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I truly believe that being a narrative designer is all about flexibility and creativity. My role is connected to every other person in the team, from the artists to the testers.

Since I started in the industry in 2009, I had the chance to work on extremely different projects. Here's a collection of some of my writing: dialogues, "pure" narrative design, short stories, or a combination of all of the above.

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## Dialogue: “Two Bosses for the Price of One”

This piece was written for an indie project.

In this dialogue, the main character meets DENJIS, one of the game’s bosses who is half-man, half-computer. The goal for me was to create a situation that was fun and awkward, like one you could find in the MGS series.

This dialogue was to be played during a real-time cinematic.

### Characters

The HERO is a mute character but the player will see him react through very simple facial animation.

### Scene

HERO enters the arena and stops. The boss in front of him is DENJIS. He’s a tall, 50-year-old man. The left side of his face is replaced with a boxy computer, not unlike an old Amiga.

**DENJIS**

Finally, you’re here.

Right after, the player can hear a female, computer voice coming out of the left side of DENJIS’ face.

**COMPUTER VOICE**

INTRUDER APPROACHING... IDENTITY  
CONFIRMED. THE SUBJECT IS EXTREMELY  
DANGEROUS, SIR. PLEASE PROCEED WITH  
CAUTION.

The HERO grabs his sword.

**DENJIS**

Shut up! Don’t mind her, she’s nuts  
but she’s nice.

**COMPUTER VOICE**

WRONG ANALYSIS, SIR. YOU ARE THE  
ONE SUFFERING FROM...

**DENJIS**

I said shut up!

The HERO shows surprise.

**DENJIS**

That’s better. Sometimes she just  
can’t shut her f [BEEP] ing mouth.

The BLEEPING clearly came from the computer...

**COMPUTER VOICE**

LANGUAGE, SIR.

**DENJIS**

See? She's been acting all weird since you escaped. I think she wants you dead more than I do. And I can't blame her, though. But... Just between you and me, pal... Sometimes, she scares me.

**COMPUTER VOICE**

WEAPONS... READY. DEFENSE SYSTEMS...  
READY. TORTURE PROTOCOLS... READY!

**DENJIS**

Perfect. Yes. See? She won't even let me talk to you. She's so impatient. Machines are impatient. Humans can take pleasure in waiting.  
*(to the HERO, trying to get his pity)*  
They can't understand simple human emotions like... REVENGE or HATRED!  
Dish best served cold, all that...

His hands dance in front of him as if they were trying to summon the old proverb.

**COMPUTER VOICE**

SIR? I SUGGEST WE ATTACK... RIGHT!  
NOW! THE FIRST STRIKER HAS A  
SLIGHTLY HIGHER CHANCE OF WINNING.

**DENJIS**

Ya, ya... We were having a MOMENT there!  
*(he sighs)*  
Ready when you are, little voice.

**COMPUTER VOICE**

ATTACK MODE ACTIVATED.

Action sequence starts.

## Dialogue: “I’ve Never Been in Here”

This piece was written for a test at Ubisoft.

My objective here was to create a light dialogue that would compensate for the dark setting of the game. We have three stereotypical soldiers and they have to be immediately recognizable.

Scenes like that are good on their own, but it’s their quantity and humor that will turn video games 3D models into characters the player care about...

### Characters

The team is made up of three soldiers.

- ★ Captain Henry Banks is the player character. He’s a solid, professional man whom you can count on.
- ★ 1st Lieutenant Max “Clinton” Hendricks, 30-something, big mouth and big muscles.
- ★ 1st Lieutenant Anna Gibbons, 27, from a family of veterans, Gibbons is tough and fierce. She’s not the kind of girl you mess with.

### Scene

TRIGGER: This dialogue occurs when the team enters the Statue of Liberty.

**“CLINTON”**

I think I shouldn’t say that but...  
It’s the first time I am in here.

**BANKS**

What do you mean Clinton?

**“CLINTON”**

I’ve never been inside the Statue.

**BANKS**

I have so many jokes in my head  
right now; it’s hard to pick one.

**“CLINTON”**

Please Banks. I’m serious. It’s  
something here! I didn’t picture  
the inside to be like this...

**BANKS**

What... I’m afraid to ask but... What  
were you expecting?

**“CLINTON”**

I dunno. Maybe ... organs?

**BANKS**

You mean, like a giant heart and veins everywhere?

**"CLINTON"**

Yeah.

A pause.

**BANKS**

You are sick Clinton. Really sick.

**GIBBONS**

I'm sorry to ruin the mood, but we have four tangos in sight, guys.

End.

## World Building: “The Republic of Venice”

This piece was written for an in-house game at Asobo Studio.

For this project, the writing team had to come up with a believable, yet fantastic world to nest our game and our characters; we spent three months on a narrative bible which, in the end, was more than 80 pages long. I worked mainly on the historical aspect of the document while my co-writer took care of the characters. We were led by a game designer and the creative director.

This document was then shared with the rest of the team and used throughout pre-production.

It was decided to set our story in a “fresh” era (1347, during the Black Death, not seen in many games) and to find a twist to create a fun, alternate history. We chose Venice as our main antagonist for simple reasons: it’s very well-known and iconic, usually portrayed as a positive and democratic power...

### Key points

- ★ Also known as the Serenissima (the most serene) by its allies...
- ★ Venice is the most powerful city around the Mediterranean Sea.
- ★ Their traders are found all around the Mediterranean Sea ... as well as their spies, soldiers, and scientists.
- ★ The Bank of Venice lends money to every kingdom in Europe.
- ★ Venice has stolen many secrets and has probably the most advanced science in Europe.
- ★ That leads to the discovery of a cure for the Black Death killing millions.

### The new face of Venice

The point of divergence in our project is 1204, the siege of Constantinople. The city is attacked by the Catholics of the Fourth Crusade on their way to Jerusalem. Venice helped the Fourth Crusade in our real history; but in our game universe, Venice takes the city almost by itself and claims it, definitely sitting its power upon maritime routes.

Constantinople becomes part of the powerful Venetian Republic. Access to the Near East, the Middle East and the Far East belong to the Serenissima.

In the following years, the Republic grows and thrives. Separated from the warlike Europe, surrounded by dying kings and crazy emperors, the city’s going on its own path ... a dark one.

### Why Venice?

The Crusades are often seen as a black and white conflict between Christians on one side and Muslims on the other. But it was more than that.

If the control of the Holy Land was at first religious, it soon became a financial issue. The founding of the Kingdom of Jerusalem offered Europeans trade routes with the East without having to deal with Muslims or Turks. They “cut the middle man.”

## Venice as a Powerful Antagonist

Venice has always been shown as a wonderful place for artists and democracy, a city of light and peace. Da Vinci is closely linked to Venice... Why don't we turn this around and give people another take on History?

Religion has been forgotten in Venice; money and power are everything. This is where we could really create a strong world. Venice, having been in contact with kingdoms and empires all around the Mediterranean Sea and beyond, has acquired knowledge in alchemy and has now access to a new kind of magic. They built faster ships, deadlier weapons, and powerful medicines that can cure anything ... even the Black Death devastating Europe.

## Venice and Mark

Venice is not responsible for the Black Death but they have a strong interest in that terrible plague: They have a cure they can sell. They have ascendancy on every other country in Europe and in the East. They control the best trading routes through the Black Sea and Constantinople.

But somewhere, a little boy (our main character) has a new, never-seen-before connection with the plague. Venice has to capture him. He can be used in experiments in the dark laboratory of the Lighthouse, the alchemist tower outside of Venice (kind of cool and unmistakable landmark). He can be used to spread the sickness in disease-free countries or cities.

## The Power of the Republic

Venice has trading posts all around the Mediterranean Sea. They have spies in every city, boats in every port. They lend money to Rome, to France, to England... They manage the trade routes all over Europe, making them not only vital but also dangerous.

A siege for strategy and politics, Venice aims at taking more and more power over Europe. They don't believe in war, which costs money and lives unnecessarily: pulling the strings is enough to them. They own many secrets about everybody (they are the CIA/USA/Wall Street of our fictional world), practicing a modern form of lobbying and global bribery.

From the depth of their laboratories filled with alchemists at work, they have created a remedy... But the "cure" is nothing more than a way to control the disease by manipulating specific elements. That's where Venice showed great weakness and vainglory: the plague has evolved quickly; their self-confidence has doomed them all.

## In-Game

Venice should first be seen as a powerful city: the player will often meet its colors. Slowly, we need to open up the player's mind and show him the "dark side of Venice." The player will start to understand that something is not right and that they'll have to deal with a warped version instead of the *real* one.

Final episodes or season 2 should make the player visit Venice and see for themselves how terrific the city has become. Imagine Venice but with steam engines, machines, golems... Just like *Dishonored* twisted the image of a Victorian city.

## Narrative Design: “Amira’s Story”

This piece was written for a test at Ubisoft.

Letters, books, notes, audiologs, or e-mails are a great way to convey narration and context to the player. It’s relatively cheap, and if done right, they can be meaningful and create a real sense of truth about the world they are visiting.

This series of short e-mails belongs to a young woman named Amira. She’s a doctor in New York City during a chaotic event and tries to write to her mother who’s still in Morocco...

### First day

Hello mama,

I’m sorry I missed your call last night. I was out, buying presents for the kids. Everything is so cheap during Black Friday, it’s crazy. Some malls reminded me of the souk in Casa. Everybody was shouting and fighting to pick up DVD players and games out of bargain bins. You have to see it to believe it! It’s funny how anybody on this planet likes a good deal. I imagined Baba trying to haggle the cashier to get 5 or 10 dollars out of a bookshelf.

I miss you so much :) I hope you’re fine.

I’m stuck at the hospital for 30 hours now, I’ll call you later this week.

Amira.

### Second day

Mama, I tried to call but it’s like 2 in Morocco, so I’ll write you this quick mail...

A woman died today. Very young, my age. She was run over, a block away from the hospital. His husband was there, furious, shouting on me and on everyone else.

Do you remember when I told you I wanted to do my internship in New York? You told me it was not a place for a girl like me, for a Muslim. Well, you were maybe right. Since I’m here, no one ever said anything wrong to me. Until the husband. They were pretty harsh words.

I miss you. I did not cry in front of him, of course. The whole team was great with me, they said it was not my fault. But for the first time, I really want to be back home. With all of you.

Amira.

### Third day

Hi mama,

Any news about Baba? I hope he’s fine and that he will take his medications. This is really important; he must follow the doctor’s advice.



We are facing a strange epidemic here, the hospital is filled with sick people. I went home for a couple of hours, took a shower and ran back to the hospital. I'm tired, I'm stressed but this is part of the work mama. I'm glad I came here.

I couldn't even finish this mail in ONE shot. I had to stop my break to help a bunch of kids. They are really sick. Do not worry for me mama, please, you know how it works: patients are always sick, doctors are always healthy.

Twahachtek, Amira

(I miss the keyboard back home...)

## **Fourth day**

Mama,

Please, don't panic. You know how the media are: yes, we have a situation here in New York but I'm a doctor, I have access to drugs and supplies. The police told us to stay inside the hospital so we are working like crazy, taking naps whenever we can. The telephone lines are not working but please say to my brother that I'll send him his console as soon as possible.

Do you remember the man who insulted me the other day? He's back, he's really sick. I hope he will get better. I am doing everything I can to save him. This is why I came here.

Amira.

## **Fifth day**

Mama,

Don't get mad. I wish I could call you but here, nothing really works anymore. We have enough electricity to use an old communication station and use Internet. I wish I could call you. I wish I could say that I'll be back in Morocco in January as planned. I wish I could see the whole family once again.

The man who insulted attacked me this morning. He stole a knife and... Well, let's not talk about this. I really wanted you to see Central Park in Fall. The colors are so amazing; I KNOW you would have loved it. It reminds me of this old cafe in Rabat. The one with the cardamom tea.

I am dictating this mail to my friend Elsa. She will contact you as soon as the city is under control. It will be in a few days, I'm sure. I love you.

Bye bye 'alikh, wada'an Amira

## **Narrative Design + Research: “O.zen”**

This piece comes from the game O.zen (Ubisoft, 2015).

O.zen was a weird project for Ubisoft when we started working on it in 2009. Our goal was to create an experience that would allow people to become aware of and fight their stress.

### **Preproduction**

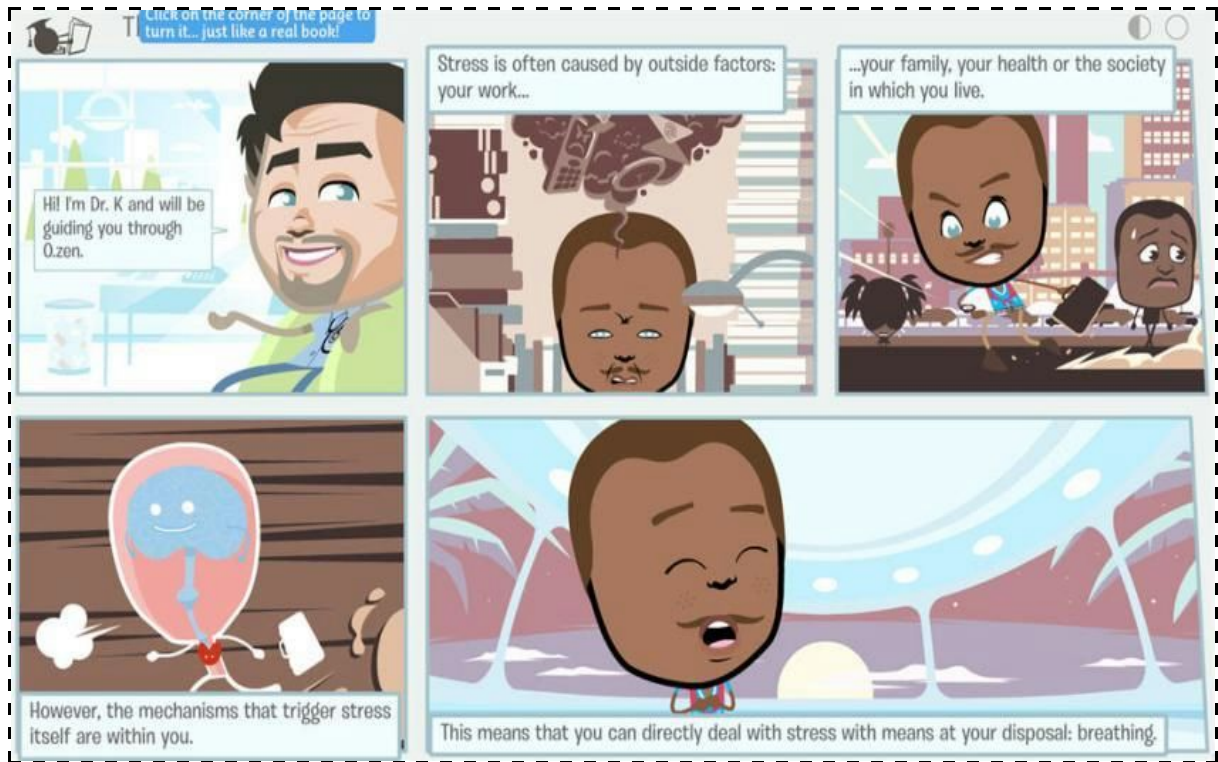
The first year was for me a fantastic time as I was working everyday with the design team to lock the game structure as well as investigating our subject. I interviewed doctors, researchers, specialists to know more about stress, about our body and our mind.

This led to the creation of our profile system (the game is able to determine what kind of stress you have and offers you solutions) as well as programs, tutorials, and games. In the end, the game has more than 120,000 words, just like a big novel and it even doesn't feel like one. It's light and entertaining.

### **Comic book**

One of my biggest achievement was the writing of “Zenopedias”, two-page comic books about the body. It was as challenging as it was exciting. I wrote 18 comics about hormones, circadian cycle, or defense mechanisms... The example below are the first two pages the player sees when they start playing O.zen.

I spent days finding the right tone and pacing, working closely with an artist to create something short, sharp, and fun. It was the first thing we finished for the game, giving the whole team and the marketing a good sense of our universe: scientific, colorful, warm, precise, fun.



## Narrative Design + Level Design : “The Sea Wall”

This piece was written for my test at Asobo, during my hiring process.

Narrative design is, for me, the child of level and game design. It’s a powerful tool to tell a story, but it’s also a great way to create a piece of the game, using the player’s emotions to pace a level.

### Character’s Journey

Log line: This is the story of a man who thought he had all of it right, and who had all of it wrong. It’s a journey of emancipation, when you kill your father to be free at last.

Synopsis: Altaïr is an assassin of the Brotherhood, one of the forces fighting against the Western invaders during the Third Crusade. But Altaïr is too sure of him, too confident and does not respect the rules and the tenets of the Brotherhood. During a mission (which serves as the tutorial), he breaks his oath and, **as a punishment, he’s stripped of his rank.**

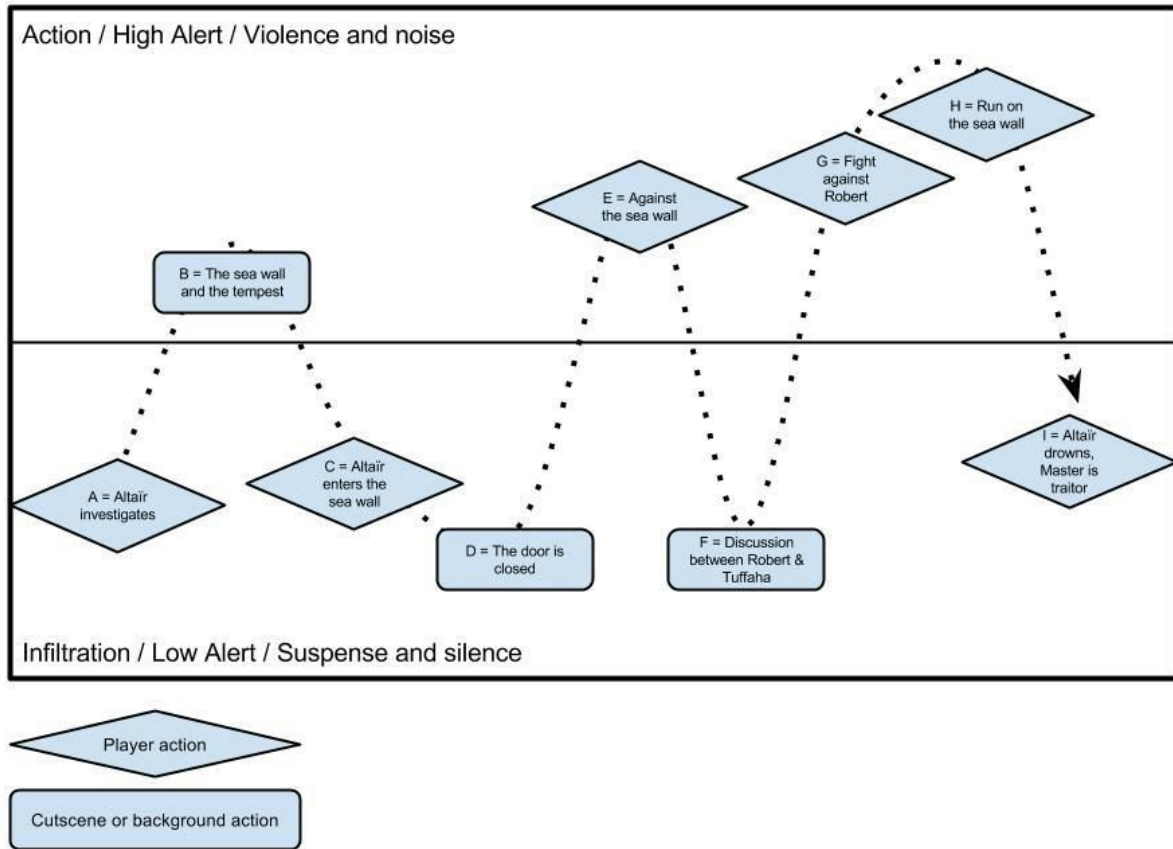
Now a simple assassin that has everything to prove once more, Altaïr is tasked to kill nine Templars and starts a journey to discover who he really is. In the process, Altaïr realize that everything he’d always believe in might not be the whole truth. Step by step, **he uncovers a plot not only against his people but also against the whole world, formed by his own Brotherhood master and mentor.**

When he finally kills him, Altaïr becomes a free man. But in exchange, he gains a knowledge that shakes his beliefs and sets him and his descendants for **a new adventure through time and space; ultimately saving mankind from slavery.**

### Level Narrative

- ★ From a previous assassination, ALTAÏR knows that his last two targets will be in Saint-Jean d’Acre to meet in secret.
- ★ Arriving in the Templar town, he gathers information on the meeting (**A**), which will happen in one of the rooms of the sea wall. That day, the sea is raging and hitting the wall relentlessly (**B**).
- ★ ALTAÏR has to go past the guards all along the port (**C**) and then enters the sea wall, a huge fortification made of white stone where food and weapons are stocked.
- ★ Inside, he finds the door to be closed and too heavily guarded (**D**) so he has to walk against the sea wall, while meeting not enemies and avoiding the furious sea hitting the wall (**E**).
- ★ He finally arrives near the room and spy on the last seconds of conversation between ROBERT DE SABLÉ and the mysterious TUFFAHA (**F**). ALTAÏR jumps into the room to fight and kill ROBERT DE SABLÉ (**G**) while Tuffaha escapes.
- ★ Running after his last target on top of the sea wall during the tempest (**H**), ALTAÏR grabs his robe and a second before being pushed into the sea, he sees the face of his master (**I**) ...

## Dramatic Curve of the level



## The hero's journey

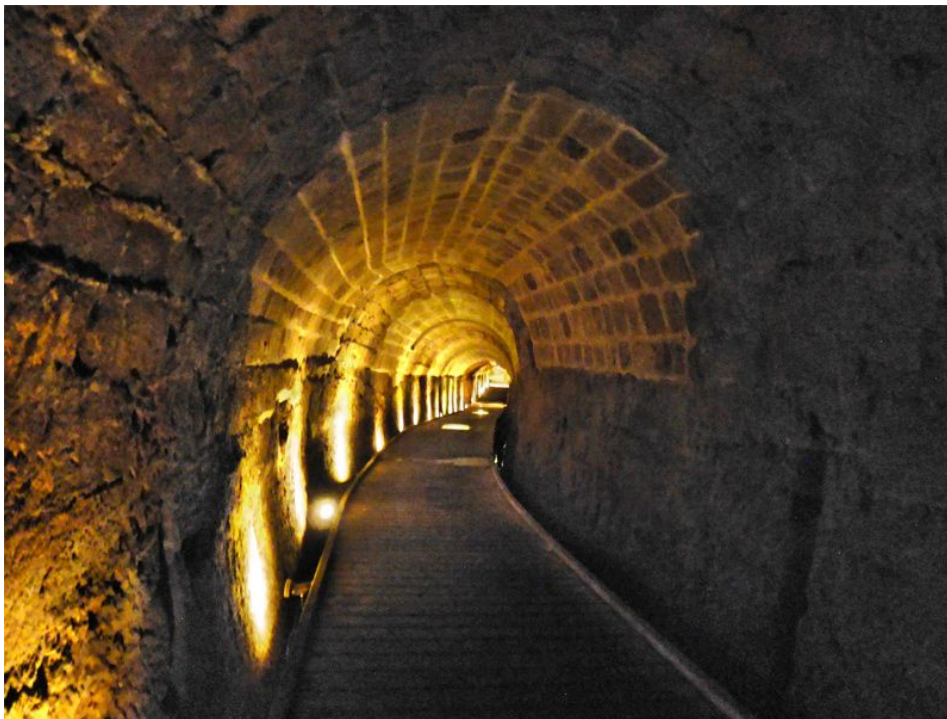
We are at the end of the game's Act II. This level is the moment where Altaïr thinks he's lost everything; his master is a traitor, he's underwater, during a tempest, near a Templar construction. The following scenes will show Altaïr alive and well but the end of this level has to be a pause in the game where the player should ask himself: "**Everything is lost,**" exactly like Altaïr.

The narrative and the level design will slowly build to the big finale, when Altaïr has to kill his master. The most important part of this level is not "my master is a traitor" but "how will I be able to kill my master."

## References



The Sea Wall.



The tunnel under the  
Sea Wall.



The Akko Tower next to the sea wall.



A room of the sea wall (huge windows directly facing west).

## Narrative Design: “Sibling System”

This piece was designed for an unannounced project.

The Sibling System was made to add interactivity and choice-based consequences to a 3d adventure game. Let’s take a look at how it works...

### Overview

The Sibling System offers players a choice: they can decide how our main character JULIA will talk to her little brother MARK, influencing the way he will evolve throughout the game.

Both kids were genetically modified and have certain powers... but they are also damaged. Mark, especially, will need special care from the player or he will become a monster.

This system is designed to link the game design to the story.

### Goals

The goals of the Sibling System are:

- ★ To give players something to do when the brother is panicking.
- ★ To challenge players with meaningful choice.
- ★ To create a changing and living relationship between Julia and Mark.
- ★ To strengthen the bond between the narration and the gameplay.

The system will have an impact on Mark’s behavior. After several answers, the boy will then:

- ★ TOUGHEN UP or
- ★ GAIN MORE CONFIDENCE.

### Consequences on the narration: Toughening up

As Mark and Julia are being hunted, Mark can toughen up, meaning that:

- ★ He can be more violent,
- ★ He is less able to control his rages,
- ★ His power may grow stronger.

While toughening up, his relationship with his sister will ultimately change. At the start, they are both uneasy and uncomfortable with one another. If Mark toughens up, he will still be a mystery to his sister, and she will never really trust him... she’ll afraid of him.

### Consequences on the narration: Gaining more confidence

As Mark and Julia are travelling together across a ravaged world, Mark can gain more confidence, meaning that:

- ★ He follows Julia’s orders quicker,



- ★ He is able to better control his rages and his outbursts,
- ★ He takes the initiative.

While gaining confidence, Mark's relationship with his sister will change. They gradually learn to trust each other and they will share things more easily. If Mark gains confidence, his sister will let him decide and listen to him.

## Two endings

We can also imagine that choosing one version of Mark over the other will have an impact on the game's ending.

Let's imagine a sequence where the two kids are cornered by Dr. Spaz, the man who "made" them.

- ★ Mark toughened up during the game: he will be the one killing the doctor, much to his sister's horror.
- ★ Mark gained confidence: he's able to help Julia and they both find a solution to stop the doctor without killing him.

## Consequences on the gameplay: Toughening up

If Mark toughens up during the game, we can imagine the following effects for the player:

- ★ Mark's power is stronger, deadlier, and/or more lethal.
- ★ Mark is able to last longer when he's attacked by an enemy; he'll fight back until Julia arrive.
- ★ Mark has more life or stamina.
- ★ Mark is able to climb and access specific places with special loot/collectible (ex: Mark is strong enough to go through a tunnel and push the blocking grate).

## Consequences on the gameplay: Gaining more confidence

If Mark gains confidence during the game, we can imagine the following effects for the player:

- ★ Mark can find alone better hiding places.
- ★ Mark can use his power to peacefully control more enemies and/or for a longer time.
- ★ Mark helps Julia, giving hints, picking up things by himself.
- ★ Mark has access to specific places with special loot/collectible (ex: Mark is confident enough to dare jumping across a large gap by himself).

## How to act on this system?

How to increase one side of Mark over the other? Through dialogues. Sometimes, the player will have to choose an answer. One will add points towards the "Toughening up" gauge and one that will add points to the "Confidence" gauge.

The Sibling System will appear when:

- ★ Mark is panicking after being left alone for too long. When Julia gets close to him the choice prompts and the player has to pick a sentence.
- ★ During the game, after or before scripted events, the choice will prompt.

- ★ We can imagine lines related to the area around them, an event that just happened, something related to what another character said...
- ★ At camp fires.

To offer dialogues to the player, the Sibling System will use three different types of dialogues:

- ★ Triggered dialogues: triggered outside of Mark's panic attacks, they will be triggered for a specific reason, before or after a RTC, when you kill your 10th enemy, and so on.
- ★ Special dialogues: used after Mark' panic attacks, they will be linked to different variables like the location, the state of Julia or Mark, the presence of infected, and so on.
- ★ A "generic" chatter: it will be used whenever there is nothing else available.

## Scope

A dialogue is at least two lines and up to four lines. They have to be short and effective, as the game is still on while they talk. For a six-hour experience, we can imagine the following numbers:

- ★ 50 triggered dialogues.
- ★ 30 special dialogues.
- ★ 40 generic chatters (20 complex chatters with several sentences and 20 simple ones, with just a few words).

## One gauge

The system can use only one gauge to deal with the Toughness/Confidence graduation.

This gauge will be a line going from -100 to 100.

Points towards Toughness decreases the gauge, points towards Confidence increases the gauge.

At specific marks, the game will unlock a gameplay bonus that will stay one, even if the gauge moves past that mark. The best bonuses and dialogues are unlocked with the higher marks. Going all Toughness or all Confidence is much more interesting gameplay-wise than doing a bit of both.



The gauge starts a bit before 0, as Julia and Mark have a past in common. But before the events of the game, Julia was already mean to her brother. Maybe she'll change that...

We have to give the player enough points to go in one direction and change their mind. Players should be allowed to make mistakes.

## Dialogue Tests

### Dialogue #1

Beginning of the game, right after escaping the laboratory, Mark uses his power on a policeman blocking the exit. Once the exit is cleared, Julia can't take Mark's hand as the boy is panicking.

<p><b>Julia:</b> Mark! Mark! What's going on?  <i>Mark keeps on shaking.</i></p>	
<p><b>TOUGHNESS CHOICE</b></p>	<p><b>CONFIDENCE CHOICE</b></p>
<p><b>Julia:</b> Mark! Calm down! We need to leave this place immediately!  <b>Mark:</b> I... don't... want to...  <b>Julia:</b> Wake up, Mark! We have to move forward. Now!  <i>She takes his hand and pulls him. Mark swallows his tears and speeds up the pace.</i></p>	<p><b>Julia:</b> Shhh... It's fine, come here.  <i>She embraces her brother.</i>  <b>Mark:</b> I... I... I don't want to leave.  <b>Julia:</b> I know, I know. But Mother is waiting for us in Marseille. We cannot stay here any longer.  <i>Julia steps backwards.</i>  <b>Julia:</b> Come on, we've got to go!  <i>Mark wipes his tears with his sleeve and grab his sister's hand.</i></p>

### Dialogue #2

Middle of the game, Julia and Mark were followed by the Gorgona Squad. Mark used his power to make them unload their weapons. His panic attacks are stronger every time and come with dark and twisted visions.

<p><b>Julia:</b> We need to go... Look at me, Mark. Look at me!  <i>Mark's eyes can't focus on anything.</i></p>	
<p><b>TOUGHNESS CHOICE</b></p>	<p><b>CONFIDENCE CHOICE</b></p>
<p><b>Julia:</b> Let's not waste time, little one. Hurry up.  <b>Mark:</b> Clouds... There is a snake hiding behind the clouds.  <b>Julia:</b> Scare it off. Use your sword. Kill it.  <i>Mark waves his arms, screams, and immediately falls on the ground.</i>  <b>Mark:</b> It's dead...  <b>Julia:</b> Well done. Let's go now.  <i>She takes Mark's hand.</i></p>	<p><b>Julia:</b> What's wrong?  <b>Mark:</b> There's something... behind the clouds... A snake.  <b>Julia:</b> What kind of snake? A bad one or a good one?  <i>Mark is focused on his vision. He slowly calms down.</i>  <b>Mark:</b> The snake is scared of me... I have to let him go.  <i>Mark opens his eyes and grabs his sister's hand.</i></p>

**Dialogue #3**

Later in the game, Mark’s power is giving him strong and violent visions that he cannot even describe. To go through an abandoned hospital, Julia has to leave her brother behind. When she comes back, the boy is in a state of shock.

<p><b>Julia:</b> Mark? Wake up! What’s wrong with you? What happened?  <b>Mark:</b> ... They are crying...  <i>Mark seems far away and his throat is doing a weird buzzing noise.</i></p>	
TOUGHNESS CHOICE	CONFIDENCE CHOICE
<p><b>Julia:</b> Oh God... What are you talking about?  <b>Mark:</b> The skeletons.  <i>Julia takes Mark’s hand and pulls him towards her.</i>  <b>Julia:</b> They are dead. All of them. No one is talking, Mark. Let’s go now.  <i>She pulls Mark one more time. This time, the boy follows, albeit reluctantly.</i></p>	<p><b>Julia:</b> Who is crying?  <b>Mark:</b> Can you hear them? Can you hear the skeletons?  <i>Julia takes a step back and listen for a second.</i>  <b>Julia:</b> What are they saying, Mark?  <b>Mark:</b> I don’t understand... What does ‘volumus mori’ means, Julia?  <b>Julia:</b> I don’t know...  <i>She takes Mark’s hand and they leave the catacombs in silence.</i></p>

## Narrative Design + Scriptwriting: “A Short Investigation”

This piece comes from a test at Pretty Simple for their game “Criminal Case” on Facebook.

Games have usually limited space for text and that makes us, writers, be really concerned about size. To be efficient is more important than to be stylish. Especially when your lines must be read, must be short, and must be meaningful.

For “Criminal Case,” I had to write a full investigation with one challenge: **no more than 500 words for dialogues**. Here’s the script. **It’s voluntarily straight-forward and simple** as the game is only available in English but in the whole world.

### Pitch

David Lexington and his wife come back from an evening outside and they discover the body of the babysitter they hired, Jane Barry (22), in a spare room.”

### Script

#### 1. CHIEF’S OFFICE”

CHIEF”

Officer! I know your shift is over  
but I need my top detective on this  
case.”

OFFICER”

T ... thanks.”

CHIEF”

A babysitter was found dead twenty  
minutes ago. Stop blushing and go!”

OFFICER”

Yes, sir!”

#### 2. LEXINGTON’S HOUSE—SPARE ROOM”

A small room with toys. The body of Jane Barry is lying on the  
bed.”

The window is broken.”

CORONER”

David and Emily Lexington came back  
at 11:45 p.m. with their car. He

found the body and called the police."

OFFICER"

It looks like a burglary that went sour..."

CORONER"

I'll wait for you at the coroner's office with the body. And coffee."

You find a PHONE on the floor."

### **3. CORONER'S OFFICE"**

CORONER"

\*Yawn\* The poor girl was killed with 12 knife blows... No trace of fighting."

OFFICER"

She knew her killer?"

CORONER"

It seems. By the size of the blows, I would say that the killer is right-handed and likely below 6'."

OFFICER"

Great job!"

### **4. HACKER'S OFFICE"**

The phone's analysis shows that the victim's boyfriend sent her messages."

OFFICER"

His last text message says: "take me back OR ill kill U". Let's talk with this guy."

### **5. INTERROGATION ROOM"**

Martin is a tall and sporty guy, clearly angry."

MARTIN EISNER"

What the hell, man! What's wrong with y'all?"

OFFICER"

You'd better shut up, Martin. Your girlfriend was killed and you left her nasty messages."

MARTIN EISNER"

Jane is... Jane... Hey! Wait a minute! I simply wanted to talk to her!"

OFFICER"

Stay in town for a while, OK?"

Martin leaves."

OFFICER"

I need to know if he was there last night..."

## **6. LEXINGTON'S HOUSE-BACKYARD"**

A clean backyard with a nice pool. There is some broken glass under the spare room window."

OFFICER"

Someone tried to cover the murder as a robbery. I need more evidence..."

You find a BOOT PRINT in the mud."

This boot has a name tag on the sole: Martin Eisner."

## **7. INTERROGATION ROOM"**

OFFICER"

I could arrest right now! We found your name on the crime scene..."

MARTIN EISNER"

You have to believe me, I couldn't hurt Jane! I loved her!"

OFFICER"

And that's why you couldn't stand being dumped?"

MARTIN EISNER"

I just wanted to talk to her... A taxi stopped by, so I left. I swear!"

OFFICER"

I hope you're not lying again... We need to find this taxi."

## **8. HACKER'S ROOM"**

HACKER"

Good news Officer! I used a special algorithm I wrote..."

OFFICER"

Can you get to the point?"

HACKER"

Yes, sorry. We found the taxi. The driver remembers her as she was his last client."

OFFICER"

"Her"?"

HACKER"

Emily Lexington. She came back around 11 p.m."

OFFICER"

Great, we have a new suspect now."

## **9. INTERROGATION ROOM"**

Emily Lexington is a short and classy woman."

EMILY LEXINGTON"

My kids are under a lot of stress right now..."

OFFICER"

We have a witness stating that you came back earlier. Why did you lie?"

EMILY LEXINGTON"



I ... had a migraine. I took a cab,  
kissed my kids good night, and went  
straight to bed..."

OFFICER"  
What's that on your hand?"

EMILY LEXINGTON"  
I... I cut myself when I was  
gardening the other day."

OFFICER"  
You can go now."

#### **10. LEXINGTON'S HOUSE-BACKYARD''**

Under a pile of leaves and dirt, you find a KNIFE. It's the  
murder weapon."

Its analysis shows that the killer is smaller than 5'5"."

#### **11. CHIEF'S OFFICE''**

CHIEF"  
I must say I'm impressed by your  
results..."

OFFICER"  
Thanks, chief! But I still need a  
last piece of conclusive evidence."

CHIEF"  
What are you waiting for! Have you  
thoroughly checked the crime scene?"

OFFICER"  
Right away!"

#### **12. LEXINGTON'S HOUSE-SPARE ROOM''**

This time you take a closer look at the puzzle on the floor. When  
you complete it, you discover that the bloodstains are in fact a  
message that the victim wrote with her finger."

The letter "E" is clearly visible."

With all the evidence, you are convinced that Emily Lexington is the killer."

### **13. INTERROGATION ROOM"**

OFFICER"

The evidence is clear. You killed Jane."

EMILY LEXINGTON"

What? Are you joking with me, officer?"

OFFICER"

Come on Miss Lexington, you knew about your husband's affair and you couldn't stand it!"

EMILY LEXINGTON"

No, I ... the children... I did it for the children..."

### **14. CHIEF'S OFFICE"**

CHIEF"

Amazing job, Officer!"

**OFFICER"**

If I may, I really want to rest before my next shift. Goodbye!"

**CHIEF"**

Wait! Officer! We received a phone call. You need to leave at once!"

**OFFICER"**

Well... I am going to need coffee.

End of story.

## **Case Details**

Suspects:

- ★ Martin Eisner
  - The victim's boyfriend, sent a violent text message the night the victim died.
- ★ Emily Lexington

- The victim's employer, came earlier than she said.

Killer's profile:

- ★ Right-handed,
- ★ Letter "E" in their name,
- ★ Height between 5'5" and 6'.