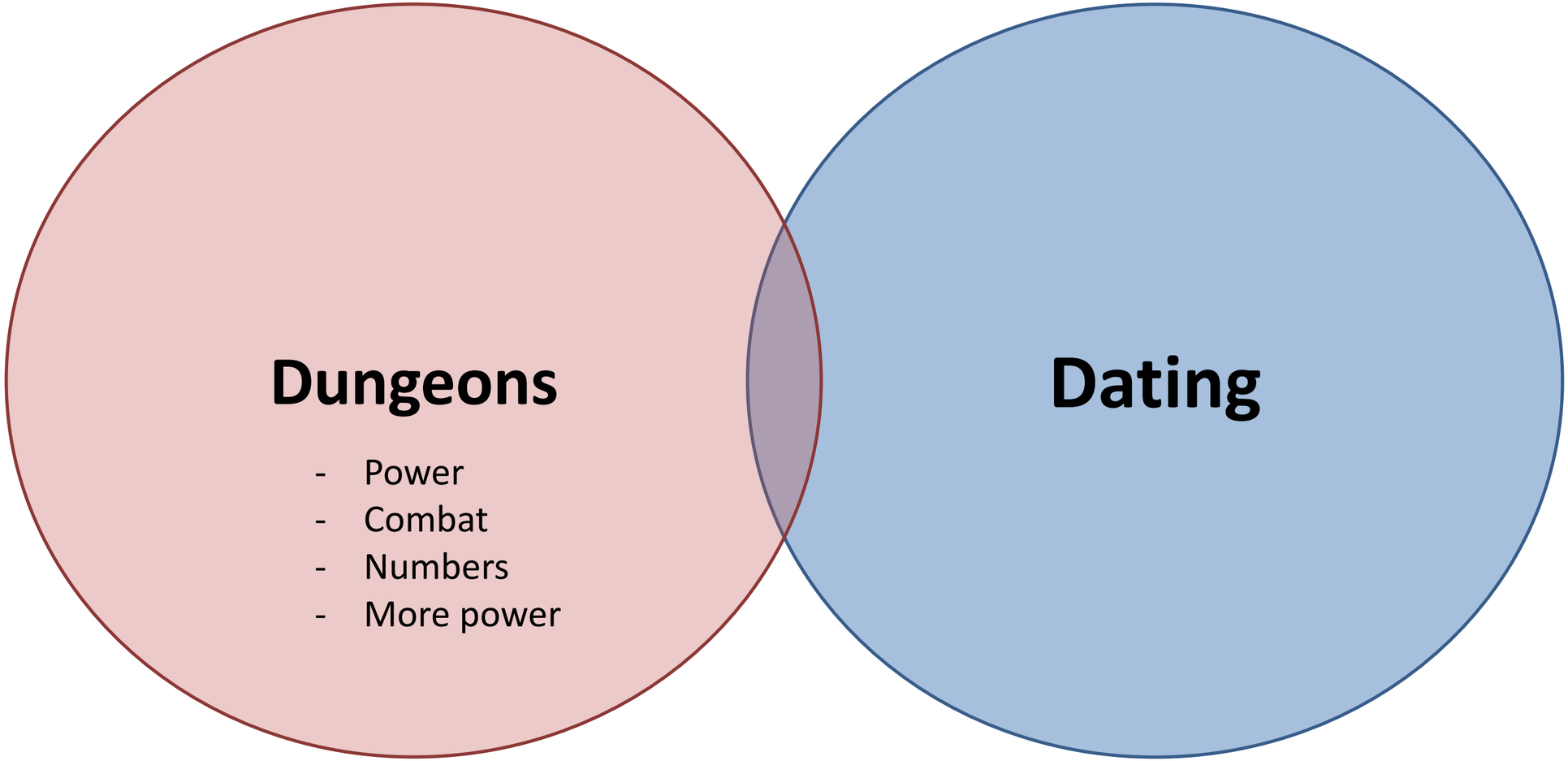
Boyfriend
DUNGEON
@kitfoxgames

@kitfoxgames

What was he talking about?
Who's this "Jake"?
Valeria
Hey. Sorry about that. I just... I never know who's watching, when Jake's around.
@kitfoxgames



@kitfoxgames



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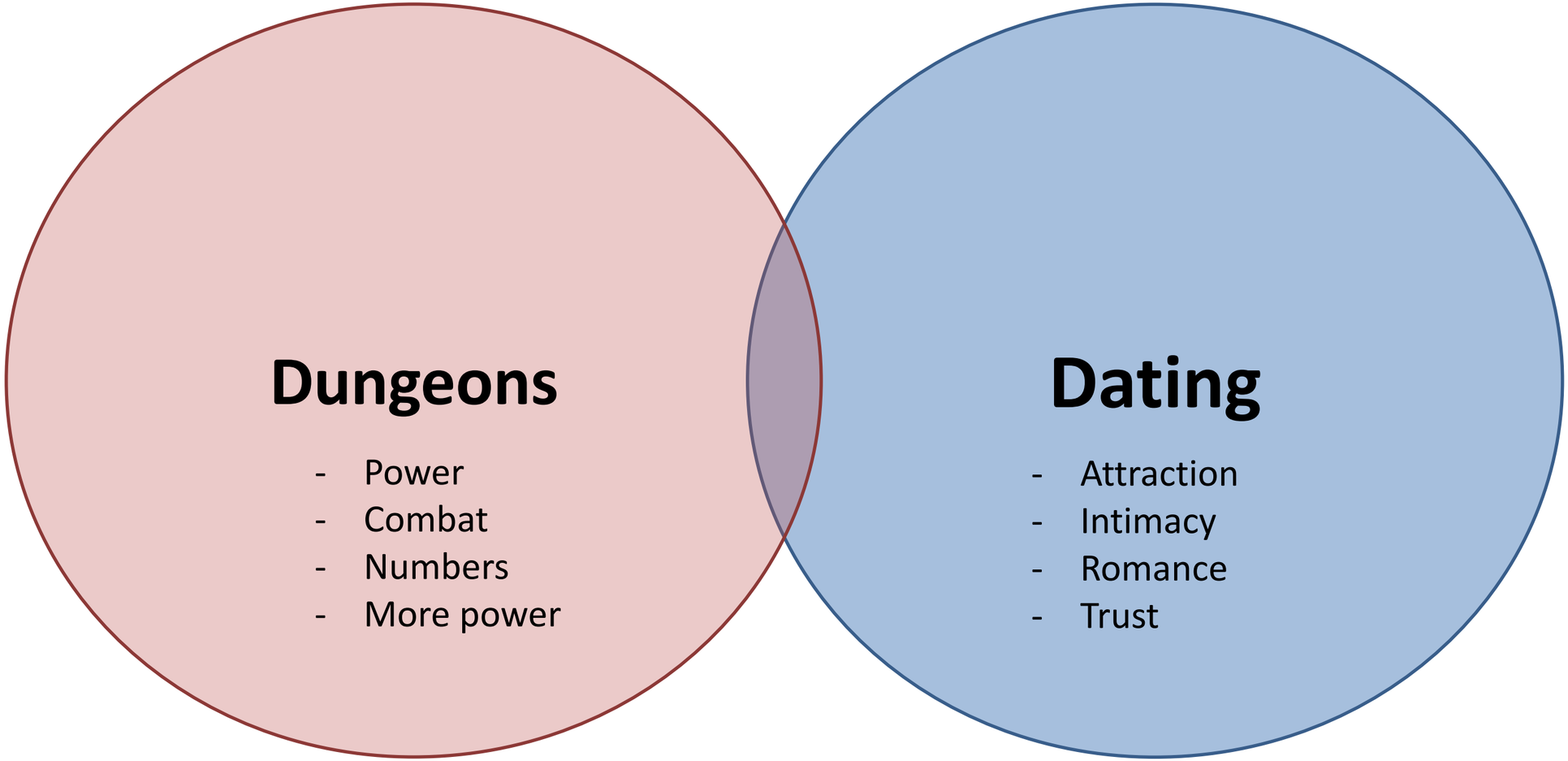
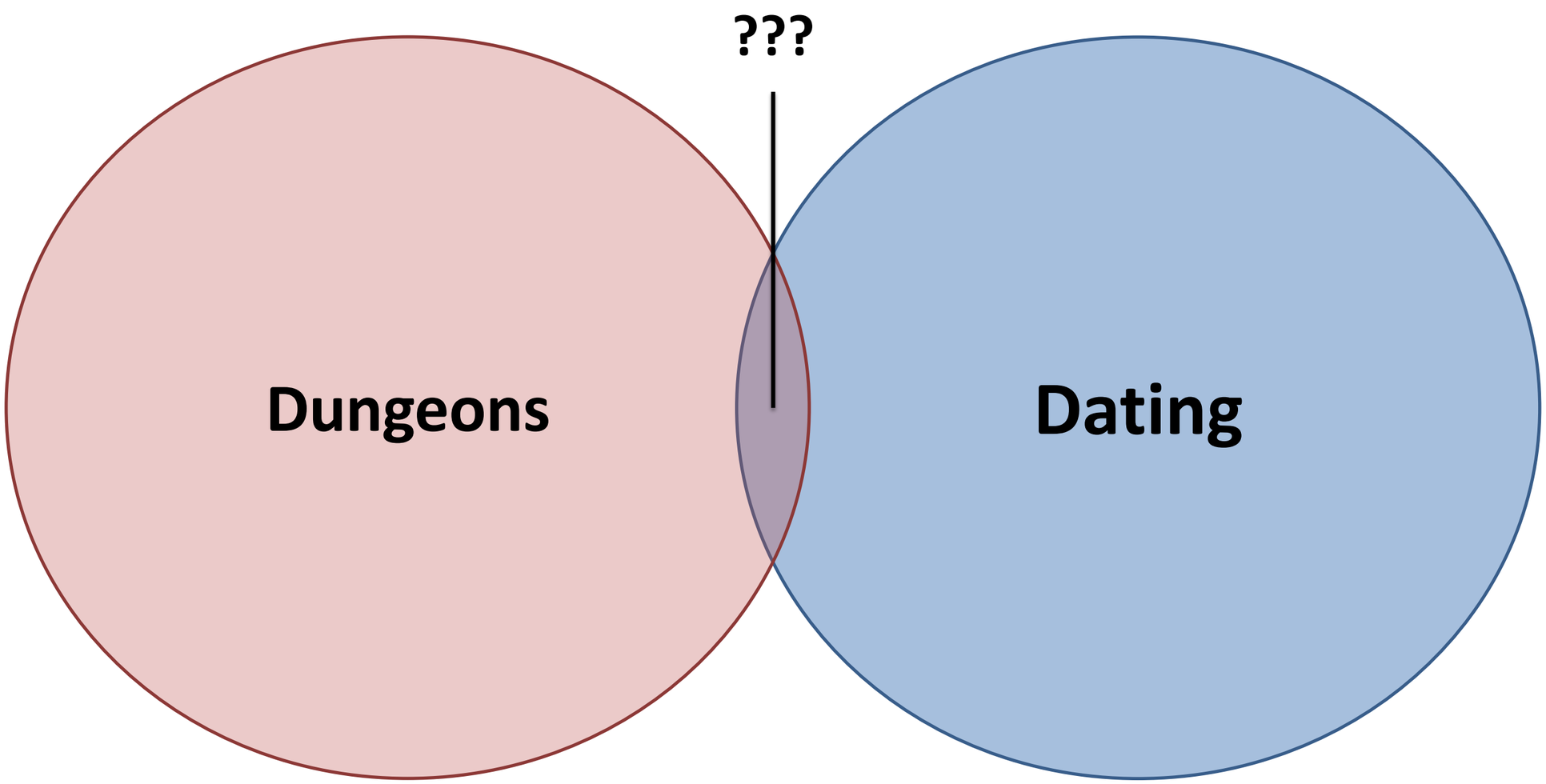


@kitfoxgames



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Playful **Romantic** **Fantasy**

Playful

Pick up and play
Quick, surprising
Safe to experiment

Romantic

Relationships
Love conquers all
Consensual

Fantasy

Role-playing/expression
Satisfying progression
Empowerment

@kitfoxgames

Playful

Pick up and play
Quick, surprising
Safe to experiment

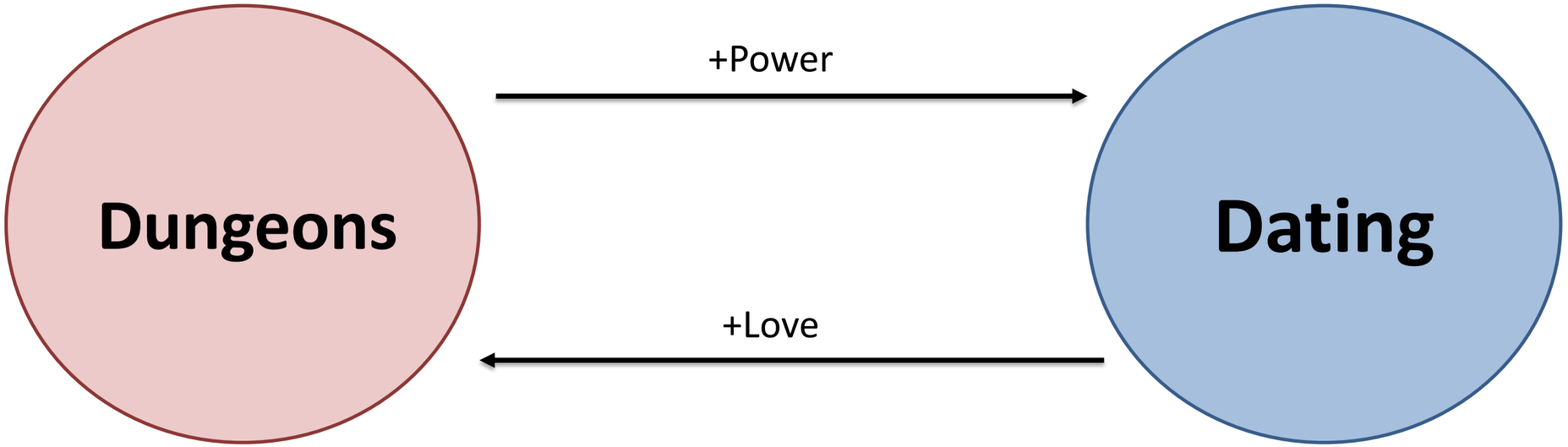
Romantic

Relationships
Love conquers all
Consensual

Fantasy

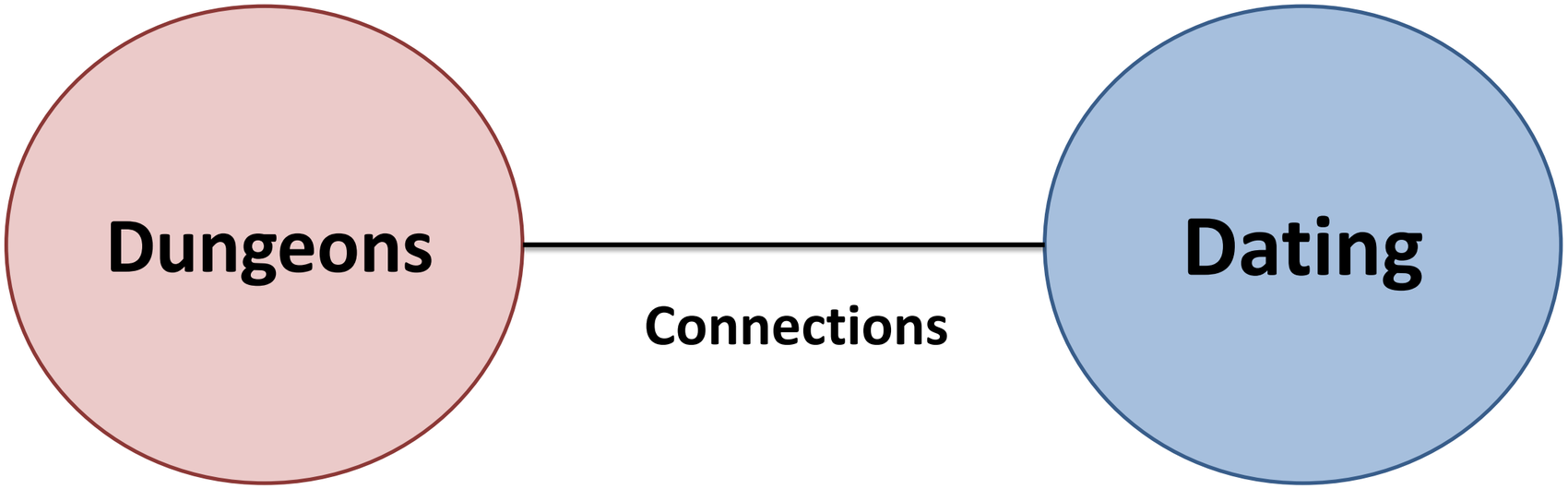
Role-playing/expression
Satisfying progression
Empowerment

Theme: We're stronger together.



Get stuff from one half to use in the other

@kitfoxgames



Dungeons give you $$$ → Spend $$$ on dates?

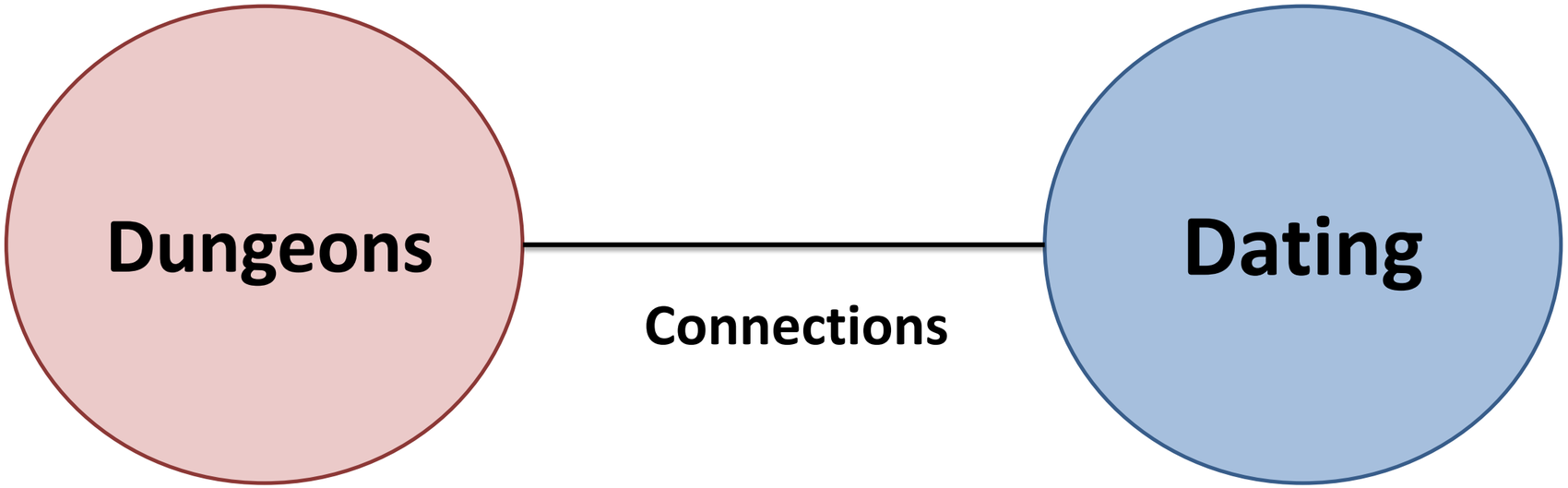
@kitfoxgames

Meet you at the park!

Pay $25

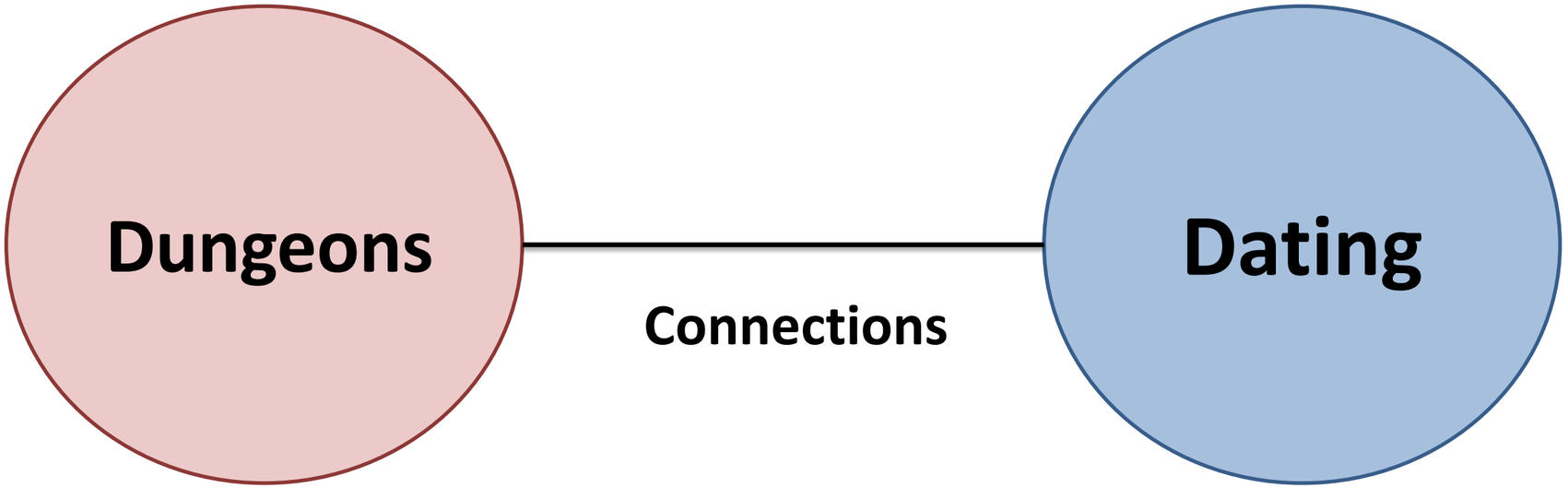
Cancel

@kitfoxgames



Spend dungeon loot on dates

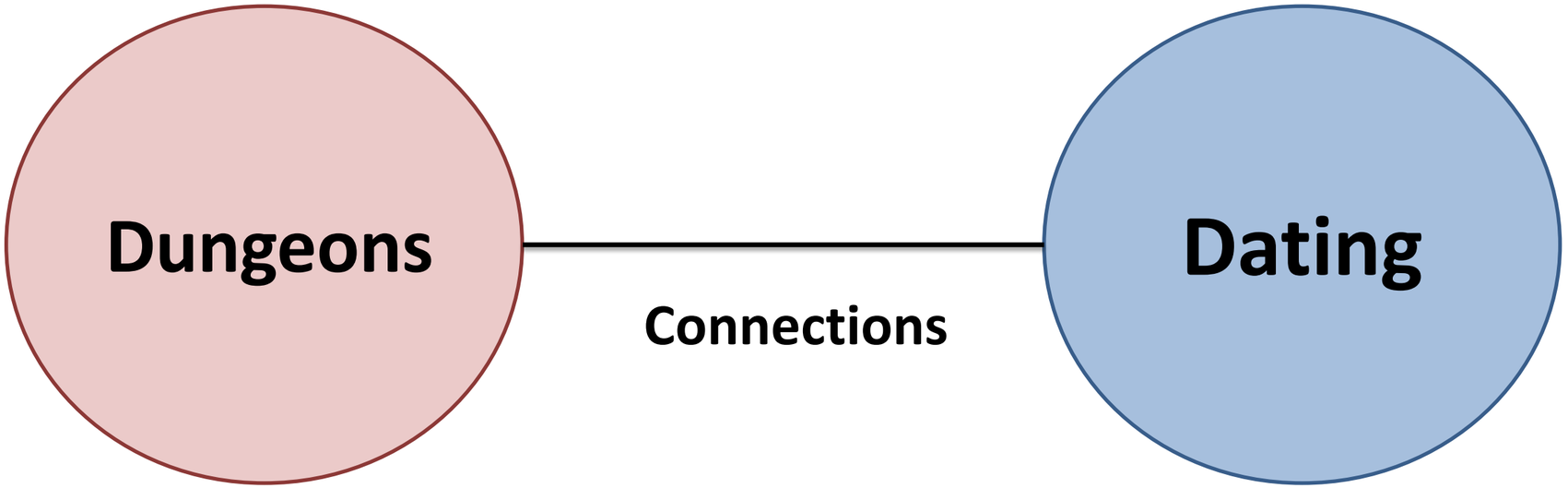
@kitfoxgames



Spend dungeon loot on dates

Dates are inside dungeons?

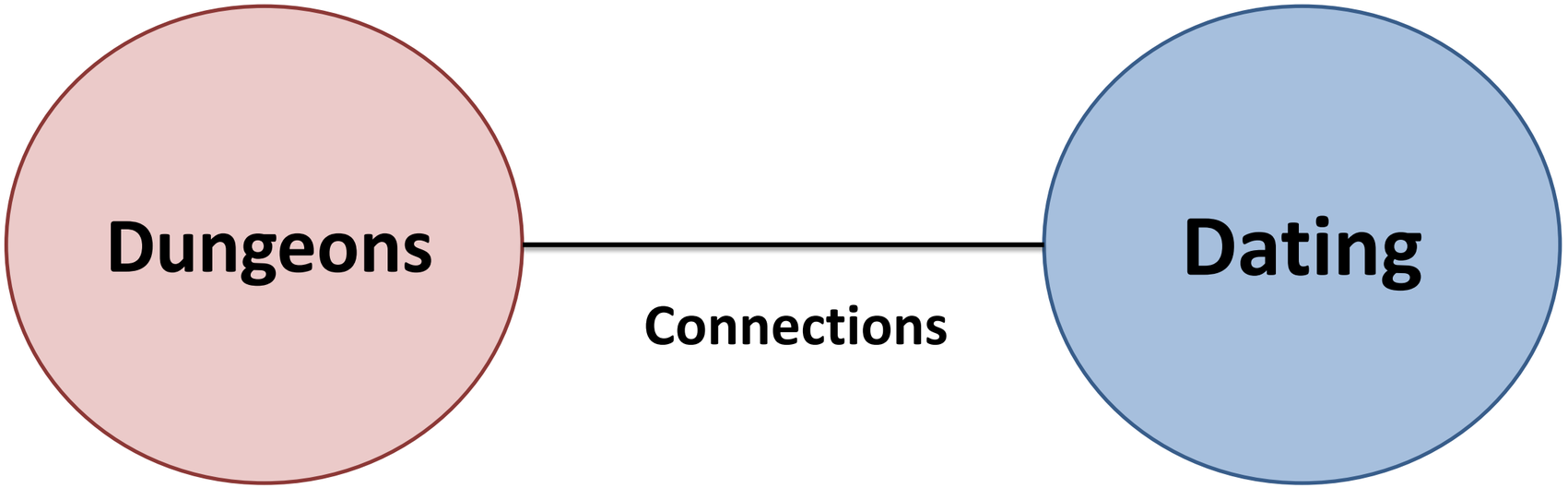
AJ
The sound of the water is almost musical.
@kitfoxgames



Spend dungeon loot on dates

Dates are inside dungeons
"Hangouts"

@kitfoxgames



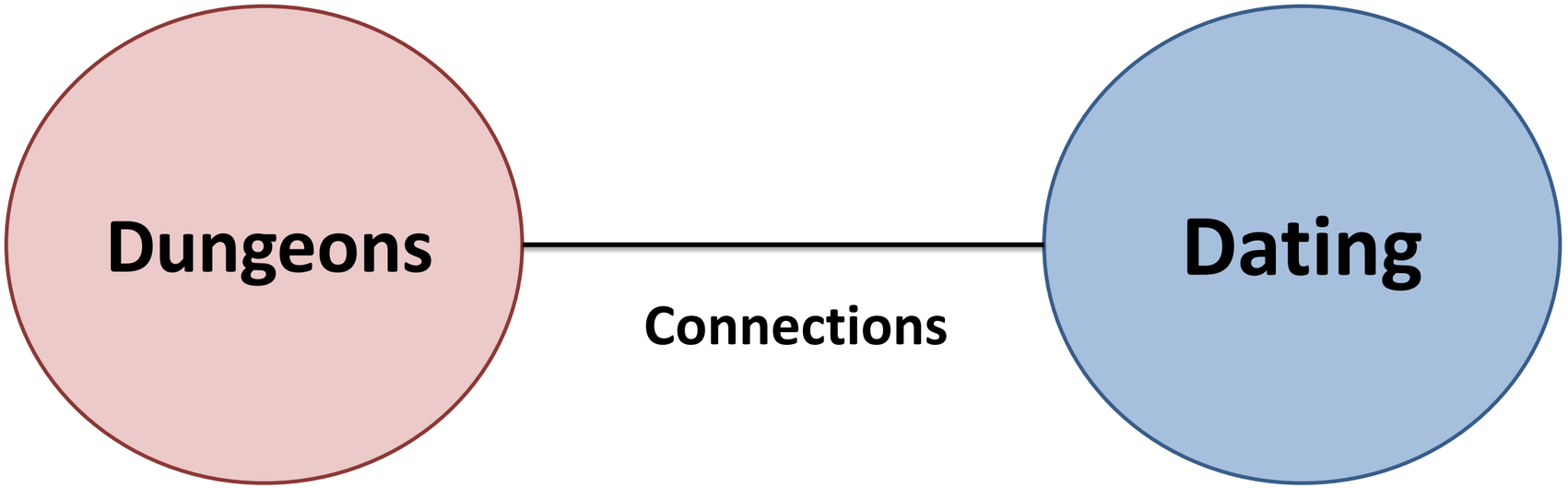
Spend dungeon loot on dates

Dates are inside dungeons
"Hangouts"

Weapon personalities are expressed in the dungeon?

@kitfoxgames

$0.85
+0.40
Pick Up
A
Phoenix Cap
Revives you once.
Verona Mall, Floor 1
RT
We found it, so, we keep it.

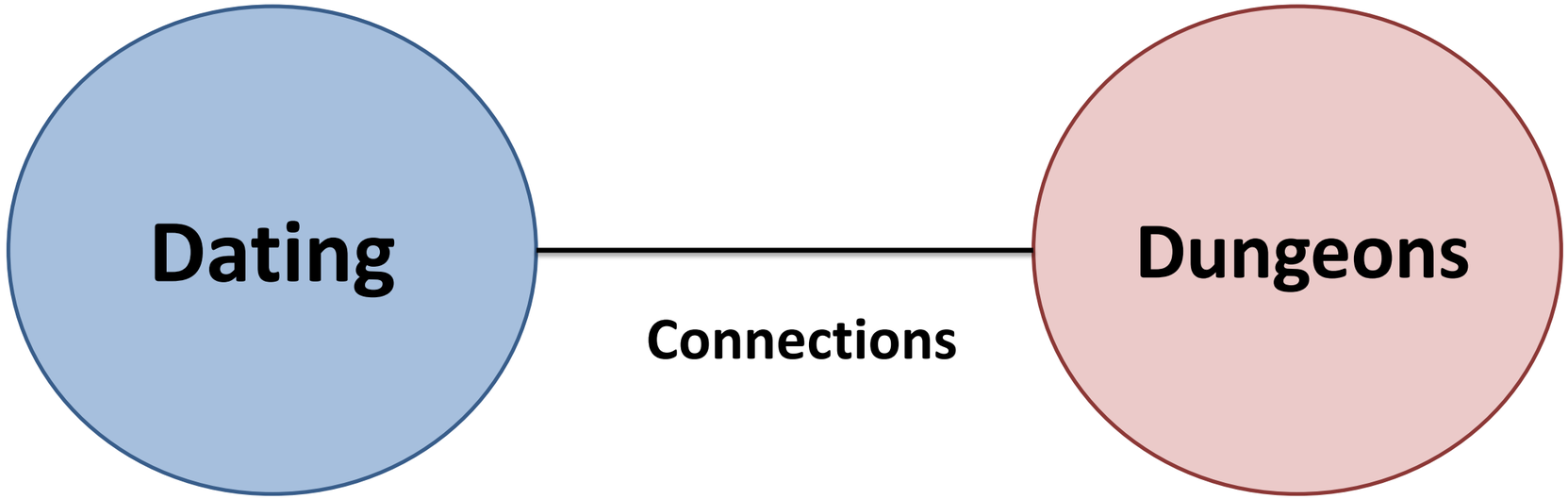


Spend dungeon loot on dates

Dates are inside dungeons
"Hangouts"

Weapon personalities are expressed in the dungeon
"Comments"

@kitfoxgames

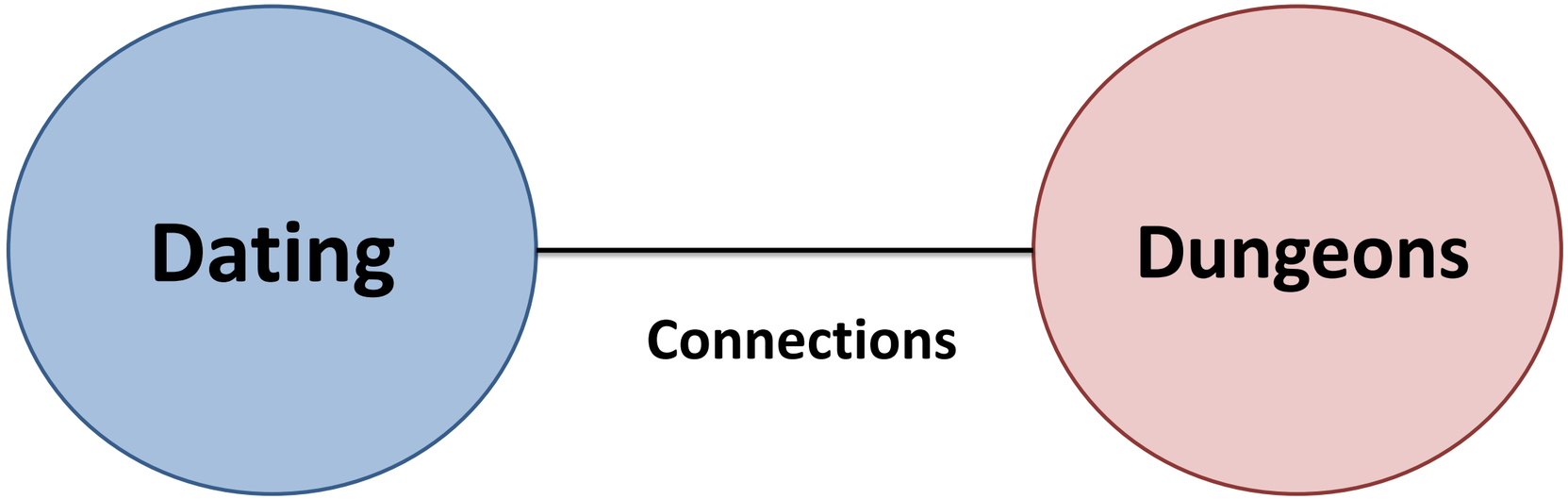


Find new characters in dungeons?

@kitfoxgames

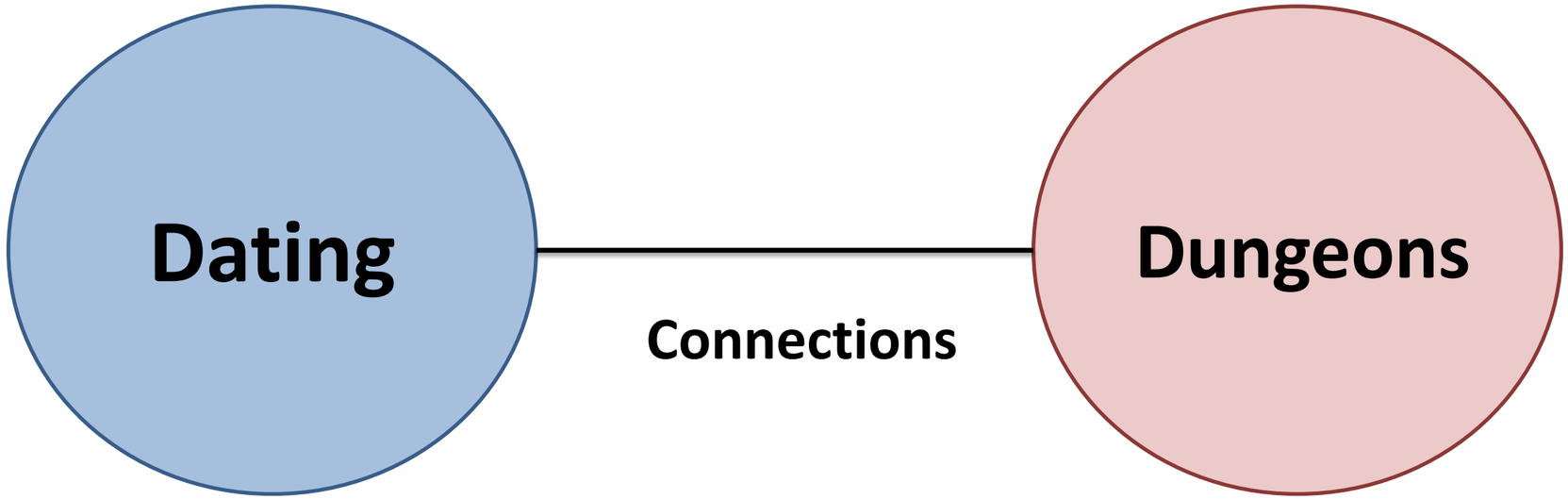
Verona Mall, Floor 3
RT
You find a strange gadget.

Verona Mall, Floor 3
RT
???
Who are you both? What day is it?



Find new characters in dungeons

@kitfoxgames



Find new characters in dungeons

Dialogue choices give combat stats?

You’re cute.

Not as cute as you!	+Attack
You’re making me blush.	+Defense
Especially my forehead.	+Luck

@kitfoxgames

Not all difficult decisions are interesting.

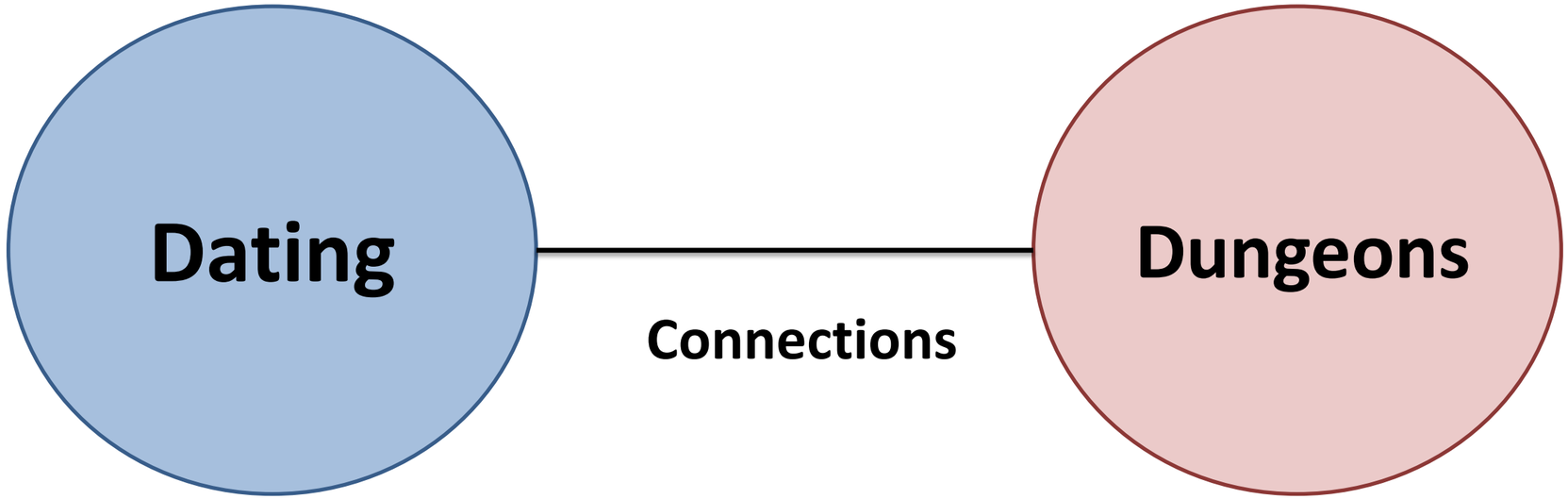
You're cute.

- Not as cute as you!
- You're making me blush.
- Especially my forehead.

@kitfoxgames

Not all difficult decisions are interesting.

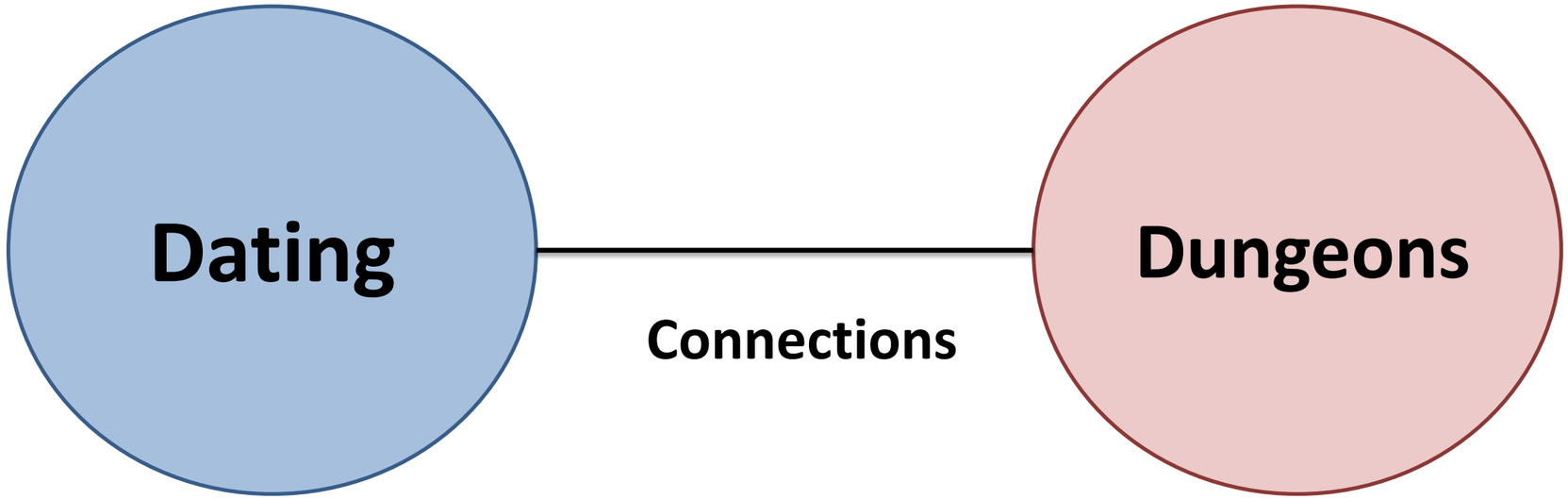
Intrinsic versus extrinsic rewards is difficult, not interesting.



Find new characters in dungeons

Dialogue choices give combat stats?

@kitfoxgames



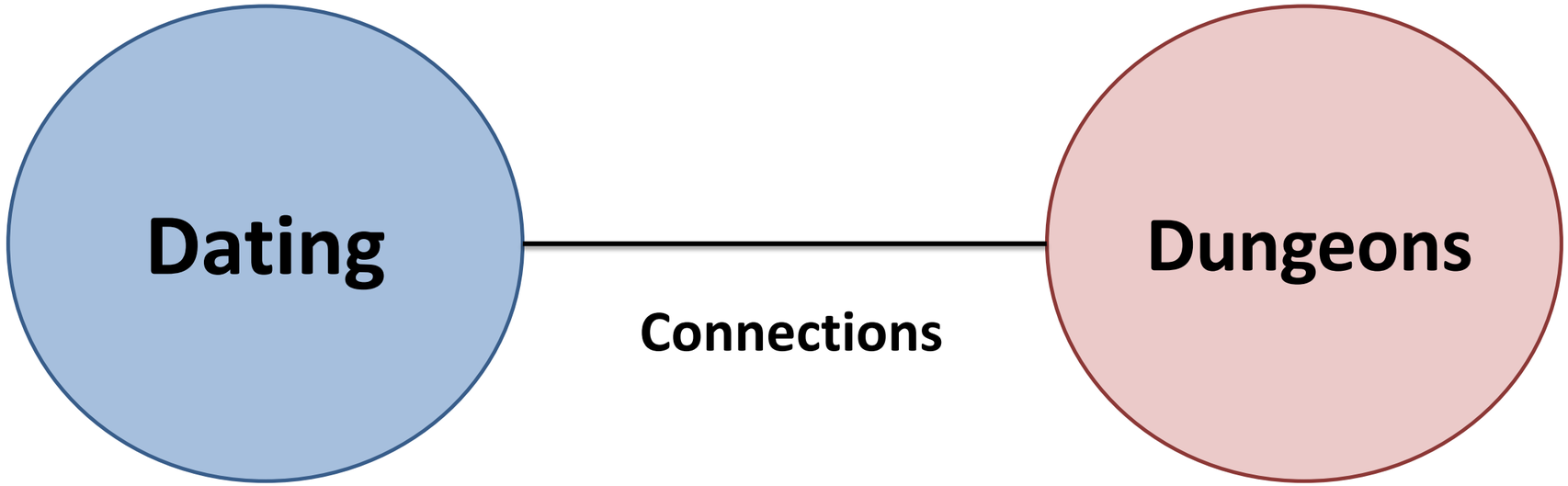
Find new characters in dungeons

Dialogue choices give combat stats

Intimacy improves combat?

@kitfoxgames

1 Weapon Info
Deep Cuts
Heavy attack causes enemies to take damage over time
1
2
3
4
5
LOVE RANK 1!



Find new characters in dungeons ✓

Dialogue choices give combat stats ✗

Intimacy improves combat ✓

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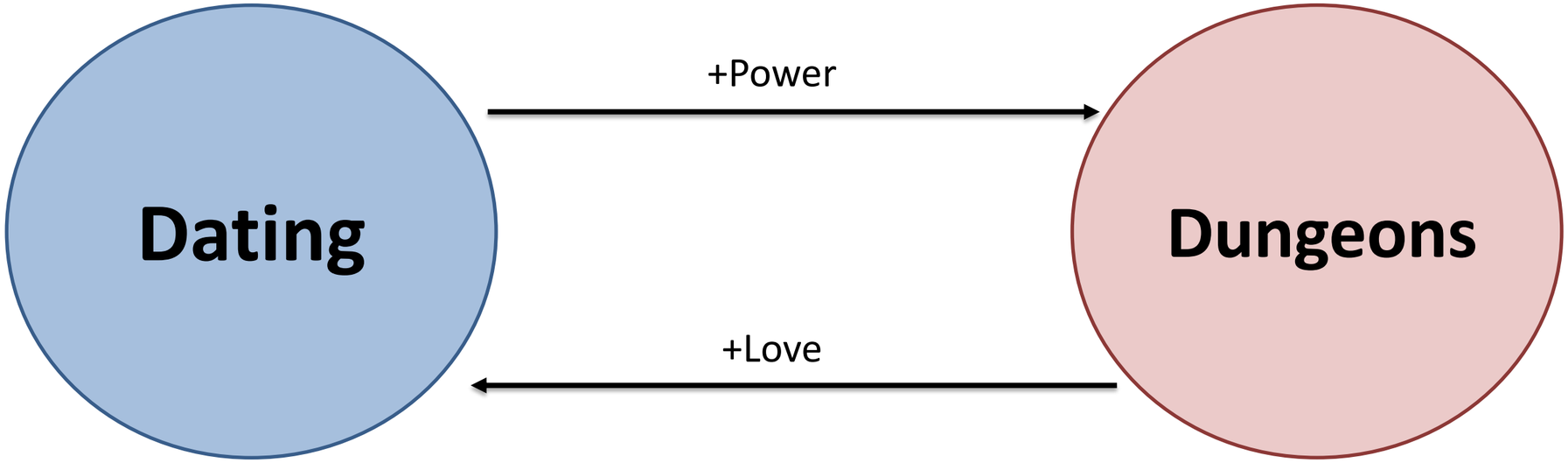
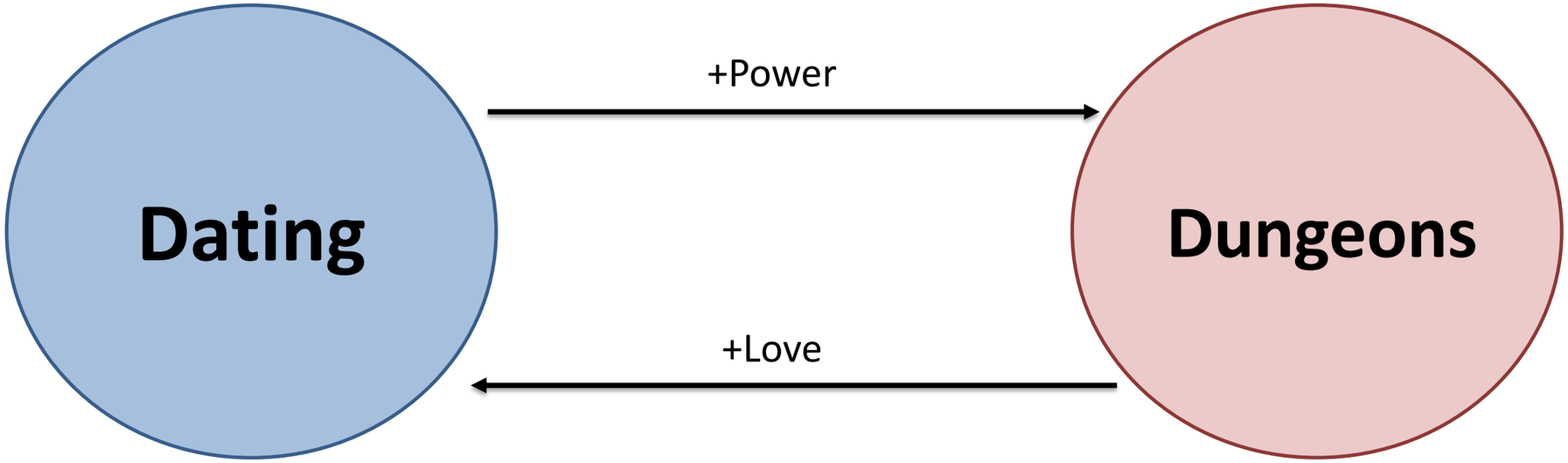


~~**Get stuff from one half to use in the other**~~

@kitfoxgames



Advance in one half *while* playing in the other.

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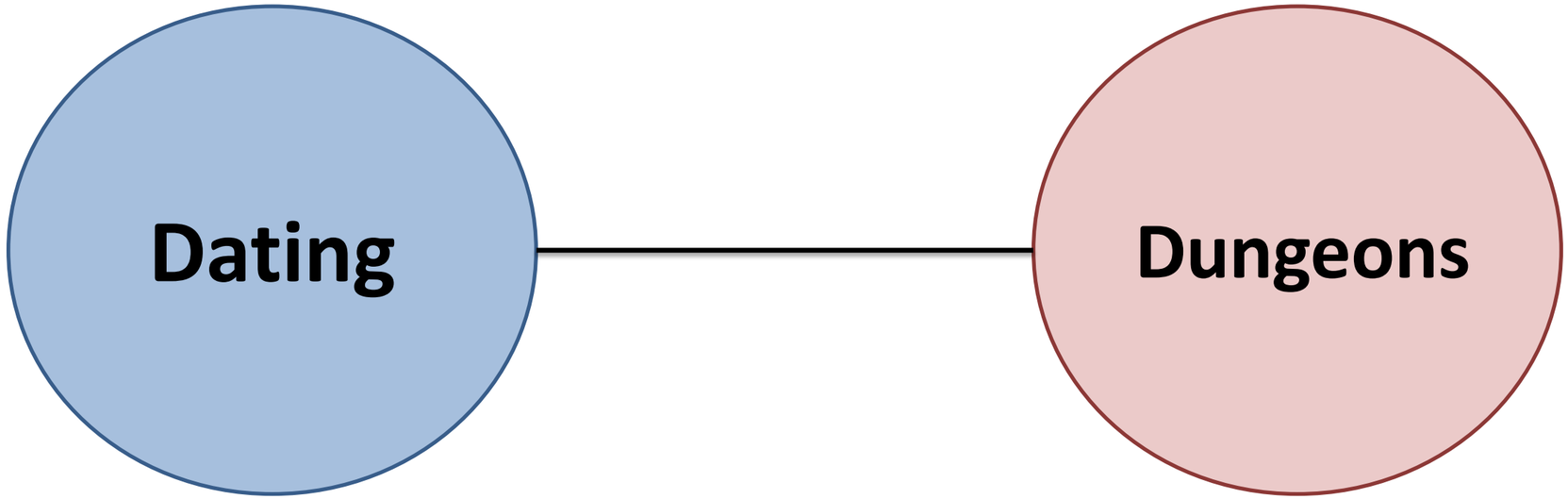

But what if… your audience doesn’t want it?

Boar 1
Cp2 Lv 4
VP 060/060
AP 027/055
Bunny 1
Cp2 Lv 3
VP 050/050
AP 054/055
Turn
Triple Slashes Melee Physical
AP -25 CP +0 Power 17 Hit 110 Critical 40
Melee Attack
Ceri
Cp6 Lv52
VP 080/080
AP 048/075
White Knight
Cp4 Lv52
VP 070/070
AP 032/070
Witch Cat
Cp2 Lv52
VP 060/060
AP 043/070
Guard
Sword Slash
Triple Slashes
Capture

SAKURA
DUNGEON

Mirror

アリス＝デ
CV. 柚凪
B：94cm（Hカップ）
かつて栄華を誇
貴族ディートリ

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@kitfoxgames

SAKURA
DUNGEON

Mirror

アリス＝デ
CV. 柚凪
B：94cm（Hカップ）
かつて栄華を誇
貴族ディートリ

05/21
FEATURES 1080P PIGEONS!
San
"Coo, coo!" (Never worry, never fear! Okosan never brings up the rear!)
HATOFUL BOYFRIEND

Hatoful Boyfriend

T-34
"It's... it's not like I invaded Crimea or anything, b-baka!"

Panzermadels
Tank Dating Simulator

Humor is... Disarming

Recommended
2.3 hrs on record

POSTED: 7 FEBRUARY

at first i bought this game just for pure fun, it seemed like a "joke" dating sim just like many others that ive played. But

Recommended
11.3 hrs on record

Posted: 25 May, 2015

I share a similar story with many other reviewers here. I bought this game for the laughs. I mean, a pigeon dating sim? I assumed I'd

Recommended
12.2 hrs on record

Posted: 4 June, 2017

Ok what the HELL did I buy?

Recommended
8.4 hrs on record

POSTED: 2 FEBRUARY

Got this game for a quick laugh, like many others.

Recommended
1.0 hrs on record

POSTED: 8 FEBRUARY

i'm going to hell

Recommended
8.3 hrs on record

Posted: 25 November, 2017

You think this is a game about dating hot bird men but then i

Recommended
0.0 hrs last two weeks / 2.0 hrs on record

Posted: 17 Feb @ 12:45am

i bought this game just have it on my steam profile as a joke and its actually decent

5,961 people found this review helpful
1,129 people found this review funny

Recommended
11.2 hrs on record

Posted: 5 September, 2014

Lately, a lot of fowl games have been released on Steam. This has ruffled a lot of feathers,

Recommended
8.6 hrs on record

Posted: 15 December, 2015

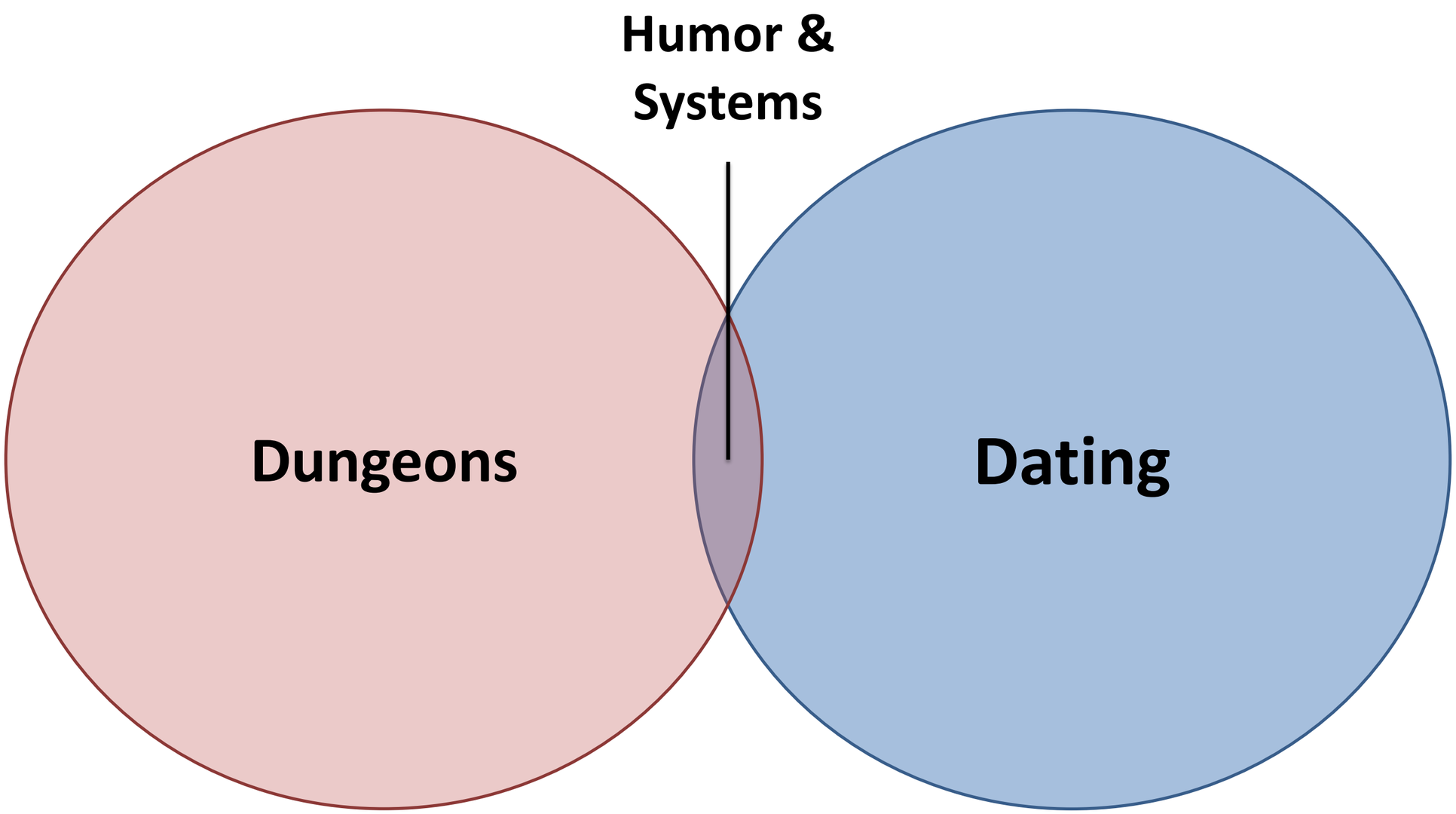
this game is an emotional trap. you buy it because the idea of a dating simulator with pigeons is 'LOL SO RANDOM!!11 XD' and full of 'teh lulz', but then you accidentally end up playing a parody game that turns out to be *far better than the majority of material it's actually imitating.*

“Just a Joke” = Plausible Deniability

@kitfoxgames

“Just a Joke” = Plausible Deniability

@kitfoxgames



Advance in one half *while* playing in the other.

@kitfoxgames

Making Dungeons Intimate

Tanya X. Short
@kitfoxgames

GAME NARRATIVE SUMMIT

Indigenous Narrative Innovation

Allen Turner
Designer/Owner, Council Of Fools, LLC

Elizabeth LaPensée
Assistant Professor, Michigan State University

WHEN RIVERS WERE TRAILS

When Rivers Were Trails

• Educational 2D adventure game which follows an Anishinaabe person in the 1890's who is displaced from Minnesota and travels to California due to the impact of allotment acts on Indigenous communities.

When Rivers Were Trails

The Challenge

- How can a game with Indigenous themes include culturally informed narrative game design?

The Challenge: Representation

- Native characters in games are often based on stereotypes.
- If they are even anything other than cannon fodder.

Nightwolf

Tala

Turok

The Solution

- Interacting with Indigenous characters is meaningful.
  - The player earns honor for listening, gifting, or helping, which changes how the story is told.

Hunter: "Boozhoo, gibakade ina? (Greetings, are you hungry?)"
Greet

An Anishinaabekwe (Anishinaabe woman) is headed in the direction of Leech Lake to the north.
Talk About White Earth
Gift
Trade

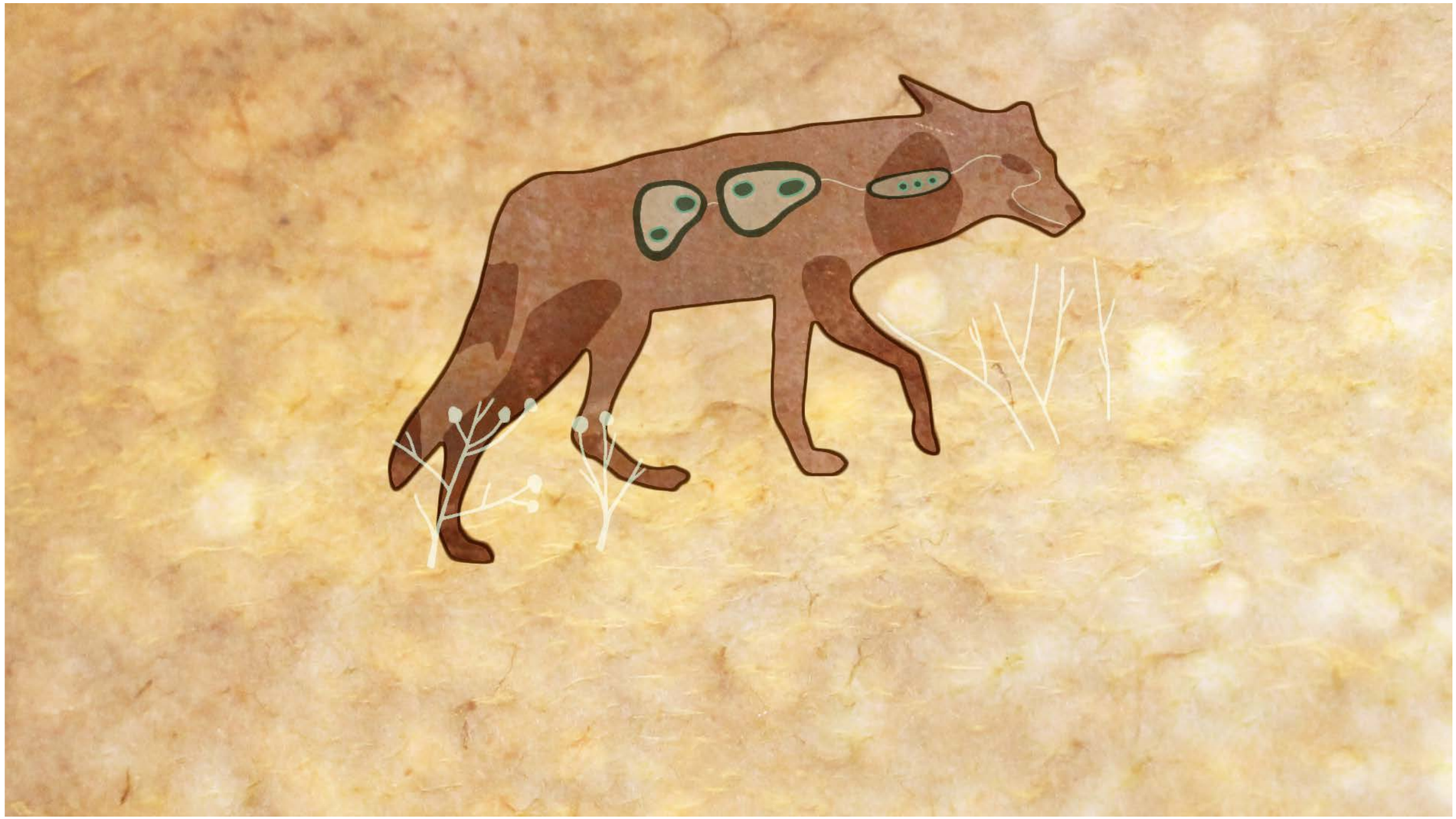
You: "Boozhoo (greetings). I have traveled here from Sawyer. It's good to see you working this sugar bush."
Continue

The Challenge: Representation

- Animals are anthropomorphized.
- Stereotypical interactions between Native characters and animals.

The Solution

- Animals can be communicated with and honored.
  - Without turning them into talking heads.
  - Without falling back on stereotypes and tropes.



The Solution to the Challenge

- Involve Indigenous creatives!
  - As writers and narrative designers.
  - At the very least as consultants.

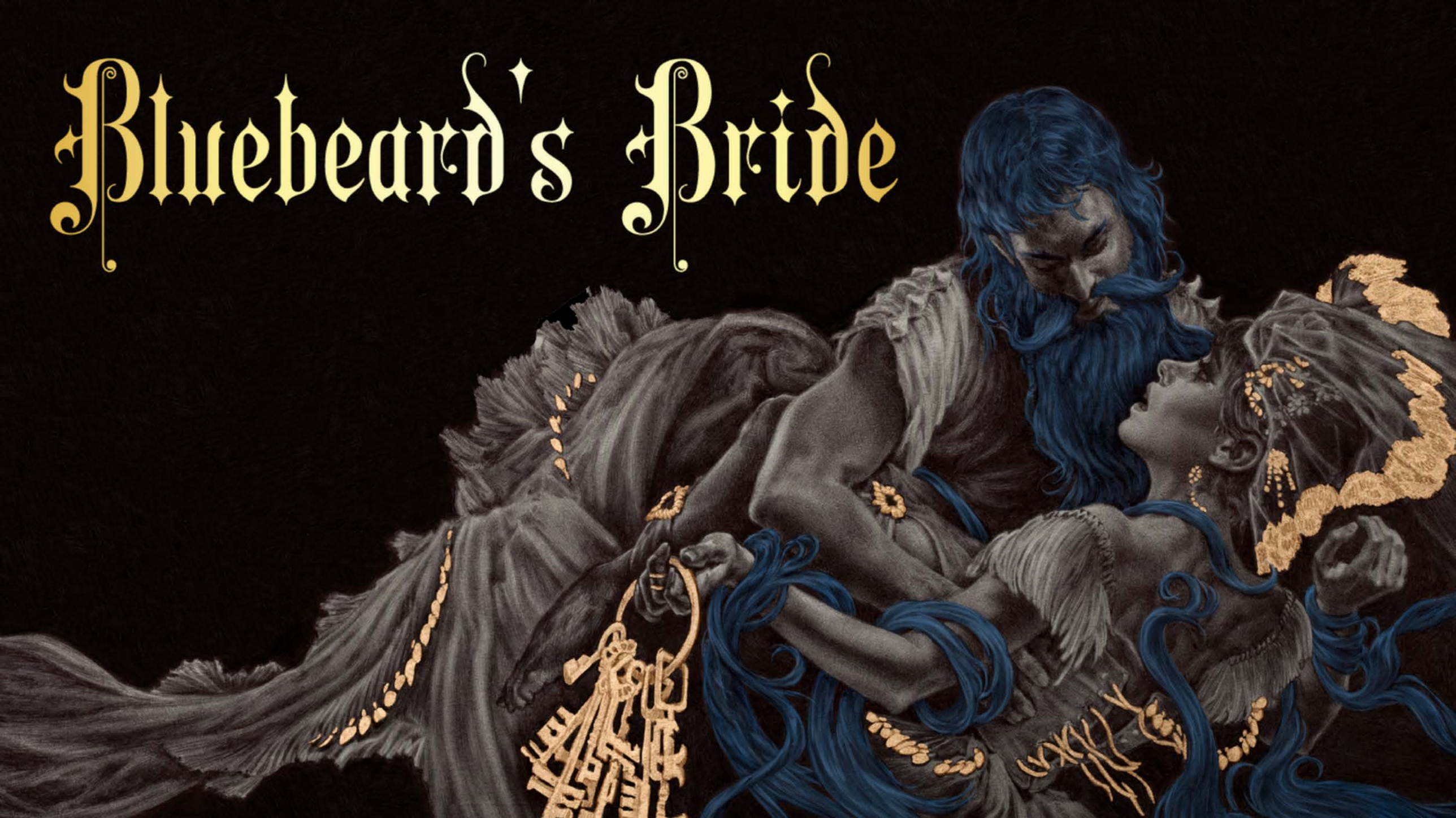
The Power of Elegant Archetypes

Whitney “Strix” Beltrán

Project Narrative Director, Hidden Path Entertainment

@The_Strix

Bluebeard's Bride



The Challenge

In a game of feminine horror where all the players inhabit the same body, how do we empower them to embrace each other

and what scares them most?

Archetypes

Archetypes are personality patterns that our minds recognize (almost) universally.

Complexes

Complexes are the imperfect “sticky gum” of life experiences that attach to our inner archetypes over time.

The Strata of Self

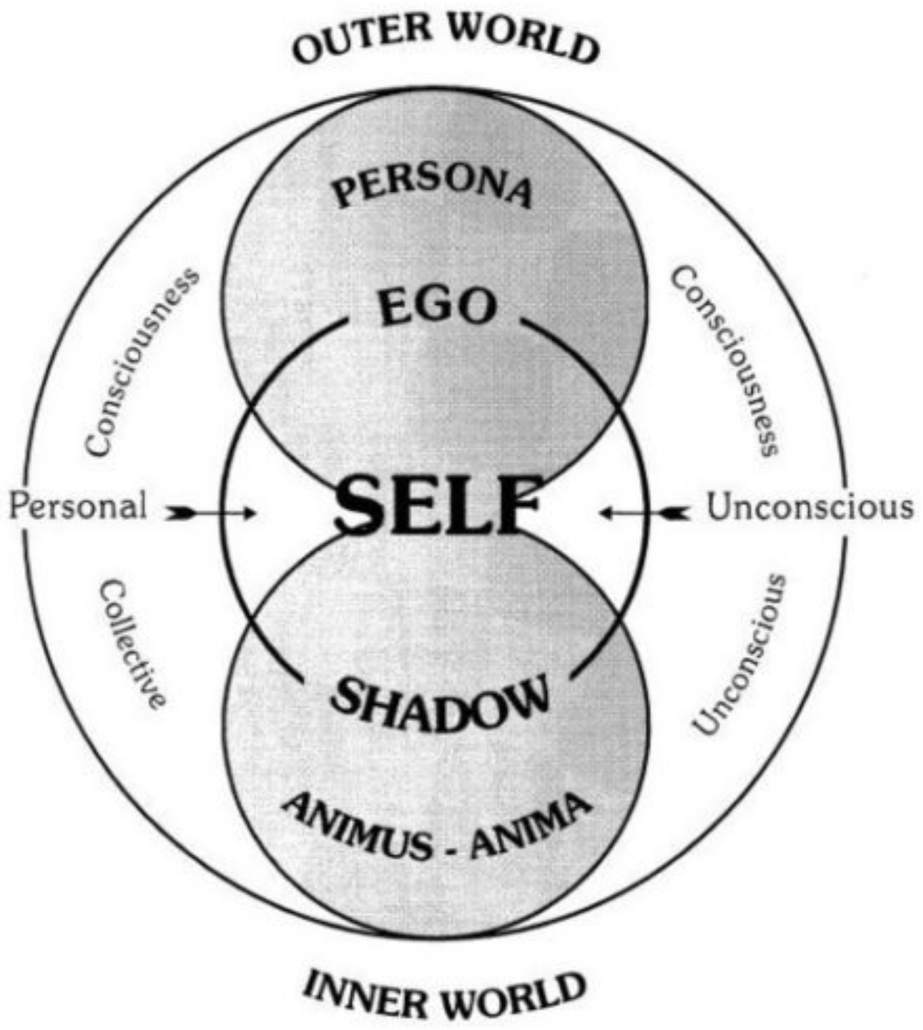


Figure 5: Jung's Model of the Psyche.

Mother

You walk with authority. Others ache for your approval, and long for you to soothe their wounds.

Wedding Prep

- What is the Bride's figure like?
- What do others wish was different about it?
- What are you leaving behind from your provincial life to become Bluebeard's Bride?
- When you first met, what loving gesture did Bluebeard make that won you over?
- What gift did you present to Bluebe re the wedding?

or do you

Sisterly Bonds

You know best, and try to guide your wayward sisters, but...

... _____ irritates you with their obstinance. Explain a time they undermined your authority.

...you trust _____ to have your back. Explain a time they supported you in a time of need.

Stats

Blood	Carnality	Resilience
	+1	

One stat is filled out for you. Fill the other two with a 0 and a -1.

Choose a Face

The Bear

When a Sister provokes trauma, you can step in and punish the Sister who truly deserves it. Tell the guilty Sister to mark the trauma instead, and mark one trauma for yourself as well, as your failure to prevent this is self evident.

The Kingmaker

When you insist a male servant or horror deserves more power than they currently have and give them a gift, you have found your champion. Heal one trauma.

The Martyr

You will take your love to the ends of this world. When you offer forgiveness for a Sister's sins, mark trauma, one for two, to heal that Sister.

Trauma Track

How You Can Take This Further

Where to Find the Game (And Me!)

magpiegames.com/bluebeards-bride
strixwerks.com
Twitter: @The_Strix

GAME NARRATIVE SUMMIT

The Narrative Innovation Showcase

Dave Gilbert
Founder/Creative Director
Wadjet Eye Games

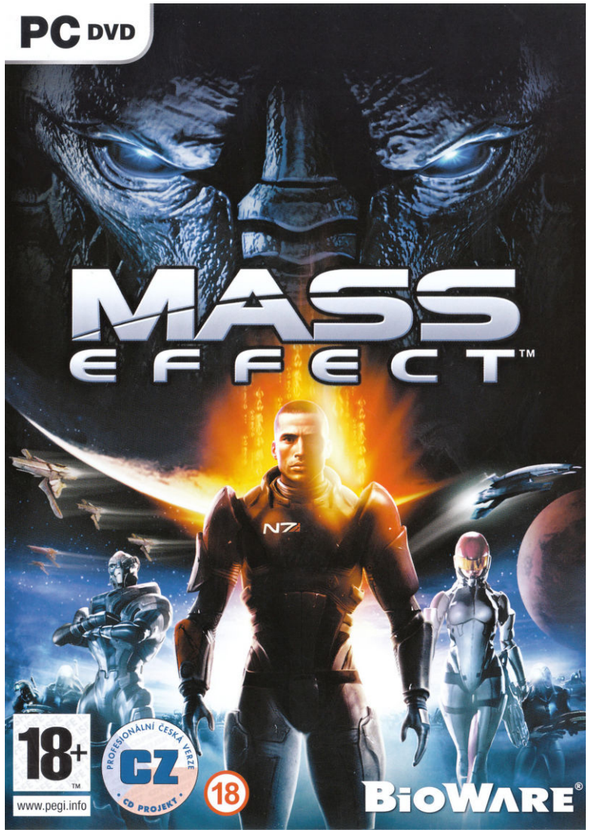
GDC
GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE
MARCH 18–22, 2019 | #GDC19

High and Low Level Narrative Design

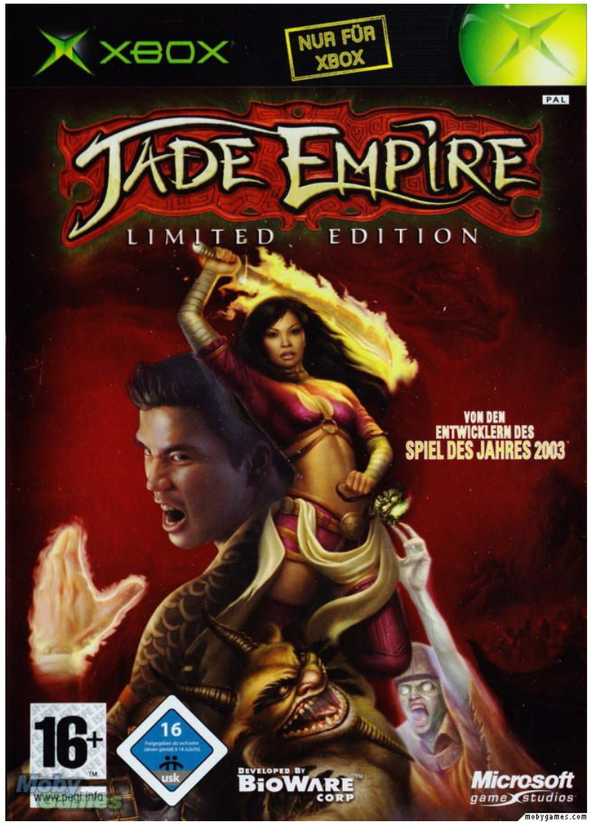
Dave Gilbert
Creative Director
Wadjet Eye Games

UNAVOWED

Unavowed


PC DVD
MASS EFFECT
18+
www.pegi.info
CZ
18
BIOWARE

DRAGON AGE
ORIGINS
BIOWARE
EA


XBOX
NUR FÜR XBOX
PAL
JADE EMPIRE
LIMITED EDITION
VON DEN ENTWICKLERN DES SPIEL DES JAHRES 2003
16+
16
DEVELOPED BY BIOWARE CORP
Microsoft game studios
mobygames.com

STAR WARS
KNIGHTS
OF THE
OLD REPUBLIC
BIOWARE CORP

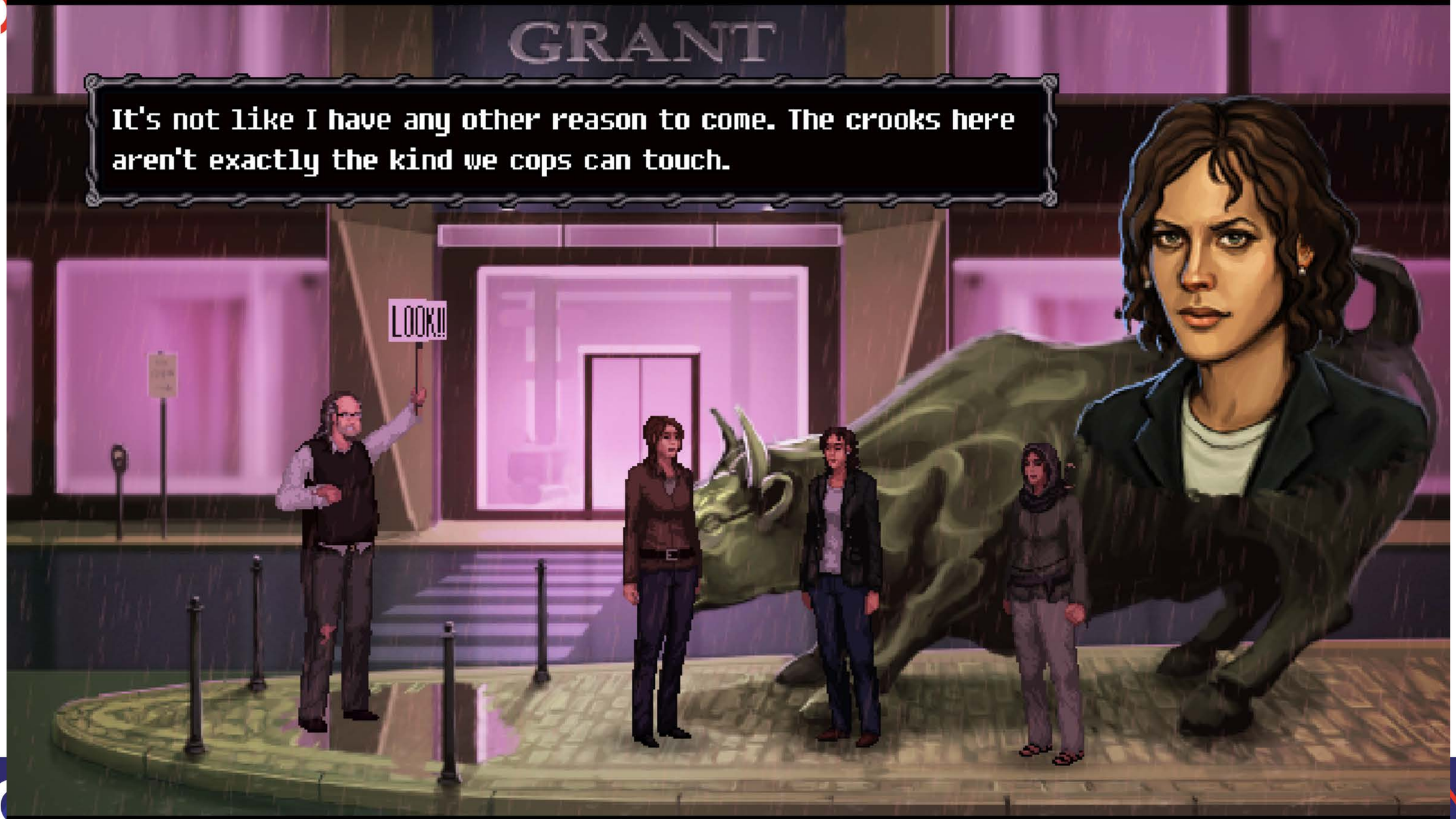
Unavowed

High Level

You call this Wall STREET. I recall when this street was, literally, a wall.

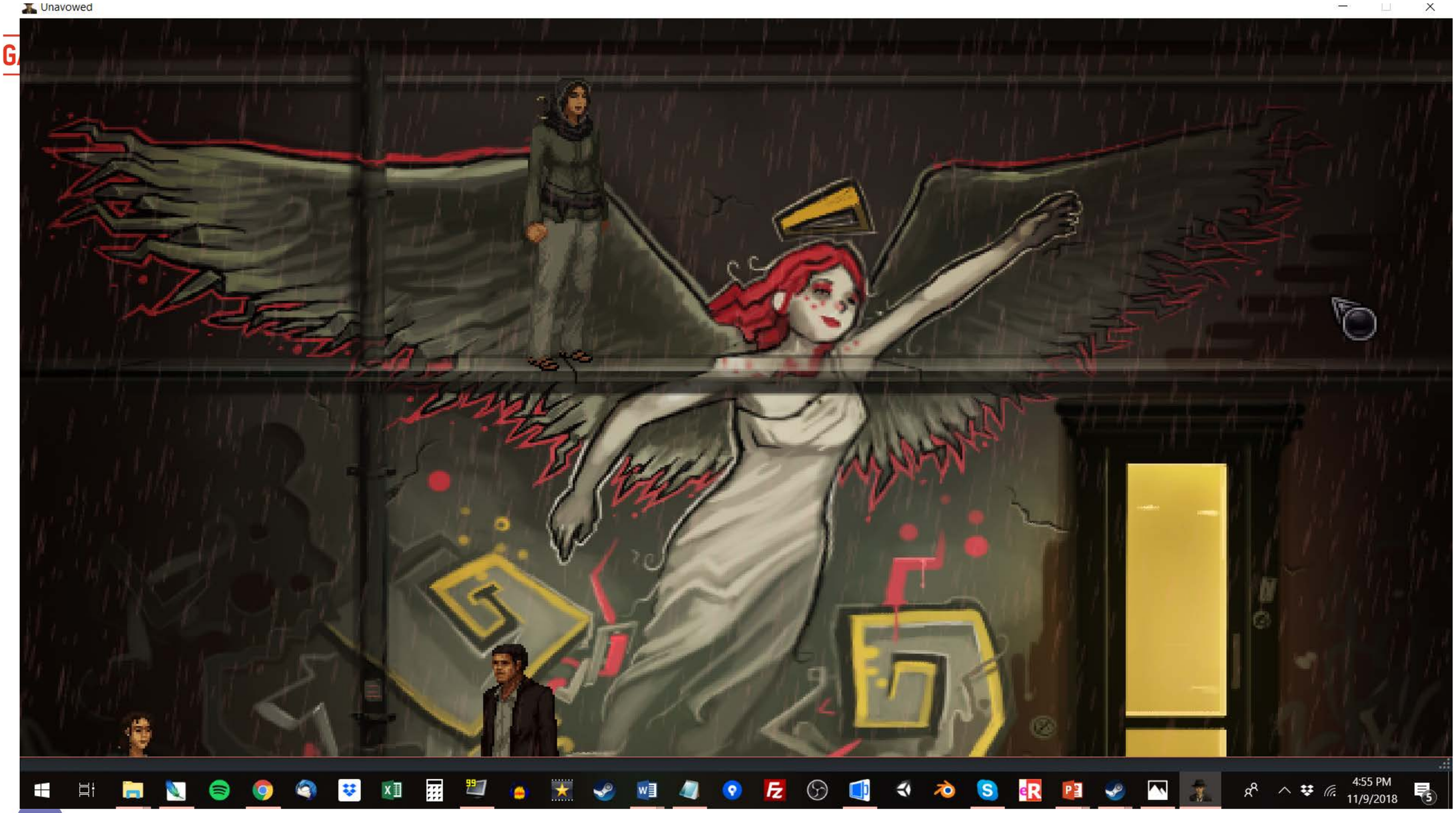
Just... old history. I met my wife at the Coney Island fireworks.
We went every week that summer.
Hoyt-Schermerhorn St
Station
A C G
POETRY
SLAM

That's one great thing about this neighborhood. Go deep enough and you can pretend you're in another country, far away.
WELCOME
TO CHINATOWN
Canal St Station
Downtown


GRANT
It's not like I have any other reason to come. The crooks here aren't exactly the kind we cops can touch.
LOOK!!

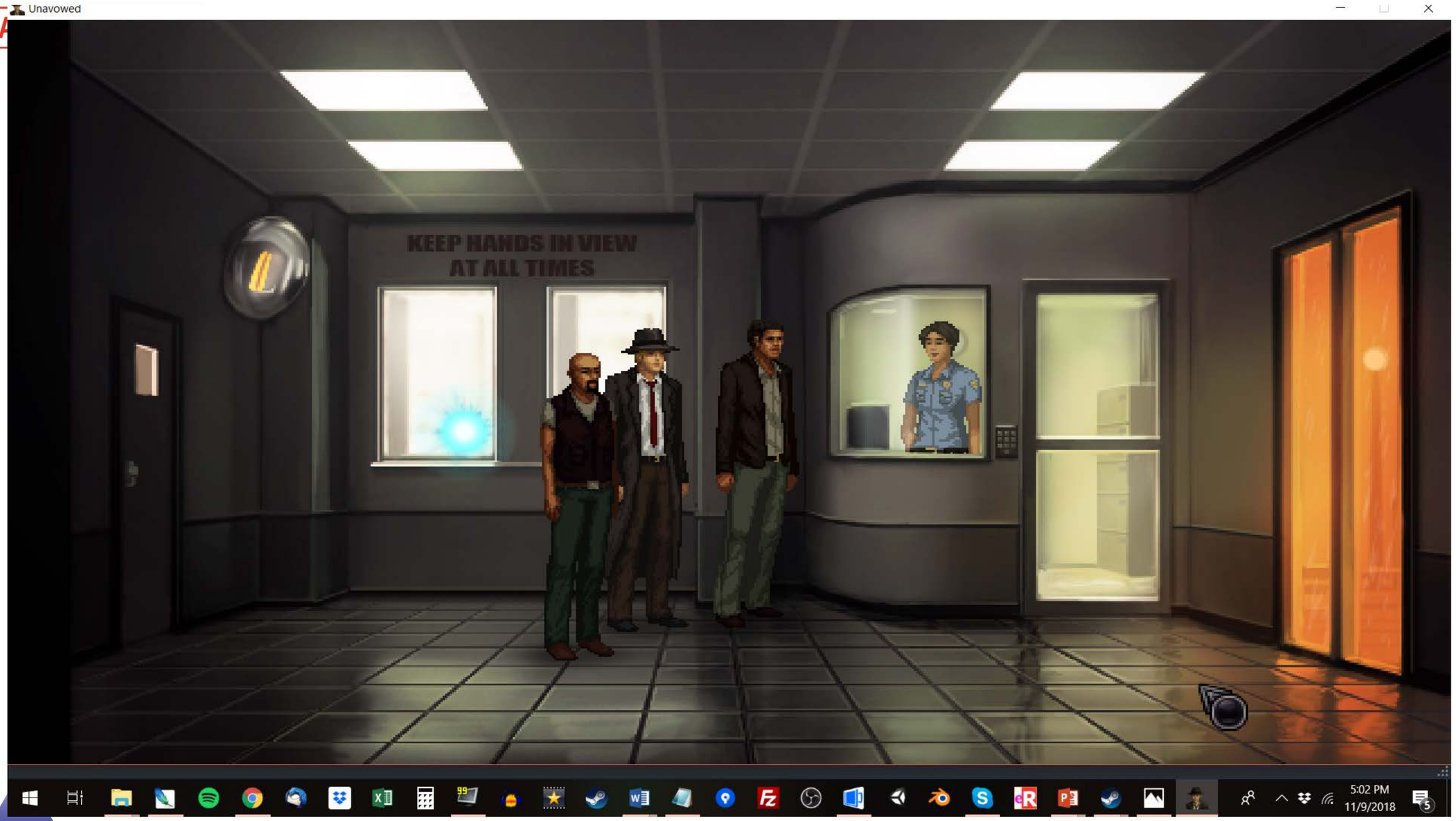
Unavowed

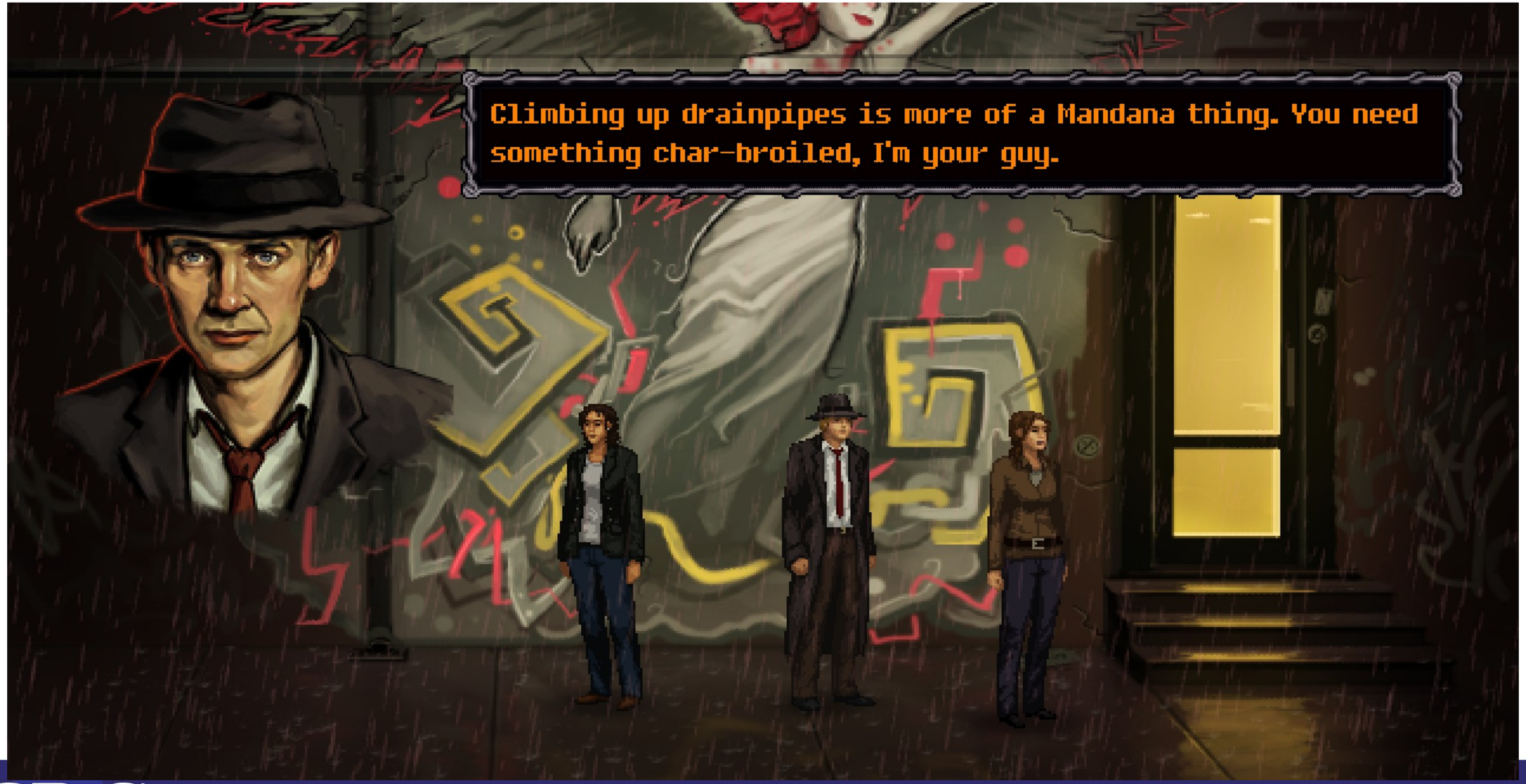
Low level


Unavowed
4:55 PM
11/9/2018

Holy crap. VICKI? How the hell are you?

Unavowed

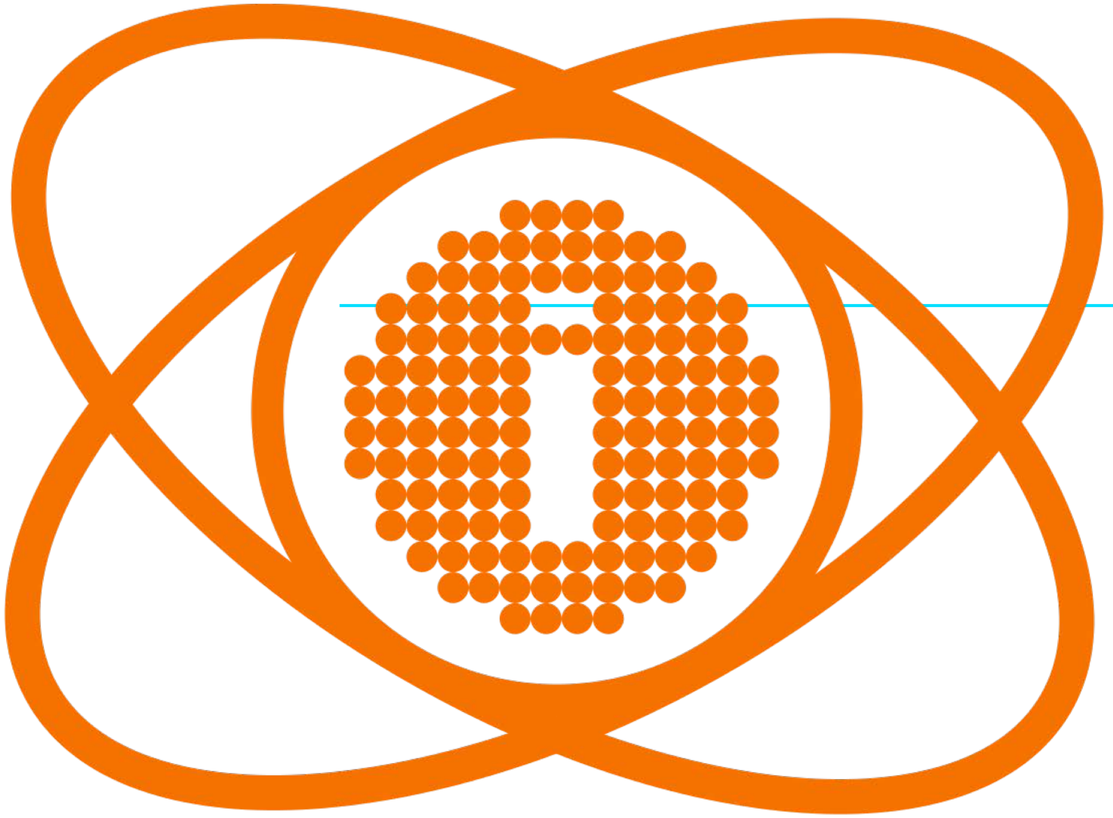

Unavowed
KEEP HANDS IN VIEW
AT ALL TIMES
5:02 PM
11/9/2018


Climbing up drainpipes is more of a Mandana thing. You need something char-broiled, I'm your guy.

Takeaways…

- Don’t lose sight of the high-level design goal.
- Every low-level decision must support that high-level goal

GAME NARRATIVE SUMMIT



INDEPENDENT GAMES FESTIVAL

Dave Gilbert
Wadjet Eye Games
@wadjeteyegames

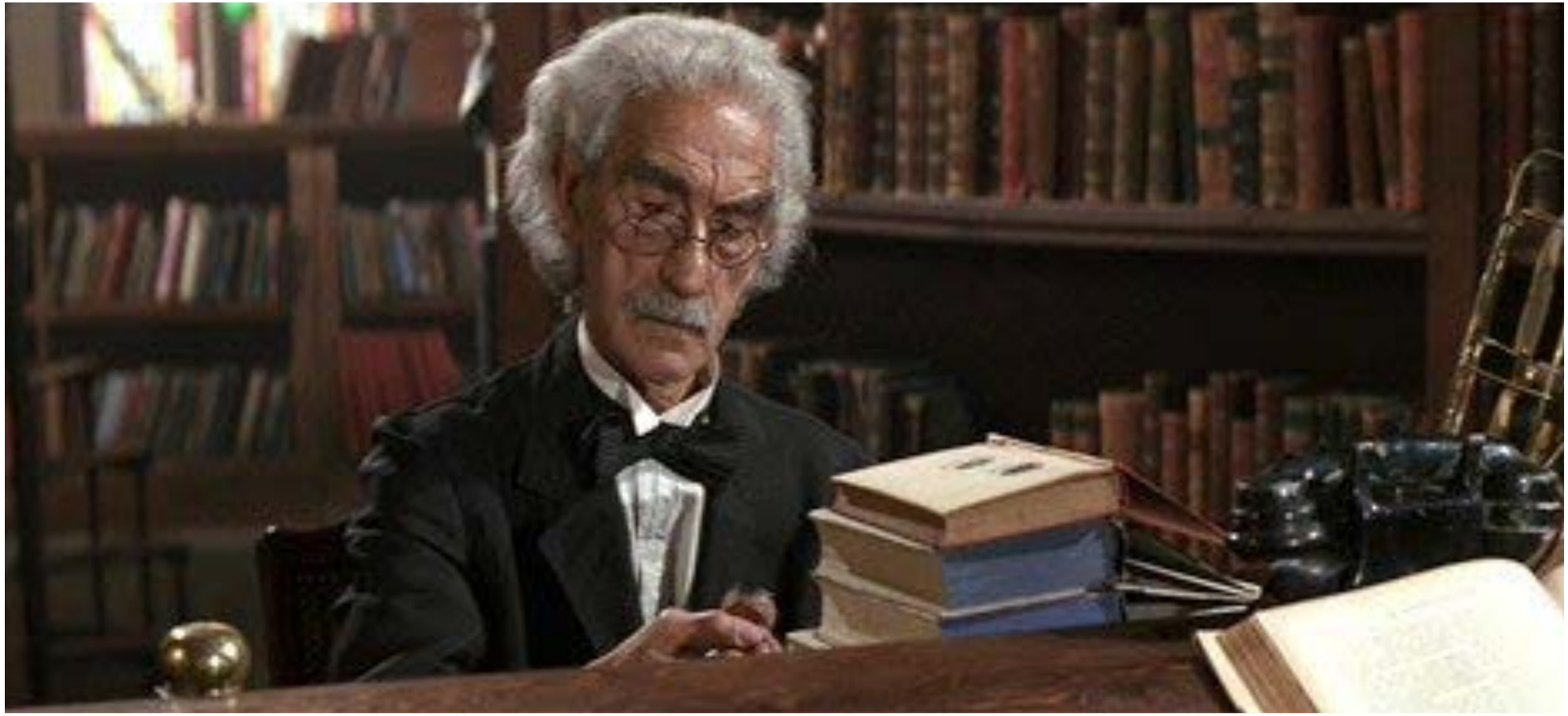
What Have We Learned?

Photo credit: Emma Loggins

Players Love RPGs Even When They Are Not RPGs

From the series Big Appetites by Christopher Boffoli

The Smallest Things Are Storytelling



Do Your Homework

Embrace Being A Smuggler

Thank you!

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