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Project 1: Twine Adaptation – Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge

Brief: An interactive adaptation of Ambrose Bierce's An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge, written from the perspective of a Confederate soldier during the American Civil War. Serving as a critique of the Confederate ideology, the story delves deep into the conscience of a dying man in his final journey. Sample prose and game interaction are as follows:

The creek runs clear, yet touched by the atrocities of war.

You cup your hands and let the water wash over your palms. The stream is now marred by your blood.

[[Look at your reflection.]] → Staring back at you are sunken eyes. In the light they reflect blue – dark, oceanic.

[[What do they remind you of?]] → The navy-clad soldiers. You cannot escape them.

Your skin is pallid; white, like your fellow comrades. They're dead now. Today's battlefield has left no survivors.

[[Aside from you.]] → Seven days of fighting have led to today, to the corpses on Malvern Hill. You are all that remains of your Confederate troop.

[[You must get back to your family.]] → Your wife and boy await you. Their faces swirl in your mind, their lips move unintelligibly. You cannot make out what they're saying, but you know they're calling out to you.

[[Their faces swirl in your mind.]] → In your head, you see your wife in a mourning dress of white. Your boy dons grey, a musket draped over his shoulder. It's the length of his entire body; he wishes to look just like his father.

[[Go to them.]]

The game is playable at the following link: https://cioutar.itch.io/an-occurrence-at-owl-creek-bridge. Sample images are as follows:

You pick yourself off of the ground. Spots of blood fall to the floor; they're trickling from your ear.

You take a moment to gather yourself. Before you, is an idyllic picture of the Virginia woodlands: pine trees sway in the wind, a creek runs with fresh water. The sun shines, melting away the horrors of what you've just participated in.

This is the place you call home. This is the place your wife and child call home. You must get to them.

Where do you go?

To the creek.

Deeper into the forest.

The creek runs clear, yet touched by the atrocities of war.

You cup your hands and let the water wash over your palms. The stream is now marred by your blood.

A cardinal sits perched atop a tree branch, a strike of red amidst the foliage. Though it appears to be chirping, you cannot hear it.

It stares at you. Like a fleeting recourse, it flutters its wings. Innocence takes flight.

You take a second to think about your comrades, the lives lost in battle. All of them, dead.

Aside from you.

The adaptation follows a generally linear structure, with two deviating paths towards the game's end. The choices that the player makes are largely tied to environmental decisions (creek versus forest, low-ground versus high-ground, etc.), though the futile nature of the story means that it ends in the Confederate soldier's death no matter what choices are made along the way. The inclusion of text effects, gradient backgrounds, and click-to-reveal wording help to home in on the sense of guilt weighing on the soldier's conscience; small decisions can be made to indicate a sense of conviction or remorse over his actions and participation in the war.

Project 2: Unity Demo – What Comes Before

Brief: What Comes Before is an atmospheric, narrative-driven experience revolving around a deceased protagonist looking into a painful memory from his past life, wherein he must learn to accept the events of what has occurred; this specific writing sample showcases the final moments of the game's demo. As the protagonist, the player has the option of 'accepting' or 'rejecting' his brother's wishes to be euthanised after falling ill. In a 'bullet-hell' style display, blockers impede the player's progress to accept, while the option to reject results in dialogue from a mysterious guide figure who oversees the player's journey. Please note, the demo's mechanics & gameplay arrangement were concepted by the game designers on my team, while I worked on writing to complement their vision. Illustrative images to follow.

1-A

Reject dialogue

- Guide: Though memory may be a fickle thing, the past is immalleable.

1-B

Reject dialogue

- Guide: No matter how much you fight it, you cannot lie to yourself.

2-A

Blocker dialogue

- Fear: In your head you see your brother: motionless, breathless. In an empty room, you still hear him gasp for air.

- Confusion: The memories blur together; the days felt like minutes. His condition was deteriorating, but maybe you didn't see that. Maybe you chose not to.

- Anger: You remember yelling. At the doctors, at him. At yourself. It didn't change much.

Reject dialogue

- Guide: Time cannot be altered.

2-B

Blocker dialogue

- Fear: You recall the world feeling so dark, so cold. It scared you how lonely you felt.

- Confusion: You didn't understand why the doctors couldn't *help*.

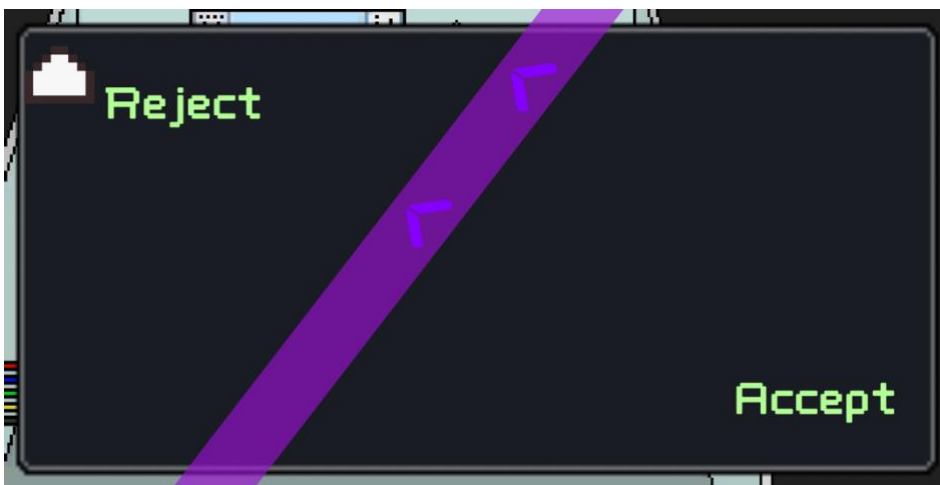- Anger: You were mad at the world. If there was a higher power, you thought, surely it was an unmerciful one.

Reject dialogue

- Guide: The truth stares you dead in the face. And yet still, you refuse to look.

The demo is playable at the following link: https://miles-logan.itch.io/what-comes-before.

Blockers circle the player icon, seeking to impede their decision.


A wave pulse sends the player icon veering towards his desire to reject his brother's wishes.

A basketball-styled game space reminds the player of his brother's dream vocation cut short, while blockers move up and down, impeding their shot into the baskets. Placements for 'accept' and 'reject' prompts switch if the player lingers too long, indicated by how many times the icon bounces against the bottom of the screen (gravity is used to pull the icon down, compared to the dribbling of a basketball.)
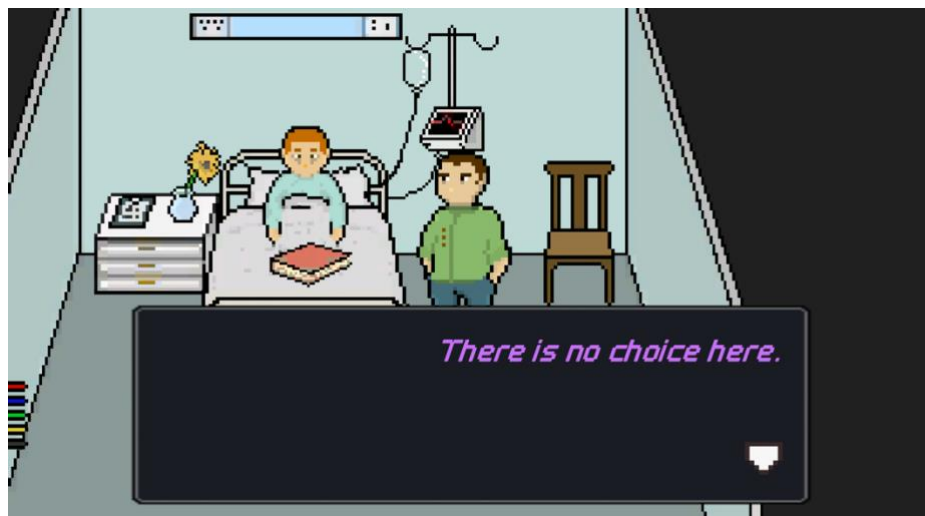
The guide relays to the player that no matter what they do in this moment, the choice was already made long ago.
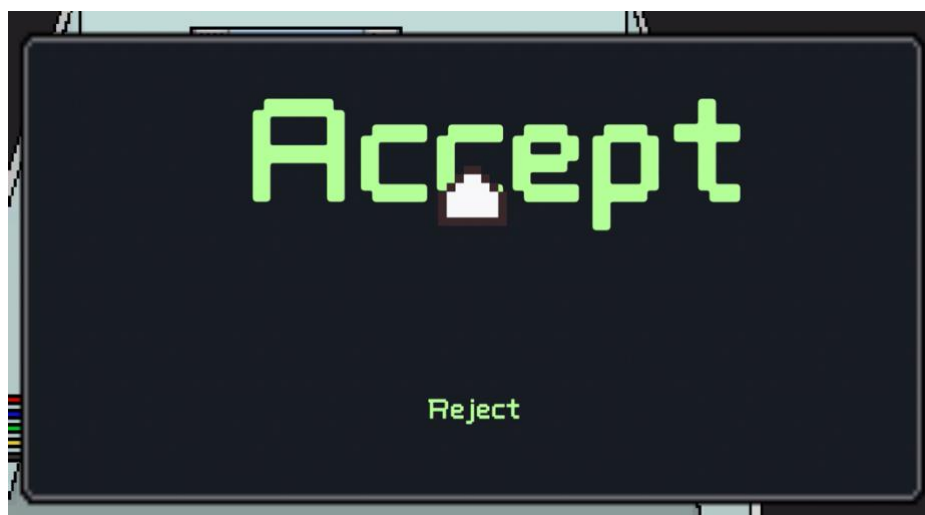
As the reject prompt becomes smaller, the player has no other option but to accept.

Project 3: Character Bio – Isla Roche

Brief: A character profile written for a fictional AAA action-adventure game set amidst the spy genre. Inspired by the likes of James Bond and John Wick, this bio seeks to give introductory context to a capable yet reclusive informant, acting as one of the game's primary protagonists.

Isla Roche

Inspiration: Ana de Armas as Agent Paloma, *No Time to Die*

Name: Isla Roche

Born: 21 April, 1990

Occupation: Informant for the French government

Employer: DGSE (Directorate-General for External Security) working alongside the efforts of MI6 (U.K.) and CNI (Spain)

Backstory

An informant deep under cover, posing as a Hungarian affluent in an operation to uncover the truth behind a string of terrorist activities in Western Europe.

Born and raised in Marseille, Isla led a quiet life with her mother throughout schooling. A stout gymnast and avid academic, her strength and perceptive skills made her a fine candidate for France's external intelligence agency.

Following her mother's death, she became more withdrawn in nature, devoting herself entirely to her work with little ties to others.

Appearance

Facial Features:

Tight cheekbones accentuated by a square face. Thin grey liner elongates the shape of her green eyes, coupled with a slight bit of rouge pulled toward her temples. Maroon lipstick casts a dark shadow against her fair skin, while the prominent indentation of her laugh lines suggests a bout of over-smiling: the faux courtesy of an agent.

Stature:

Slender frame. Her elevated shoulders and straight posture create the illusion of a taller height. She carries herself with outward confidence, though her tight movements connote a sense of heightened caution, even while unprovoked.

Dialogue Sample

"Who are you? What do you know?"

Isla questions. Her voice is direct, unwavering.

The man gives a chuckle.

"A dangerous woman when I see one."

Characteristics

Isla hides her nervous disposition through a sense of aloofness. Her worldview as a 33-year-old is limited compared to others; though she concerns herself only with her work, her mind often drifts in introspection over how different things might be had she chosen another path.

A swift and skilled fighter, Isla balances strength with flexibility. She moves quickly and methodically, favouring her left side to strike.

A square-handled purse hides an ulterior use; the metal can be disengaged with just the right amount of pressure, acting as a hidden blade that Isla uses to incapacitate her enemies.

Gameplay Introduction

Isla is first encountered by Ewan (the player), a sardonic and entirely-too-old-for-the-field MI6 agent, in the empty barroom of a Budapestian mansion. Here, she's snuck away from the Gala being held downstairs to decompress and plan her next course of action.

Ewan seeks to tell her that she's been compromised, but his witty remarks and nonchalant demeanor aren't as convincing as they should be.

An inciting cutscene between Ewan and Isla ensues as she becomes dubious of his intentions and allyship. This results in a mixed third-person action sequence with QTE elements where the player must survive Isla's barrage of attacks while convincing her that they are on her side. The sequence takes inspiration from the Nadine Ross Boss Fight of Uncharted 4.

Significance in Combat

Isla proves a formidable ally once recruited, taking a slot as a core team member alongside Ewan Sayce of MI6 and Lucas Vara, a member of Spain's Centro Nacional de Inteligencia, as the three agents ally to defend their respective countries.

She assumes the role of the group's close-range attacker, utilizing fast movements and her unassuming Stiletto blade, a thin, sharp dagger capable of being easily concealed.

Project 4: Weapon Description – NieR: Automata

Brief: An exercise in emulation, inspired by the weapon stories of NieR: Automata. Written to demonstrate the progressive description of a weapon's origin that gradually unfurls through the upgrading of its level.

The Axe of Etar: Lv. 4

An axe beholden to the wrath of nature, its blade ensnared by razor sharp vines.

> In the middle of a clearing, two trees stood side by side. As the sole survivors of a rotted forest, their branches grazed each other in affection. Despite the desolation surrounding them, their roots embraced beneath the ground, breathing life into each other for centuries.

> Together, they survived the ravages of war, the passing of time. They held strong even in the harshest of Winters and the fiercest of Summers. And in the Springtime when they bloomed, they were a true sight to behold; pink petals danced along their branches, spiraling like a song into the wind.

> The two were the image of beauty. That is, until one day, a curious man came by to test the mettle of his fine axe. Setting his sights on one of the trees, he aimed his golden weapon and swung, chopping its trunk in two. Satisfied at the blade's might, the man fled in high spirits, while the tree's partner stood in agony at the death of its beloved. Overcome with grief, it wept so hard that its own branches turned sallow. Its pink petals fell to the ground, never to bloom again.

> The man awoke the next day to see that his weapon had changed, its blade caressed by barbed vines, so sharp that the slightest touch could tear skin from bone. The axe had transformed, imbued with the vengeance of nature so that one day its victims might feel the same sorrow of a tree chopped in two.

Project 5: Ren'Py Visual Novel – Cryptid Companions

Brief: A Ren'Py visual novel created over the course of five weeks and 80+ pages of script. Cryptid Companions follows a broke cryptozoologist and their ghostly guide Lynn as they travel the world in search of new creatures to document, finding that the misconceived rumours surrounding their natures aren't all they crack up to be. Serving as a critique of the 'dating simulator,' this game utilizes choice dialogue to emphasize consent; should a player make too many questionable comments or actions, their time with a cryptid can be cut short, leaving conversations unfulfilled.

The game is playable at the following link: https://mattpiedragames.itch.io/cryptid-companions. Sample images are as follows:

The Dullahan, Ireland's headless horseman, is a far cry from what Riley expected. While his edgy personality is indicative of a life spent in turmoil, the rumours surrounding his bloodlust aren't quite as substantiated. Riley can listen to Han's tragic backstory, intercut with some moments of comedy.

Dialogue choices that seek to demean the Dullahan's approach to life might not go over so well, while listening to and sympathizing with his struggles could imbue this cryptid with a newfound hope in humanity. Three strikes and the route will end prematurely, so players should be wise in their dialogue decisions.

Riley's empathy towards the Dullahan has the power to restore his faith in the goodness of people and of himself, resulting in his green flame being replaced with a head once more.

Reflections from Riley, demonstrated through the game's polaroid epilogues, show a playful side to the cryptid and his appreciation for being seen rather than feared.

Project 6: Kingdom of Sarai – Script Writing Excerpt

Brief: An excerpt from a work in-progress manuscript, demonstrating experience in the standard film/TV scriptwriting format. Narratively, this serves as a linear cutscene for an imagined AA action RPG, set amidst a tale of environmental destruction and injustice. As the Kingdom of Sarai seeks to turn its surrounding lands to stone, a team of dissidents, helmed by a young woman with the power to harness nature, work to fight back against its corruption.

                                              FADE IN:

EXT. VILLAGE OF STONE - DAY

CLOSE UP on a statue of a mother, her stone eyes shrouded in
fear. At her side, a figure of a young girl grips onto her cold
hand.

PAN OUT to an overhead shot of a small village, devoid of life.
The land and its people are grey and motionless, a contrast to
the lush green forest that falls just outside its borders. The
RUSTLING of wind can be heard, but the village remains defiant
in stillness.

                                              CUT TO:

Four characters clad in colour emerge from the forest into the
grey ruins. AVA leads in front of the other three.

AVA, 23, gentle and naive, slows her pace. Her eyes dart around
as she attempts to process her surroundings. A sorrowed look
forms on her face as she lingers on the sight of the mother and
child, frozen in stone. She stops, frozen as well.

                    AVA
          ...I don't understand.

She turns to the three behind her. One of them, LUCIEN, 25, a
logical yet empathetic man, swats at a tree branch as he steps
onto the stone land, his boots THUDDING against the ground.

                    LUCIEN
          It never gets easier to see.

Lucien turns to the other two at his side. He is at a loss for what else to say. CILLIAN, an empathetic man in his mid-forties, speaks sternly.

                    CILLIAN
          We shouldn't have brought her here.

PARI, a steadfast woman in her early-fifties, counters.

                    PARI
          How else would she have believed us?

Cillian gives a look: he knows she's right. Still, it's too much. He turns his gaze to the ground, doing his best to avert his eyes from the horrors before them.

                    CILLIAN
          Come on, Ava. We can go around.

As quickly as they've entered, Cillian beckons Ava back towards the forest borders. But Ava remains still, transfixed on her surroundings. Lucien walks up, lingering at her side. He speaks to her gently.

                    LUCIEN
          There's no need for us to go through.
          It's a bit more of a walk, but we can skirt
          around the borders-- stay in the forest.

He trails off, staring at her face. Ava's focus remains elsewhere.

                    AVA
          How... how could this happen?

She speaks aloud, a question she knows will be left unanswered. Dazed, she begins to walk further into the village.

                    LUCIEN
          Ava, wait!

Lucien turns back to Pari and Cillian. He gives them a worried look. Pari puts a hand on Cillian's shoulder.

                    PARI
          Let's go.

                                                       CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE BROOK - DAY

A streak of orange light hits Ava's face as dawn sets in. She
crouches over what used to be a small, secluded brook, tracing
her finger along the indents of its stone currents. A grey tree
hangs over her, its branches sallow, lifeless.

Behind her, Lucien approaches.

                    AVA
          Even the water?

He crouches alongside her.

                    LUCIEN
          Afraid so.

A beat.

                    AVA
          How could they do this? These lands-- these people-- what
          purpose does this serve?

Ava's voice begins to rise.

                    AVA
          How could I have lived there all my life? Under someone who
          was doing *this*?

Lucien shakes his head, his eyebrows furrowed.

                    LUCIEN
          You didn't know, Ava. It's not your fault.

She bites back, angry at what she's seeing-- angry at herself.

                    AVA
          I could have questioned what they told us. I could have been
          more curious--

                    LUCIEN
          It wouldn't have been that easy.

Ava sighs, exasperated. Her voice numbs.

              AVA
How many people in Sarai do you think know about this? Even
in the outskirts--
How many people did I see smiling every day, knowing this
was happening?

              LUCIEN
You can't think like that.
...I don't think most of them knew-- know.

Ava turns to look at his face. She believes him.

              AVA
They told us that the outside was dangerous.
That's why we couldn't leave the borders-- why no one
wanted to.
That's why the kingdom was isolated, to keep us protected.

But it wasn't you all waging war with us, was it?
It was us waging war against you.

Lucien takes in the words, grimacing at how blunt it's been put,
trying to find a silver lining.

              LUCIEN
So, you were taught that anyone outside Sarai was a threat
to your existence-- and still, you took a chance by leaving?

              AVA
I didn't have a choice.

              LUCIEN
We always have a choice.

Lucien stands. He extends his hand out towards Ava. She takes it
as she too, rises.

The quiet moment is interrupted by Pari and Cillian, who
approach quickly from behind.

              CILLIAN
Heads up. We've got company.

The four crouch behind the cover of a grey tree trunk. Lucien
peers out to see:

CUT TO:

STONE SOLDIERS. Five of them, walking in formation. They swing their arms and legs as if they were robots moving in grand, sweeping gestures. From their armour down to their body, they are made entirely of stone.

Oddly enough, they retain a sense of humanity: each carries their own distinct facial features, however emotionless and unmoving they may be.

A small patch of grass seems to billow from the ground, a spark of colour amidst the grey. One soldier leaves the formation and bends down towards it. His figure covers our view until he stands and returns in place. We see the green has vanished, the grass unmoving.

BACK TO:

Cillian and Pari give each other a nod. Lucien turns towards the group.

          LUCIEN
    Stay low and follow me.

FADE OUT.