Parasocial Relationship in Games

I want to write about the concept of Parasocial Relationships in games and how that impacts certain games where relationships are a part of the gameplay. I want to explore the term Parasocial Relationships and find out what Parasocial Relationship means, more specifically what it means in video games, and how it contributes towards the players' immersion with the game and how it impacts the players' experience in a playthrough.

Questions ideas (possible questions I want answered in my term paper):
- What is a Parasocial Relationship and what does it mean in video games?
- How does Parasocial Relationship impact the player's experiences?
- Can you form a Parasocial Relationship with any character in a game?
    - Does character affect Parasocial Relationships?
- Which game(s) show good examples of Parasocial Relationships?

Annotation 1:

Kauppinen, Noora (2023): *"It was somewhat like a mental breakdown." — Navigating Cognitive Dissonance in Life is Strange: The Influence of Parasocial Relationships and Immersion on Players' Perceptions Thesis*, 70 pages - [Link]

- The author explores the impact of parasocial relationships and the immersion when it comes to cognitive dissonance with the experience of playing Life is Strange - more specifically they look into the moral choices of the game and how that creates cognitive dissonance with the player. I can use this as a basis for how moral choices can affect immersion and ultimately affect the relationship between Parasocial Relationship and cognitive dissonance for the player. Depending on the game where choices impact the game we can analyse the choice and figure out if that conflicts with immersion or enhances it.

Annotation 2:

Calleja, Gordon (2011): *"In-Game",* Chapter 3, 19 pages - [Link]

- This book, more specifically Chapter 3, from Calleja gives a good insight on how we should view player involvement when it comes to games. This source can give a good foundation to how Parasocial Relationships between character and player impacts overall experience. It also serves as a way to analyse the game and the player involvement in that game, which as a result we can dig deeper into how Parasocial relationships are created between character and player.

Annotation 3:

Abbott, H. (2002): *"The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative"*, Chapter 10, 15 pages - [Link](#)

- In this chapter of *Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* Abbott writes about character and the different types of character. They come with different ways a character presents and what it means for the narrative. As a result, I can research and figure out what characters are often most prone to having a Parasocial Relationship with the player.

Annotation 4:

Elvery, Gabriel (2022): *"Undertale's Loveable Monsters: Investigating Parasocial Relationships with Non-Player Characters"*, 20~ pages - [Link](#)

- The author showcases their knowledge of the definition of parasocial phenomena and uses the term parasocial interaction and parasocial relationships. Elvery uses these terms to analyse the game Undertale and how there exists Parasocial Relationship between the player and Non-Player Characters (NPC). With this as foundation I can create my own understanding and analyse games such as Persona 5 Royal and how that game creates parasocial phenomena and how that impacts the game and player experience.

Annotation 5:

Joon Soo Lim, Min-Ji Choe, Jun Zhang, Ghee-Young Noh (2020): *"The role of wishful identification, emotional engagement, and parasocial relationships in repeated viewing of live-streaming games: A social cognitive theory perspective"*, 8 pages - [Link](#)

- This source contains multiple authors. They write about Parasocial Relationships outside of video games, more specifically they write about live streamers and how viewers may create a Parasocial Relationship between themselves and the streamer. This source can serve the purpose of defining what Parasocial Relationships are and then narrow down on what it is in video games with Annotation 4.

Annotation 6:

Ivančić, Martin (2023): *"A Multimodal Analysis of Immersion in Persona 5 Royal",* 28 pages - Link

- This is a Master Thesis about immersion for Persona 5 Royal. Ivančić writes about different elements of the game such as narrative, language, characters, intertextuality and visual design. With his research of the game I can view it from an analytical point of view, whereas if I were to play through the game it would take 150+ hours in order to finish the game and find points to point out. This can also serve as a perspective of how I experienced the game and how the thesis points out certain aspects of the game. Ultimately it will tie in with Parasocial Relationships and how that also impacts the game's immersion and how the player experiences the game.

Annotation 7:

Tomlinson, Christine (2021): *"Priority pixels: the social and cultural implications of romance in video games"*, 13 pages - Link

- The author writes about romance in games and how that creates a deeper immersion for the player as they invest themselves more emotionally and makes the narrative feel more realistic (enhancing immersion). I can tie the topic of romance in games with Parasocial Relationships since more often than not they go hand-in-hand and how romantic relationships between player and NPCs enhance the narrative and immersion.