

# **Animated Narratives wk8**

## **Character development - The victim of human trafficking**

The concept of this project are focusing on the experience of spotting the victim of human trafficking and taking action to help the her. I developed the background story of Alphie based on the survivors stories from my researches on the issue.

### **Alphie background story**

Alphie is an alpaca. She is adopted by the wealthy Bates family when she was young. However, the Bates never treat her as a member of the family. Alphie had to start doing chores around the house like Cinderella, the Bate's version, at a very young age.

Even though the Bates practically living a good life, the living condition for Alphie is relatively poor. Her personal space is a small storage room, where can only fit in a single sleeping bag. Alphie has to roll up the sleeping bag every morning just to make space for herself. It is impossible to fit any furniture in it. There is only a few mounted shelf boards on the wall for her to put away her cloths. Due to the space, Alphie doesn't have much stuff aside from backpack for school and a few cloths she's been wearing for a while.

Alphie doesn't have much permission to leave the house aside from going to school. She is asked to return home right after school. The Bates give her spare living essentials sometimes but far less from enough. When Alphie needs to go shopping, she either has to wait for the opportunity where the family offers to let her tags along or she asks someone to get the stuff for her. A lot of time the Bates just go out themselves and lock her up in the house. However Alphie has her own way to sneak out sometimes.

Alphie actually gets paid for her work around the house, just above the minimum wages. The Bates claim that is more like allowance for Alphine and every teenager should work for their allowance. Even so, Alphie has been constantly threatened to be thrown back on the street when the Bates are not satisfied with her work. Especially after Alphie found her biological mother and had to start supporting her financially two years ago. Alphie thought she had no other choice for making more money but to ask the Bates for help. Instead of giving her a raise, Ms. Bates introduced Alphie to her brother, Mario, for a weekend job. With the "hook and honey" strategy. Alphie soon got trapped in the sex trafficking business under Mario's control.

Alphie is now a high schooler and goes to the same school with Alex (protagonist). Due to her personal traits and life experience, she has grown passive and does not think about how to get out of the pit she is deeply sucked in. She is not active on reaching out to people. All these facts make her even less visible in school.

Unfortunately, towards the end of the plot, Alphie finds out she got pregnant from the job. It becomes the last straw that crush her... or not.

It is up to Alex to make an effort through the interaction with Alphie to earn her trust, to build a strong friendship bound and to find a way to save her from the tragic secrets.

### **Implant the objectives within the narrative**

Visual novel gives the player freedom to choose. While the player experiences the story with his choices, most part of that experience is established on building relationships with the characters in a liner way. This character development examines how to implant the choices within a liner narrative and also present the result narrative in a consistent way.

Most games none the less got some basic reward-punish system. The “rewards” serve as the motivation for the player to dig deeper (going down the rabbit hole). Sometimes the entertainment of the gameplay is even just trying to discover how the reward-punish system works. An interactive game is a good medium for this project because it can utilize the reward-punish system to engage the player with the narrative more, compared to animation, where the audience looking at the story from a third person angle.

Due to the game genre, visual novel with simulation and mystery elements, the most common rewards are successfully make the bounds with the characters(unlocking plots) and solving the case (saving the target). For this project, the general objective is for the player successfully bounding with the victim.

There are different stages for this process. I create a list of milestones for the linear relationship narrative.

### Milestones

1. Getting acquainted
2. Finding out Alphie’s work situation
3. Finding out Alphie was adopted
4. Going to a party together (partner in crime)
5. Finding out Alphie’s terrible living condition
6. Alphie reveals the truth about her work

There are different levels of plots, general, friendly, and bestie level. The general ones happens no matter what; on this list, 1 and 4 are the general ones. However the interactions within 1. and 4. and as well as the others in between all impact the relationship stats. The player has to earn enough relationship stats through interaction with Alphie to unlock the friendly and bestie plots. The stats determine if the player gets to unlock the plots in between. Once the player earns enough stats (stronger bond with Alphie), then more facts of Alphie revealed.

The list helps to map out the essential moments (locked plots) needed to occur. It also helps for clearly planning out what information to be conveyed at each stages for the player, I created a list of the milestones.

This type of structures can be found in many scarped relationship narratives. A good example would be the relationships between Nathan Drake and his companion characters through out the Uncharted series (2007 - 2017). Even though the relationships are not part of the main focus of this 3D action game series, the player experience the relationships growing in a consistent way. The characters are well built through the scripted conversations and linear cinematic cutscenes, which are usually share moments between characters.

After research on the character relationships in animation works and other visual novels, I kept modifying the milestone list. In order to make the project to fit in the time constraints, I would like to work out a layout with a balance point, where the player build the relationship with the character with both interact-able and non-interact-able narrative tools. I am planning to utilize the cutscenes as plot unlocking rewards (make them as collectables). The cutscenes serves as the rewards as well as linear narratives showing key moments that define the characters and the linear progression of the relationships. The rest of the relationship building is set to be exercised through dialogs and interactions.