

HOMAGE TO THE DUNGEON:
AN ATTEMPTED HOMAGE TO GEORGE ORWELL'S *HOMAGE TO CATALONIA* AND
THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR, USING TWINE INTERACTIVE MEDIA

BY

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Abstract: Homage to the Dungeon is an attempted syncretism of my experiences at New College of Florida-of historical reading and research, of learning syntax and formatting, of discussion and discourse, within the format of the Digital Humanities, along with my general experiences that have touched me as a person-learning of the Spanish Civil War, a desire to create art and a story, alongside my general hobbies. In this twine based choose-your-own-adventure style experience, I attempt to provide an allegorical retelling of the May Days Events, from an excerpt of George Orwell's Homage to Catalonia, similar to Orwell's own allegorical telling of the Russian Revolution and the rise of Stalin in Animal Farm. I would like to bring both the Spanish Civil War and Orwell's experience in it to the attention of more people-to push for discussion and discourse upon the subject, which would be appropriate as we gradually approach the centennial since Orwell went to Spain.

You can access the file at:

https://lordplasmaiii.github.io/Capstone_Homage_To_Homage_To_Catalonia/Homage_to_the_Dungeon_Dra.html

Introduction

The Clash's Spanish Bombs is what introduced me to the Spanish Civil War-a topic I hadn't encountered naturally through the public K-12 school system.

I found myself drawn to the period, which I feel, despite what some people may think from a surface level glance, should not be looked at as a demonstration of the subsequent Second World War, but a wholly unique situation within Europe; while the war between fascism and the alliances of existing democracy, anarchism, and communism certainly matches the later conflicts of the 20th century, it would be impossible to try and find a similar match to the actual context and experiences influencing the conflict in Spain upon a much more personal level, as on the ground in Spain was a slew of wholly unique factors and sentiments not to be found anywhere else in-be it in Europe, Asia, Africa, or the Americas.

I intended to create a digital text-based, choose-your-own-adventure style experience, using George Orwell's autobiographical *Homage to Catalonia* as the baseline for the story; However, instead of a direct retelling, I attempted to paint it in a more allegorical style, similar to Orwell's own *Animal Farm* for the Russian Revolution and rise of Stalinism. Due to time constraints, this is primarily based on the excerpt about the May Days.

This is primarily divided into three sections, the first dealing with the historical context of May Days events-the validity of the claims leveled at the POUM, via an explanation and discussion of Trotsky's views on the POUM and the war, and Orwell's thoughts; the

second segment is the script, while the third talks about twine, the game, and my future work.

A Brief Discussion of the Various Factions with the Spanish Civil War

George Orwell would describe the myriad of political parties and organizations that he would encounter on the ground in Republican Spain as an alphabet soup, from the POUM, to the CNT-FAI, and many others. While he may not have been aware of the particular differences that these would entail, these would have great impact upon the lives of the people within them throughout the course of the war. While, on the other hand, the right wing rebellion more quickly coalesced under the rule of General Franco, in no small part due to the deaths of the other leaders early in the war, they still had separate and unique factions that are worth exploring.

General Breakdown of the Republicans

The Republican side can generally be described as a center-right to far-left coalition; consisting of more milquetoast-in-desire-for-change supporters of the Republican Government and arguably the status quo, to revolutionary groups who desired to continue the war after the defeat of Franco-seeing the war and Revolution as one and the same-although whether that revolution was primarily a social/class based one or one of cultural autonomy did differ among various

groups of those revolutionaries. The republic counted unions, communists, anarchists, liberals, workers, and peasants among their ranks (although some of these labels overlapped); Additionally, Basque, Catalan and Galician nationalists generally sided with the Republicans. While these regional nationalist groups may have been more conservative than the other republicans, and had desires ranging from higher levels of self-governance and autonomy to complete independence from the Republican Government, the rebel Nationalists sought to impose a monolithic Castilian culture and Castilian customs across the spanish portion of the peninsula-to suppress the diverse languages and cultures found within the Basque, Catalan, Galician regions of Spain, among others, in their desire to construct a solid national identity. There were the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo/Federación Anarquista Ibérica (or in English, National Confederation of Labor/Iberian Anarchist Federation), abbreviated as CNT/FAI-Anarcho-syndicalist trade unions, there were socialists like the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (English:Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) or PSOE; Communists like the Partido Comunista de Espana (English: Communist Party of Spain) or PCE; and Opposition Communists like Izquierda Comunista de España (English: Communist Left of Spain) or ICE-and later the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (in Catalan, Partit Obrer d'Unificació Marxista, in English, Party of Marxist Unification) or POUM; along a variety of more regional and youth divisions associated with each of these groups. They received international support from the USSR and Mexico, and a multitude of volunteer fighters

organized by the Comintern, under the banner of the International Brigades. This included many exiles from Germany and Italy (particularly communists and Jewish exiles, although they were hardly the only groups), who saw within Spain a chance to fight back against those same forces; “Spain is fighting for us,” read the headline of the German Social Democratic exile paper *Neuer Vorwärts* in September 1938—although as the war would go on, it went from a chance for hope to a tragic symbol of despair.

General Breakdown of the Nationalists

The Nationalists had quite a number of political opposites within their ranks as well, although they managed to avoid/delay more of the problematic infighting that occurred within the Republican side. Generally speaking, they can be considered as right wing to far right; and counted the rebel part of the army, the bourgeoisie, the landlords, and, generally, the upper classes, among their ranks; they had conservatives, monarchists and Carlists (monarchists who wanted a different line of the royal family to be on the throne), Falangists (the official Spanish Fascists), among others within their ranks. They also included devout Catholics and some supporters of the church; to counter the anti-clericalism they saw on display by various groups in the republic, they rallied around the idea of the rebellion as a crusade. They also received help from the Spanish Army of Africa (aka, recruits from the population of Spanish Morocco), Fascist Italy, and Nazi Germany, along with smaller support of various right wing countries and

volunteers. Hitler and Mussolini had a very vested interest in securing the victory of the Nationalists, and while they may have had some issues with Franco's pace of the war, they provided critical aid, and despite Mussolini contributing far more men and resources to Franco, it would be Hitler who received the most back-in terms of literal investments, as they pushed back for them harder than Italy did, and in terms of more modern military experience-it was in Spain that the tactic of Blitzkrieg was unfortunately developed-alongside more extensive usage of aerial bombardment, including against civilian populations, such as at the Bombing of Guernica.

A Discussion of Trotsky, the POUM, and Orwell

Despite George Orwell's relative fame in the US, thanks to his well known books, 1984, and Animal Farm, one might be surprised to learn about his political leanings, due to how they are taught and regularly brought up in the US. Many Americans would probably refuse to believe it if they were told that he was a socialist or informed about his service with the POUM in the Spanish Civil War-if they've even heard of the war. However, the Spanish Civil War was very critical to the development of his political beliefs that would serve as the basis of inspiration for the two previously mentioned novels. As such, one cannot truly understand his works without an understanding of his experience in the Spanish Civil War. I shall attempt to give context to his experiences, as illustrated in his account, *Homage to Catalonia*, and to place it within the larger context of the

Civil War as a whole. To that end, I shall discuss the foundation of the POUM, its relationship with Trotsky (and Trotsky's relation to Spain in general), and a variety of other matters that would directly influenced Orwell's experiences [particularly that of the May Days], as well as misconceptions I and others have had.

While Orwell's service with the POUM militia was a result of circumstantial happenstance, rather than an intentional choice due to shared political ideology, his experience was undeniably drastically altered as a result of the perception others had of the POUM from its ideological basis, and as such, I feel a discussion of Orwell without an analysis of Trotsky and the POUM would be overly shortsighted.

Brief summary of the May Days Events

The May Days, which happened from May 3rd through May 8th of 1937, wound up being very important internally, to the Republican coalition. Now, simply put, the Guardia Civil, or Civil Guard, came to seize the telephone exchange from the CNT-UGT in Barcelona, who had been operating it with official permission from the government; the anarchist workers then refused and fired shots. While the literal situation at the telephone exchange would be deescalated within the day, throughout the rest of the city, barricades would be drawn, and groups allied with the CNT-UGT or sympathetic to them, such as the POUM, would enter stand-offs and skirmishes with the Civil Guard and the Assault Guards throughout the city.

The situation would evaluate and spread to other cities in Catalonia, before the government would crush the workers. The events would serve to demonstrate numerous things; Particularly, there was no longer a sense of unity behind the actions of the Anarchists; the victory of communist influence and power within the Spanish Republicans (and thus the course of the quasi civil war within the Civil War was set).

Trotsky and Spain:Preface

This primarily describes Trotsky's opinions on and interpretations of the events in Spain-as such, there is bias in his criticisms that may not have been feasible given the constraints of other parties-for instance, under President Manuel Azaña, the republic does attempt to do some objects of Trotsky's criticisms-but Azaña was constrained by law, something Trotsky might've considered irrelevant or foolish, in the face of his desired revolution.

It should also be noted that the overall influence of Trotsky and the POUM upon the war wasn't exactly huge; When Trotsky refers to the 'end of any real political force to oppose the Rightwing Socialists and Stalinist Communists', it should be noted that this is from his personal POV, of the loss of a political force ostensibly in alignment with his own-however, the POUM was not exactly a large political force, particularly in comparison to the anarcho-syndicalist groups, such as the CNT.

I shall attempt to address this further in the Reflection section.

Trotsky and Spain:Pre-Germany

The start of the Spanish revolution began with the fall of the monarchy and the unofficial abdication of Alfonso the 13th. In [Marxist] theory, this should have resolved the tasks of the 'Bourgeois-democratic revolution'. However, Trotsky and others in Spain believed that the Spanish bourgeoisie did not have the strength nor the conviction to carry out the essential parts of this democratic revolution. According to Pierre Broue, Trotsky wrote, "The Spanish Republicans remain entirely on the basis of the present property relations. We can expect from them neither the expropriation of large landed property, nor the liquidation of the privileged position of the Catholic Church, nor the radical cleansing of the Augean stables of the civil and military bureaucracy."¹ Now, Trotsky had a theory called that of 'Permanent Revolution,' which should be noted, differed drastically from the usage of the term by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Trotsky's permanent revolution was an explanation of how societies that had not achieved the advanced stages of capitalism, critical to Marx's theory, could still achieve a socialist revolution. He argued that countries rather late to the capitalist bandwagon could simply not develop the levels of productivity needed to become and reach the stage of advanced capitalism, which was essential to developing an industrialized proletariat. Therefore, the proletariat must form an alliance with the peasantry, and take economic, social and political power via force. Alongside this idea, he opposed the 'socialism in one country principle', stating that

¹ (Broué, *Trotsky*, 1966)

socialism needed to be worldwide in order to combat the hegemony of the global capitalists.

Now Trotsky identified the problem in Spain in particular as pertaining to the revolutionary policies of the proletariat and their actual capacity to truly revolt against both the old regimes' and the bourgeoisies' oligarchies. Even as far back as 1931, Trotsky was analyzing the political situation in Spain, and would comment on the scale of the strike movement, as well as its spontaneous nature. He would categorize the period as a "period of the awakening of the masses of their mobilization of their entry into the struggle," and would note, "With the strikes, the class begins to consider itself as such."² Now, the idea he's describing, class consciousness, is not a revolutionary theory of his own, but a revolutionary point critical to Marxist thought. According to Marx, class consciousness is the awareness of one's holdings, their social class or economic rank in society, and the impact that the structure of their class and their class interest have upon them. This awareness is the basis for, or rather the key to sparking the revolution that Marx predicts. Now, Marx defines class in relation to the means of production, and on whether they own capital. Although non-Marxist social scientists have other ideas of class, according to Marxist thought, defining a person's social class can be the specific trigger to them becoming aware of it. How it applies to the Spanish strike is that by striking, the workers are demonstrating some awareness of their class interests, fighting for it, and

² (Trotsky, *The Revolution In Spain* 1931)

spreading that awareness to their fellow workers—even if they don't pick it up.

Now, Trotsky, in relation to the strike movement in Spain, was concerned about the spontaneous nature of the strike, which, while the source of its strength, could become the source of its weakness and defeat, as a labor movement without clear program, without leadership, abandons to its own fate and is doomed to be confronted with a perspective lacking hope. Following the PSOE or the Socialist Party, whom had collaborated with General Primo de Rivera and essentially were reduced to Republicans, Trotsky wrote, "If the social democratic party were to acquire a leading position over the proletariat during the revolution, it would be capable of only one thing: to spill the power conquered by the revolution into the sieve of the republican wing, out of which the power would then automatically pass to its present possessors. The great conception would result in an abortion."³ He viewed the Spanish Communist Party as being equally if not even more weak; Divided explicitly on the method of leadership that the Communist International (Stalinist organization) imposed, it consequently went through split after split, largely ruining its credibility within the eyes of the conscious workers who disliked it just as much for its bureaucratic methods of leadership, as well as its obedience towards Moscow and Stalin. In Trotsky's view, the real revolutionary cadres continued to be expelled or turned away, thus, leading the masses to turn their backs on the party.

³ (Trotsky, *The Revolution In Spain* 1931)

Trotsky thus argued that, in reality, the revolutionary vanguard, the most combative elements of the proletariat, were organized in the CNT. In regards to the CNT, Trotsky said, "selection has taken place over a number of years. To consolidate this organization and to transform it into a real mass organization is a duty for every advanced worker, and above all for the communists."⁴ While he predicted they would inevitably come into conflict with the conspiratory portion of the anarchists who controlled the FAI group, he warned that they should not be misled, for the mobilization of the proletariat on the democratic transition slogan could only be done with Soviets [or the juntas]. In essence, he believed the revolutionaries would have to fight a struggle upon two fronts inside of the labor movement; one front against the anti-Parliamentary baseness of the anarchists and the other front against the parliamentary baseness of the socialists. Trotsky, speaking of the anarchists, wrote that they "deny' politics at the very moment when it takes them by the throat, then they give way to the politics of the class enemy."⁵ Trotsky viewed the first task of these Spanish revolutionaries as winning the masses to organized, bold revolutionary politics; to keep them away from the influence of the socialist and anarchist leaders; to, in the form of the Juntas, establish the superior class organization; and to prepare the victorious insurrection and complete liquidation of the old state machine. Trotsky believed that the resolution of those tasks had three required conditions, "a party, and again a party, and again a party!" However, in

⁴ (Trotsky, *The Revolution In Spain* 1931)

⁵ (Trotsky, *The Revolution In Spain* 1931)

the Spain of 1931, this party did not exist. He wrote, "if the leaders of the Comintern prove to be incapable of offering anything to the Spanish workers, but bureaucratic leadership and splits, then the real Communist Party of Spain will be formed and steeled outside the cadres of Comintern. In any event, the party must be built."⁶

The Spanish militants of the International Left Opposition would thus set out to complete the tasks laid out by Trotsky, in the organization called Izquierda Comunista. The Izquierda Comunista seemed to be in ideal shape, more so than any other country anyways; they had within their ranks some key personnel from Spain's Communist movement; personnel such as former secretary of both the CNT and the red trade union international, Andes Nin; Juan Andrade, who managed to convince many socialist youths to go further left right before the war; and many others. The Izquierda Comunista served as a beacon for the militants disheartened and lost in the sea of the co-existing parliamentarian socialists and anti-Parliamentarianism anarchists. To some militants, in Spain, the conditions were seemingly so favorable that they desired to abandon the idea of opposition and found a new Communist Party; Trotsky however would fight against this discussion, tooth and nail. The international revolution, in his mind, required a solitary uniform analysis for their tactics, and simply leaving the Communist International would not convert them to their side-all that would be accomplishing, would be the abandonment of the ideals to the wolves; unless, of

⁶ (Trotsky, *The Revolution In Spain* 1931)

course, it became obvious that the course of the International could not be corrected and there was no other option left.

As such, the Trotskyists, who referred to themselves as Bolshevik-Leninists, stayed within the opposition; and most of the Izquierda Comunista would follow Trotsky's lead-when the struggle moved to Germany, they would try to course correct the International by shredding (metaphorically) Stalin's horrendous policies, which they felt paved the road for Hitler.

Trotsky and Spain: Lessons from Germany

Hitler being able to gain power-to crush the German working class without any impactful resistance, was a direct result of Stalinist policies and the social-democratic methods, in Trotsky's opinion. It undisputedly was the first sign of the looming World War as well as the further pivotal clashes of Fascists, undeniably counter-revolutionaries to Trotsky; and the working class. The Comintern resolutely adhered to the policy from Moscow with virtually no resistance, and would not only proclaim the infallibility of its leadership and deny the significance of the German disaster; but, according to Trotsky, would focus on fighting international rebuke and backstabbing the Workers' United Front-destroying a potent potential counter to the troops of Hitler. To Trotsky, the German defeat was a new 'August 4th, 1914'-in other words, the Third International joined the Second International in the graveyard; they were both dead and struggling from the inside to course-correct would be in vain and a

wasted effort.⁷ This was the moment, according to Trotsky, for the Bolshevik-Leninists to abandon their standpoint of internal opposition, and instead pick up the task of constructing the revolutionary leadership for the working class, in addition to beginning the 4th International. The development of the class struggle Trotsky wrote about in Spain seemed to paint Spain as the ideal site to enact this plan—the Izquierda Comunista, in the few years working as Communist opposition, had made quite a bit of progress; The minimum aim was a series of transitional demands—intended to raise the levels of class consciousness of the masses in the current struggles, and to lead them through future struggles.

One early leadership described those aims as follows: "The immediate demands possible were: the working day, wages, equality of the working day for both sexes, security for the working class, collective contracts; the demands of the democratic revolution: confiscation and distribution of the great estates, separation of church and state, full freedom to meet and hold demonstrations, etc.; general demands against the reaction: a demand for responsibility, confiscation of all property — agricultural and urban, personal and real estate — of the monarchist reactionaries; political demands capable of organizing the masses for their own defense and bringing them nearer to the seizure of power: united front against reaction, trade-union unity, workers' committees in the factories, the farms and the barracks Other important demands not

⁷ (Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin* 1936)

immediately realizable but capable later of making a bridge from the bourgeois to the socialist republic, included workers' control of production, the total disarming of all bourgeois bodies and the arming of the proletariat."⁸

Trotsky and Spain:The Spanish Quiz and Betrayal

The Izquierda Comunista would grow rapidly in size and influence; However, the creation of the BOC (Bloque Obrero Campesino, or Workers and Peasants' Alliance), derived from the Federation Comunista Catalana-Balear, would sap up the remaining quality militants in Catalonia. Trotsky accused this group of having 'no clear programme for action,' and that they 'had been won over by the prejudices that the epigones of Bolshevism... had spread so widely'⁹, and would compare them to what Brandler developed in Germany, Lovestone in the US, Tasca in Italy, and the Bukharin tendency of the rightist within the CPSU. He would attack them for their refusal to criticise Stalinist policy, their efforts to appeal to petty-bourgeois Nationalist movements, their efforts to get handed control of the Spanish Communist movement from Moscow; Trotsky would warn against them and their brand of 'centrism' that he deemed worse than the official stance of Stalinism. The BOC, in his mind, would wind up not only impeding the

⁸ Pierre Broué doesn't provide a source for this-while it may come from a newspaper publication, the lack of a date makes it hard to confirm. It purportedly seems vaguely similar to the PSOE Parliamentary Programme, July 1931, but on top of that being a different group, who was admittedly in dialogue with the ICE, I am still searching for the actual program; It is possible the ICE program was built off of that of the PSOE however, as the larger break between them wouldn't happen until closer to the founding of the POUM from the ICE and BOC.

⁹ (Trotsky, *The Catalonian Federation's Platform* 1931)

Izquierda Comunista's growth but would prevent them from winning a majority of members of a Communist Party Federation everywhere besides Madrid. It would be within the Socialist Party, particularly among the younger generations, that one could most clearly see the radicalisation of the working class of Spain and the progress of Trotskyist ideas within their vanguard. Thus, Trotsky would attempt to strengthen that foothold within the Socialist Party, in order to influence the Communist Party and the CNT. Unfortunately, Trotsky couldn't convince his Spanish comrades to follow this plan—it only really found legs among the French Bolshevik-Leninists; and the few Spanish ones who were willing stopped short of trying to act against the organization and followed the party's eventual (and time consuming) refusal to join the Socialist Party. Instead, the leadership of the Izquierda Comunista and the Bloque Obrero y Campesino would unify, after September 25th, 1935, formally becoming the POUM that Orwell would find himself fighting alongside. Trotsky, however, would view this as betrayal from his former disciples; in particular the merging of political positions; they no longer were working to build the Fourth International, and instead fused the corpses of the Second and Third International. To Trotsky, this would mark the end of any real political force in Spain to oppose the right wing Socialists and Stalinist Communists push for an electoral alliance with the bourgeoisie Republicans.

Trotskyist Accusations and the POUM

Given how venomously Trotsky would criticize and attack the POUM, what can be said about the accusations of the Stalinists? The very man didn't see them as remotely pursuing his aims, and continuously ignoring his attempted course corrections and warnings; However, couldn't the very fact that he was still trying to course correct the POUM be taken as proof that they were Trotskyists-in the sense that they weren't strictly following his program, but he still saw some level of hope-that they hadn't as fully abandoned him as his writings might suggest? Ironically, how Orwell came to fight alongside the POUM serves as some testimony as to why the POUM shouldn't be viewed as Trotskyist; They had completely abandoned the 4th International. How the POUM was connected with the Independent Labor Party of England, was because of the International Unity Bureau of London-which was a collection of socialist and communists opposition parties who had no desire to create or work with a Fourth International; this was actually said in the *POUM's Response to the Articles in Pravada and l'Humanité*. Orwell himself as well as his wife certainly weren't Trotskyists, contrary to what Soviet records might say. It is obvious that the real intention was to crush any form of opposition, and the POUM and CNT were merely the easiest targets. In fact, one could argue this was the explicit reason for the venomous opposition to Trotsky from Stalin-he was an obvious dissenter and had the capacity to influence others into dissenting as well, in spite of being in exile on the other side of the world-although even without that ability, Trotsky probably would've still been assassinated.

Trotsky's overall reflections on the War

Trotsky's assessment of the war, admittedly written not too long after it had ended, for he was assassinated in 1940; seems remarkably similar to Orwell's, if more politically charged. It may be that this understanding was easily developed from the perspective of leftist opposition to Stalin; regardless, both witnessed Stalin's efforts to crush the Revolution in Spain. Trotsky would go on to develop the reasoning for this-to an extent that seemingly went beyond Stalin's personal political ideology. Trotsky believed that Stalin was attempting to kill the Spanish Revolution to appeal to not just France, but England and other western powers (aka international capital). Furthermore, Trotsky would charge this with being the ultimate nail in the coffin for Republican Spain; not lack of arms, as the USSR successfully demonstrated against the international Interventionists during World War 1-he felt they had demonstrated that the revolutionaries didn't need mighty foreign patrons-they could just take the weapons from the enemy. Regardless, Trotsky wrote, "Arms and military 'geniuses' were not lacking in Madrid and Barcelona; what was lacking was a revolutionary party!" Trotsky would go on to assert that Stalin had guaranteed the conditions for defeat, and as far as the POUM went, "Despite its intentions the POUM was, in the last analysis, the main obstacle on the road to building a revolutionary party."¹⁰

Trotsky's take on Spain, in Reflection

¹⁰ (Trotsky, *The Lessons in Spain: The Last Warning* 1937)

Now, as far as Trotsky goes, his train of thought had never been extremely influential in Spain-and the groups he was in conversation with, particularly the POUM, were never really a dominant political force in Spain-that actually would go to Mikhail Bakunin, who died sixty years before the Spanish Civil War, and his anarchist philosophy; the same Mikhail Bakunin who was expelled from the First International by none other than Karl Marx, and whose prominence in Spain was only strengthened by exiles from the only other country besides Spain in which anarchism had really taken root, Italy. Additionally, on the more Marxist side, it would be the Soviet Union who would gain and manage the influx of communist supporters, particularly due to the role of the International Brigades in the defense of Madrid-something that the POUM, with its lack of actual military arms and resources, could hardly even hope to emulate or pull off. His claim dismissing the relevance of a sizeable nail in the coffin, of the relevance of a lack of arms and military genius, citing the success of the international Interventionists in the USSR in spite of that same would-be nail, fails to understand and acknowledge the drastic differences in situation; in WW1, the Allied Interventionists were primarily conscripts who were generally war-weary after the lengthy First World War, and there was a notable portion of soldiers and sailors who were reluctant to fight against the world's first Socialist State-in some cases to the extreme of mutiny, and the treatment of the Allies to some of the Russian forces they were supporting caused them to defect to the Bolsheviks. Additionally for the majority of the first World War, Russia had been allies with the

Allies-ordinary American and British soldiers wouldn't have seen them as the enemy just like that, in 1918. In Spain, one would find no such sympathies among the general enemy-a significant portion of the enemy combatants were admittedly foreign, but primarily composed of volunteers (but from the formal armies) with a common shared interest in crushing the Spanish Republic-in particular, the volunteer troops of Fascist Italy, which numbered up to 80,000; and the 20,000 volunteer troops from Nazi Germany¹¹. After November 18th 1936, when the two dictatorships had recognized the Nationalist Junta as Spain's legitimate Government, American Ambassador in Berlin, William E. Dodd saw, "that having recognized Franco as a conqueror when this has yet to be proved, Mussolini and Hitler must see to it that he is successful or be associated with a failure."¹² Such a level of commitment wasn't found among the Allies in the Russian case-all of the allies, aside from Japan, had given up on the intervention and withdrew Russia after 2 years. Hitler and Musolini perceived an existential threat in a victorious Republican Spain, and had been attempting to build up their own military power anyways-the needing of forces and materials elsewhere was the primary excuse of Hitler as to why Italy's commitment, number wise, far outstripped its own.¹³ The 'political infighting', be it from either side of the republican coalition, can also be said to have unequivocally hurt the effort to fight Franco-a miscalculation for anyone who was truly interested in defeating Franco,

¹¹ Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War* (172).

¹² Glyn Stone

¹³ Glyn Stone

as he and the nationalist forces (and their Axis supporters) were more of a threat than any independent rival group on their own side. Simply put, Trotsky, in exile on the other side of the world, simply did not have a good grasp on the situation on the ground in Spain, and erroneously tried to apply what his lessons from the Russian Revolution.

Orwell in Spain:A Summary

From the very beginning, Orwell was a man of the left and sympathized with the common people-and he made a good deal of effort to try and tell their story, as with his 1933, *Down and Out in Paris and London*. It should be no surprise then that when Orwell learned of the attempted fascist rebellion in Spain, he was set upon trying to get involved to stop it and get in the thick of it. Orwell first tried to go to Spain, which he believed required him to get supporting documentation from a British Left-wing Organization, by approaching the British Communist Party. After they rejected his request, he went to the much smaller Independent Labour Party(ILP), part of the Labour and Socialist International (rather than the Third International/Comintern), and was granted accreditation to go to Spain as a writer for their paper, the *New Leader*. Now, while he officially went to Spain as a journalist, Orwell wrote, "I had come to Spain with some notion of writing newspaper articles, but I had joined the militia almost immediately, because at that time and in that atmosphere it seemed the only conceivable thing to do."¹⁴ This is supported by the fact that soon upon arriving in Spain, and meeting with

¹⁴ Orwell, Homage to Catalonia, pg 1

John McNair, the ILP representative in Barcelona, Orwell would then be taken to enlist with the POUM. As stated earlier, Orwell joined the POUM, an anti-Stalinist organization, entirely by chance-if he had come over with the British Communist Party, he would have likely joined the International Brigades, and Orwell stated that, "As far as my purely personal preferences went I would have liked to join the Anarchists."

Having arrived in Barcelona, in December 1936, Orwell would note the drastic differences from his own England; about the first town he encountered with the working class in the saddle, he'd note not only the immediate visual differences-of "Buildings... draped with red flags or with the red and black flags of the anarchists, the walls were covered with the hammer and sickle...", the colors of which also covered the majority of the transportation; of the destruction of most of the churches. It went beyond what some might write off as superficial visual displays, however. He talked about the social changes, of equal treatment irrelevant of previous class standing, which he witnessed in the speech and actions of the people, and just an overall display of unity and solidarity. To Orwell, "there was much in it that I did not understand, in some ways I did not even like it, but I recognized it immediately as a state of affairs worth fighting for."¹⁵

This would characterize much of his experiences in Spain-on the front lines and in the trenches: the mud, the human shit, the lice, the ridiculous size and number of rats, and such didn't damper his desire to fight for the revolution and against

¹⁵ Orwell, Homage to Catalonia, pg 2

fascism-in fact, the only thing that truly dampened his spirits in general was the boredom and the poor training and weapons-they didn't even have weapons to train with before his group arrived at the front. While he would attribute this to the nature of stationary warfare, he'd write about how he "used to gaze round the wintry landscape and marvel at the futility of it all. The inconclusiveness of such a kind of war! Earlier, about October, there had been savage fighting for all these hills; then, because the lack of men and arms, especially artillery, made any large-scale operation impossible, each army had dug itself in and settled down on the hill-tops it had won."¹⁶ At one point, he regretted not being with the International Brigades, for it seemed that would be the only way to be sent to Madrid-where the more concrete and apparent fight against Franco was taking place, although he would come to abandon said regret after what he would witness in the May Days Events, which occurred a little after he returned to Barcelona from the Aragon front-which he had been at for about 3 months. Upon his return, he already noted a drastic change in the city-it had, in his opinion, greeted them just as hostilely as if they had returned to London or Paris. Most of the social and non-permanent changes to the city had been undone; the working class was once again out of the saddle, with the bourgeoisie in their place. Even before returning to Barcelona, it should be noted, Orwell wrote about the propaganda from the Republican Government, from which "you would have derived the impression that there was something disgraceful in having gone to

¹⁶ Orwell, Homage to Catalonia, pg 11

the front voluntarily and something praiseworthy in waiting to be conscripted. For the time being, however, the militias were holding the line while the Popular Army was training in the rear, and this fact had to be advertised as little as possible.”¹⁷ This suspicion of the militias would only serve to add to the air of rejection of the previous values. Now, after the events of May Days, Orwell would return to the front, and was shot in the throat by a Fascist Sniper; He was hospitalized and in the process of moving from hospital to hospital, and getting his discharge papers stamped, having been declared medically unfit to serve, when he learned that the POUM has been suppressed. After attempting, in vain, to rescue George Kopp, a friend of Orwell and his wife, whom they had met in Spain, he and his wife would flee via the Pyrenees Mountains to France. In his absence, he would be tried, and described as a rabid trotskyist, a claim that Orwell would liken back to the Moscow Trials and the Great Purges of the USSR from not that long ago-a claim devoid of actual meaning besides painting of a scapegoat/enemy.

Orwell in Reflection:

In the Spanish Civil War, Orwell witnessed what he described as a revolutionary fever that he found worth fighting for, even if he disagreed with it on some fronts, when he first arrived. When he left, the signs of the revolution were gone.

Looking at newspapers discussing the fate of the POUM, what he saw completely contradicted what he had witnessed-and that was just the left sympathizing ones. It was as if reality was being distorted in real time. He would

¹⁷ Orwell, Homage to Catalonia, pg 55

encounter difficulty in finding a publisher for his account, due to the left not wanting to offend Stalin in preparation for the ensuing war against Hitler-ironically, a reversal of Trotsky's assessment of why Stalin crushed the revolution in Spain. While the temporal wait for a publisher in England wasn't that long, getting published within a year, the wait in other countries would be much longer-it wouldn't be published in the US until 1952, and a French translation, on which he directly worked with the translator, Yvonne Davet, back in 1938, wasn't published until 1955; three and five years respectively after Orwell had already passed away. Anyway, this trauma and rightful hatred of Stalinism that he developed from the Spanish Civil War would continue to dog Orwell through the remainder of his life. He would spy and report on his leftist friend groups for the British Government, explicitly out of concern that there might be Stalinists among them, even after he had written *1984*, which featured a vaguely similar situation. This would incidentally overlap with the 12 year period in which the Special Branch (Metropolitan Police) would spy on him, in regards to his lived-research for writing *Down and Out in Paris and London*¹⁸. In spite of his desire for *Animal Farm* to explicitly comment on the USSR and the rise of Stalin in a more nuanced manner than how many anticommunist perceive, and for Socialism to be rehabilitated from the false association, perhaps it would come as no surprise that many Americans view the book as speaking out against communism and socialism-that is an association that during the Cold War and even now, would be

¹⁸ (Special Branch file on Eric Blair alias George Orwell, author and journalist. Communist 2005)

handy for those opposing communism to cultivate, regardless of its accuracy. Orwell perceived the revolution overthrowing the tsar and in the novel, the farmer, as good, but perceived a betrayal of that revolution by Stalin-although more precisely, he perceived the roots of betrayal far before that. In a letter to Dwight Macdonald in 1946, he wrote, “*Of course I intended it primarily as a satire on the Russian revolution... The turning-point of the story was supposed to be when the pigs kept the milk and apples for themselves (Kronstadt).*”¹⁹ Combined with his official statement, “The Spanish war and other events in 1936-37 turned the scale and thereafter I knew where I stood. Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, *against* totalitarianism and *for* democratic socialism, as I understand it,”²⁰ his opinion should be pretty clear. Is it perhaps intentional that so many in the US are unfamiliar with Orwell, beyond those two novels, and his reasons for writing? In regards to *1984*, the general populace references the book so often that even to the same populace, comparisons and allusions to the novel are generally devoid of meaning. One can question if the distortion of his intentions is perhaps even more sinister than that, but research into such a conspiratory notion would likely prove very difficult-and odds are there is no organized distortion effort. While the CIA did fund the first animated movie of *Animal Farm*-in fact, it was agents of the Office of Policy Coordination, a branch of the CIA²¹ who purchased the film rights

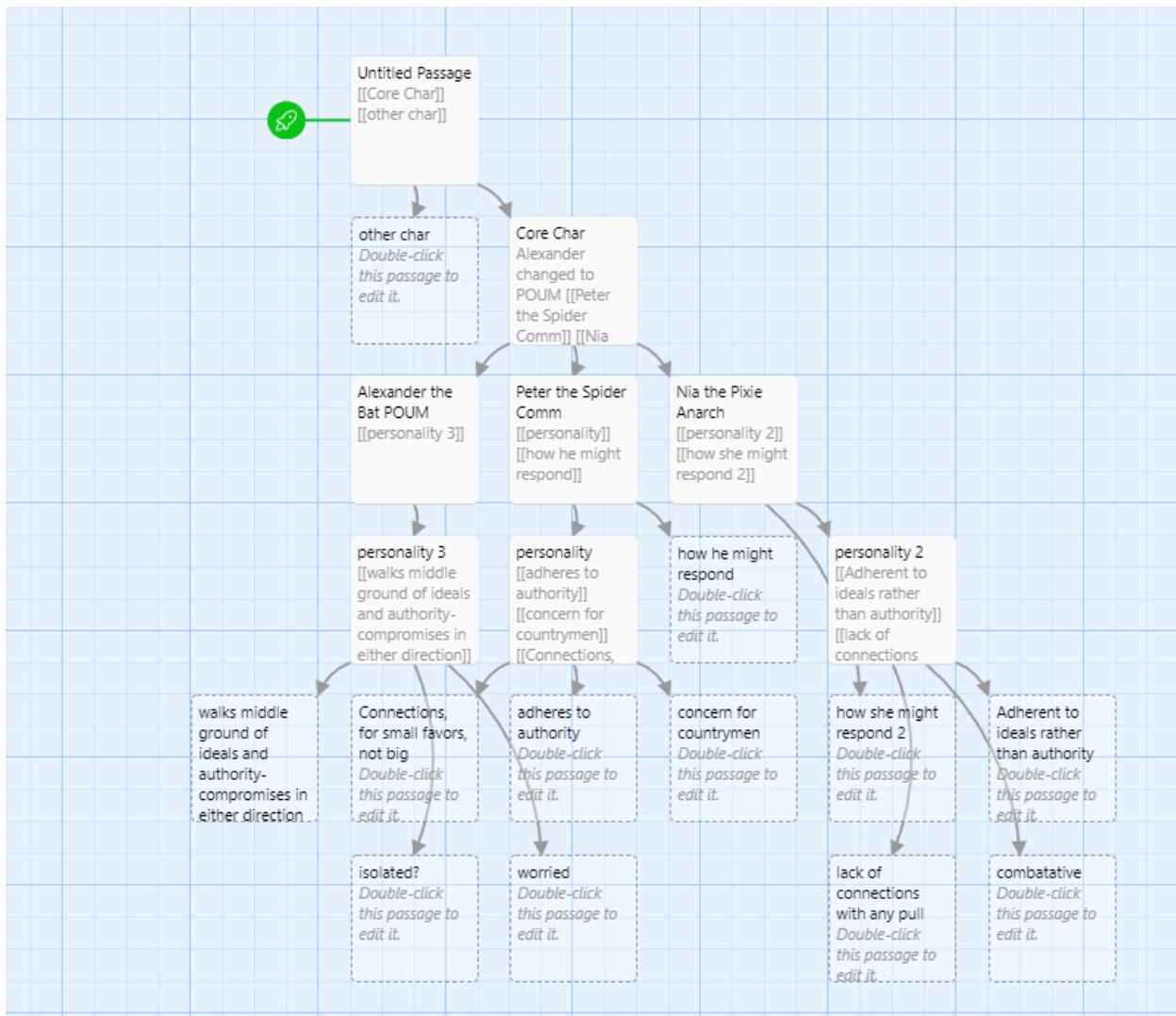
¹⁹ (Orwell et al., 1946/2013)

²⁰ (Orwell, *Why I Write*, 1946)

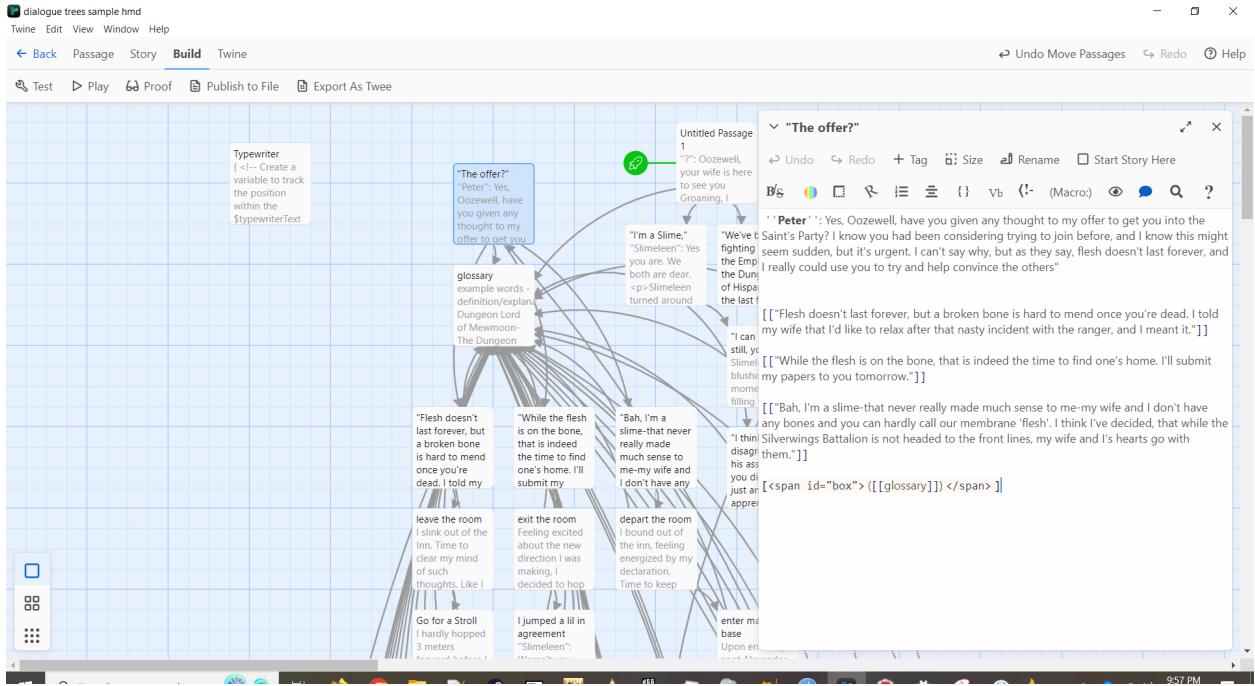
²¹ (Leab, *Orwell Subverted: The CIA and the filming of Animal Farm* 2007)

from Orwell's widow, the usage of it for propaganda and the complications with it is a more nuanced discussion than I can have here, and the pushing of one novel doesn't automatically constitute the suppression of another. Life, quite often, is unfortunately just as muddy and confusing in the modern day as it was back when Orwell saw the alphabet soup of countless acronyms back in Spain, if perhaps with a smaller number of dictators threatening war.

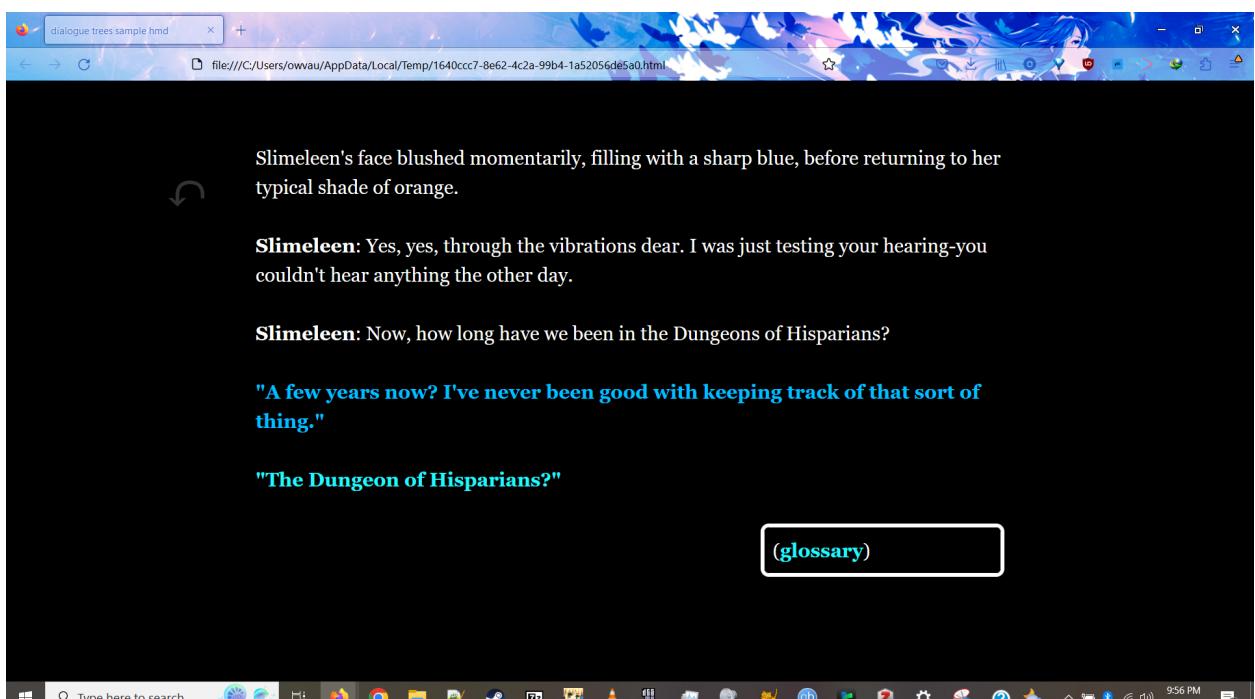
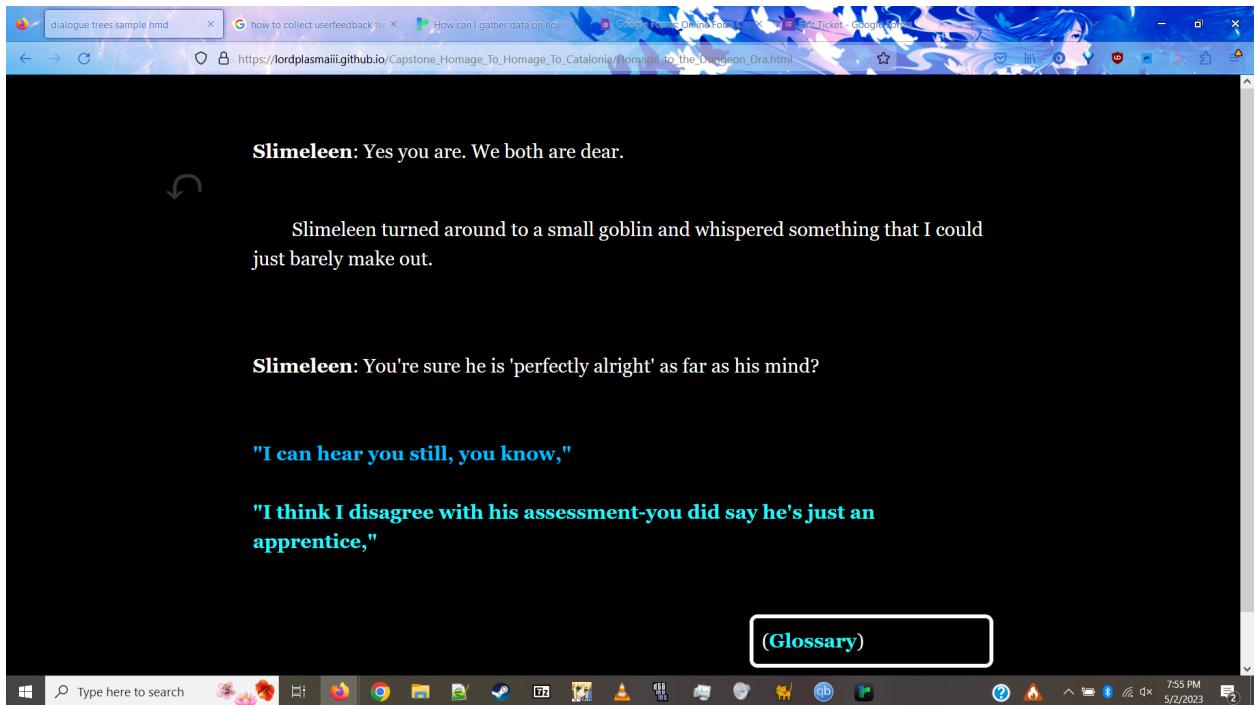
The general plot outline of Homage to the Dungeon.



The character matrix visualized within Twine for a few core characters. This was used to help generate dialogue in regards to the plot.



Here is an internal display of dialogue within the Twine program. The hyperlinked dialogue options can be see enclosed within two brackets, [[like this.]]



Between the two screenshots above, one can see the selection of the first hyperlink results in the scene moving forward and responding to the selected hyperlink. This is the general flow of dialogue.

Here is a view of the glossary, from its in-progress state.

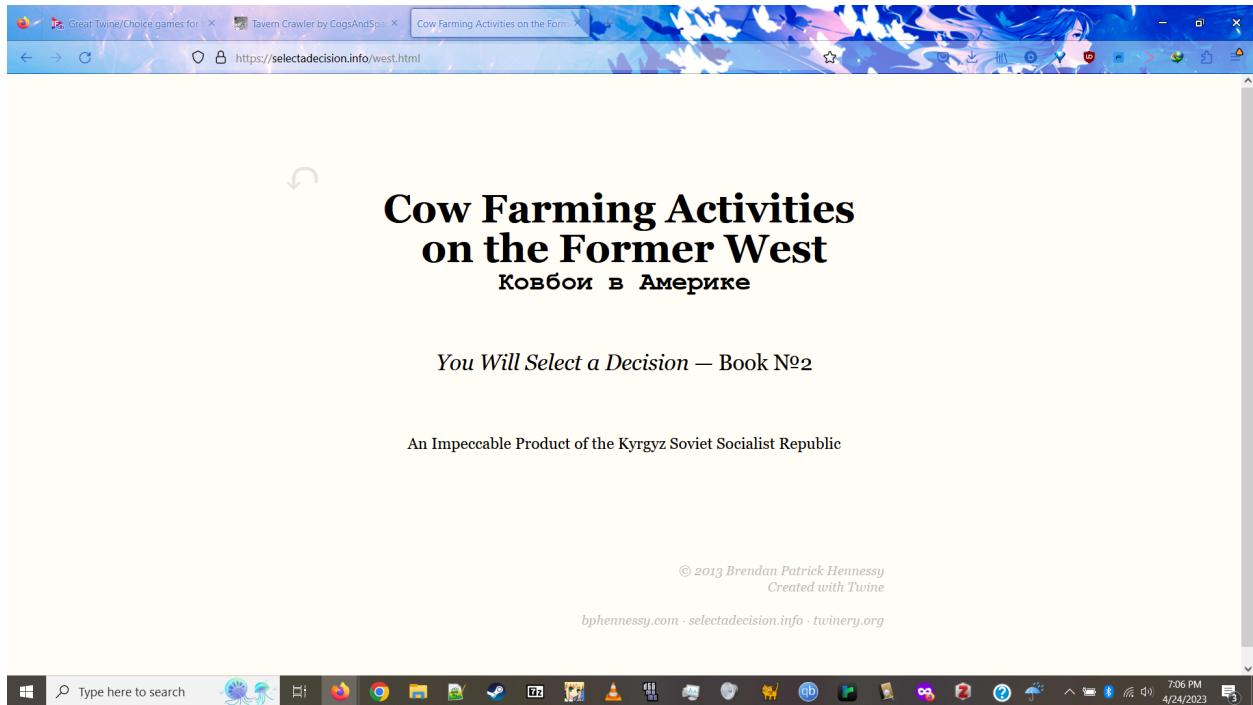


Figure 1.1 Here is the title screen of

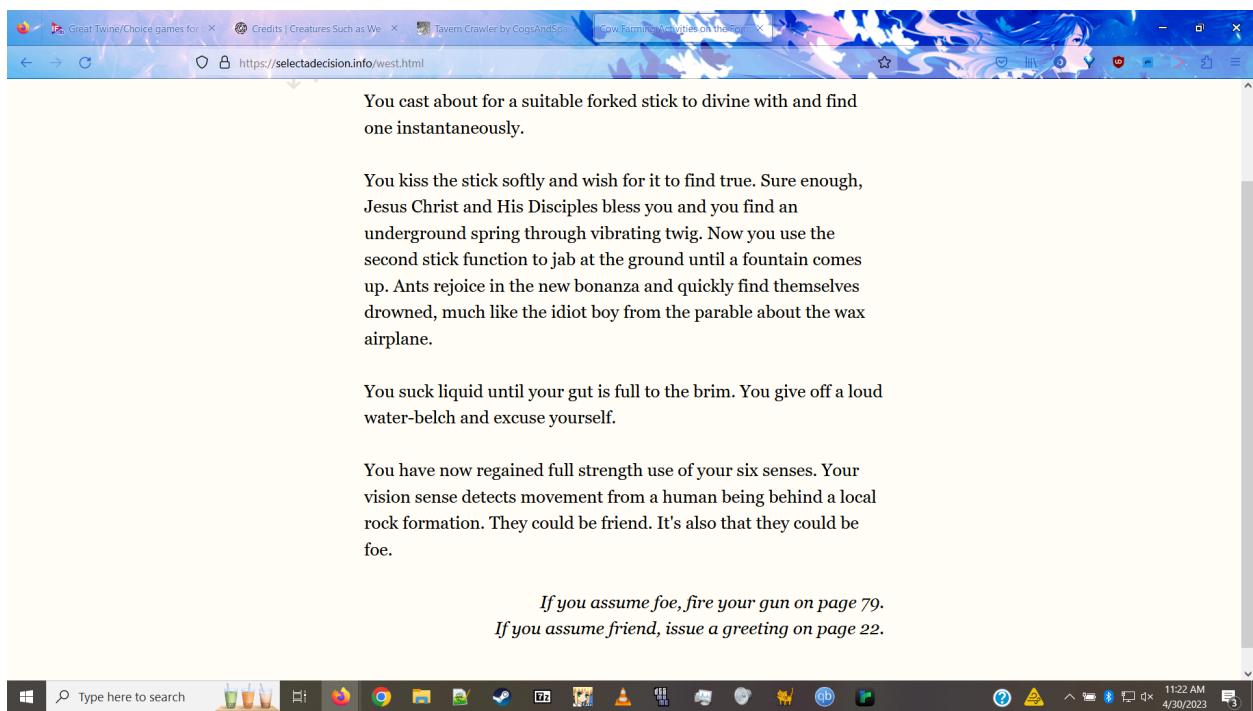


Figure 1.2 Here you can see the book-like structure.

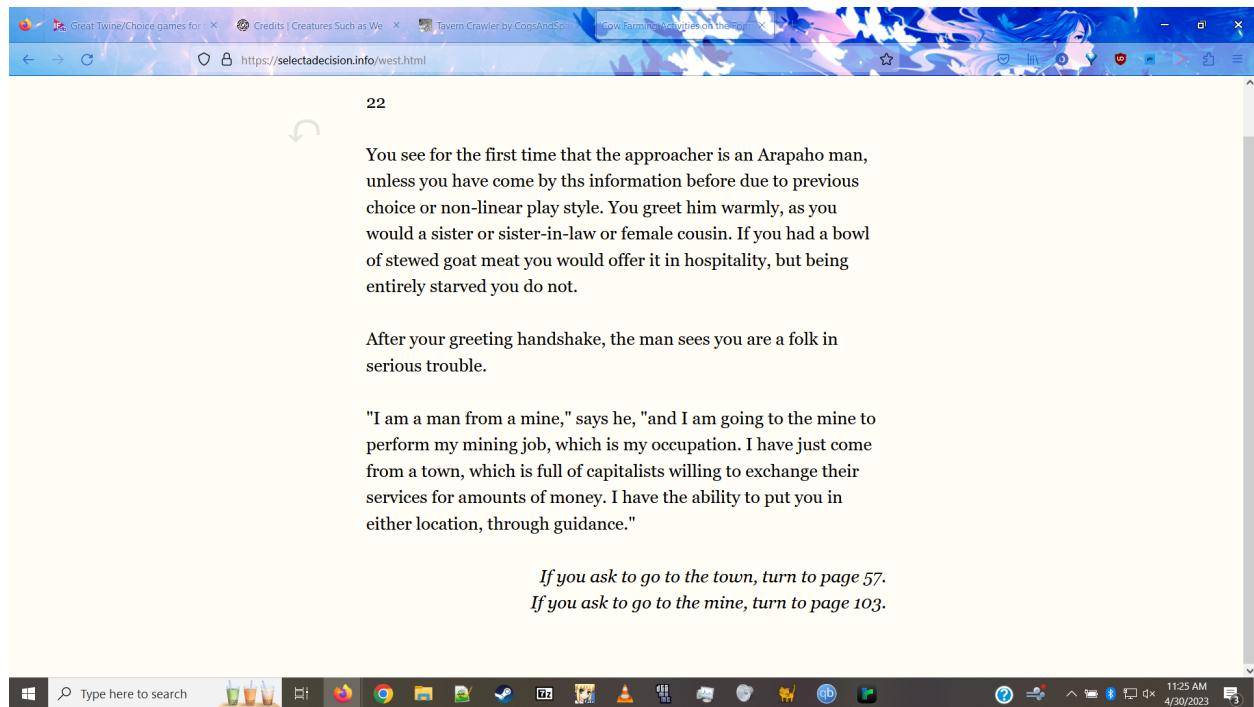


Figure 1.3 The game imitates the style of Choose-Your-Own-Adventure novels, in which the reader would have to manually flip to different pages based on their choice.

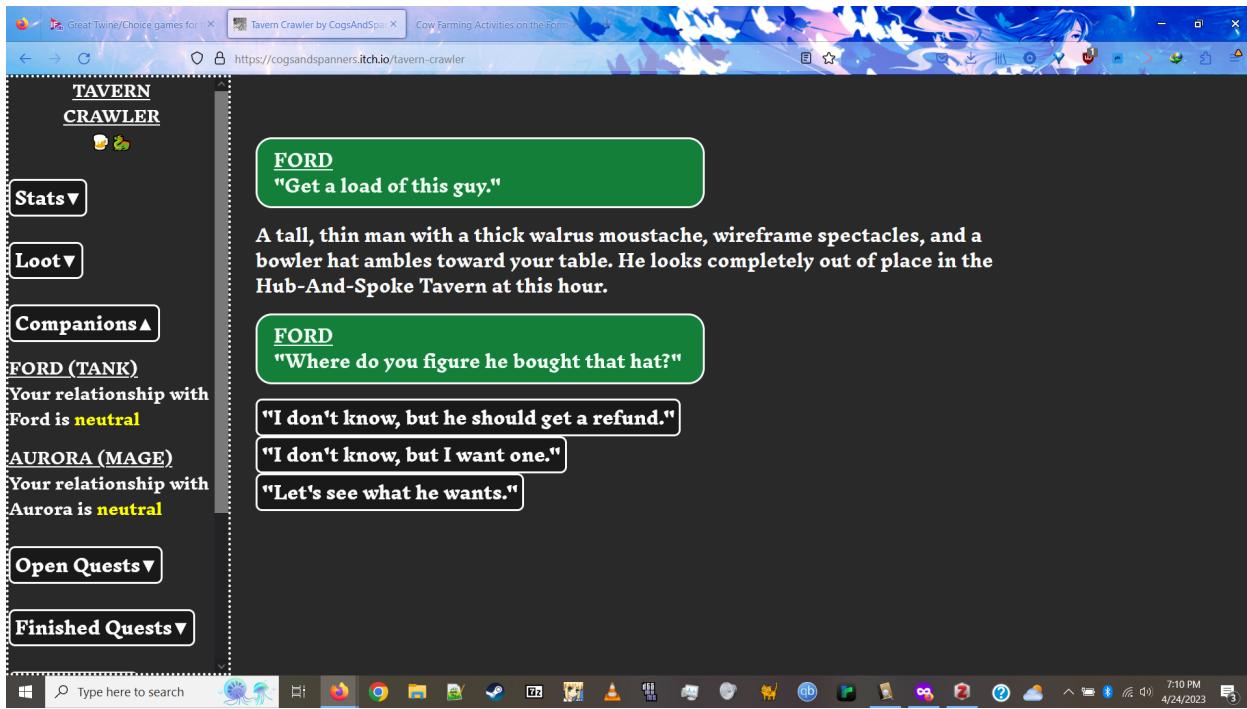


Figure 2.1. Here are an example of some details that are kept loaded as the player progresses through the game.

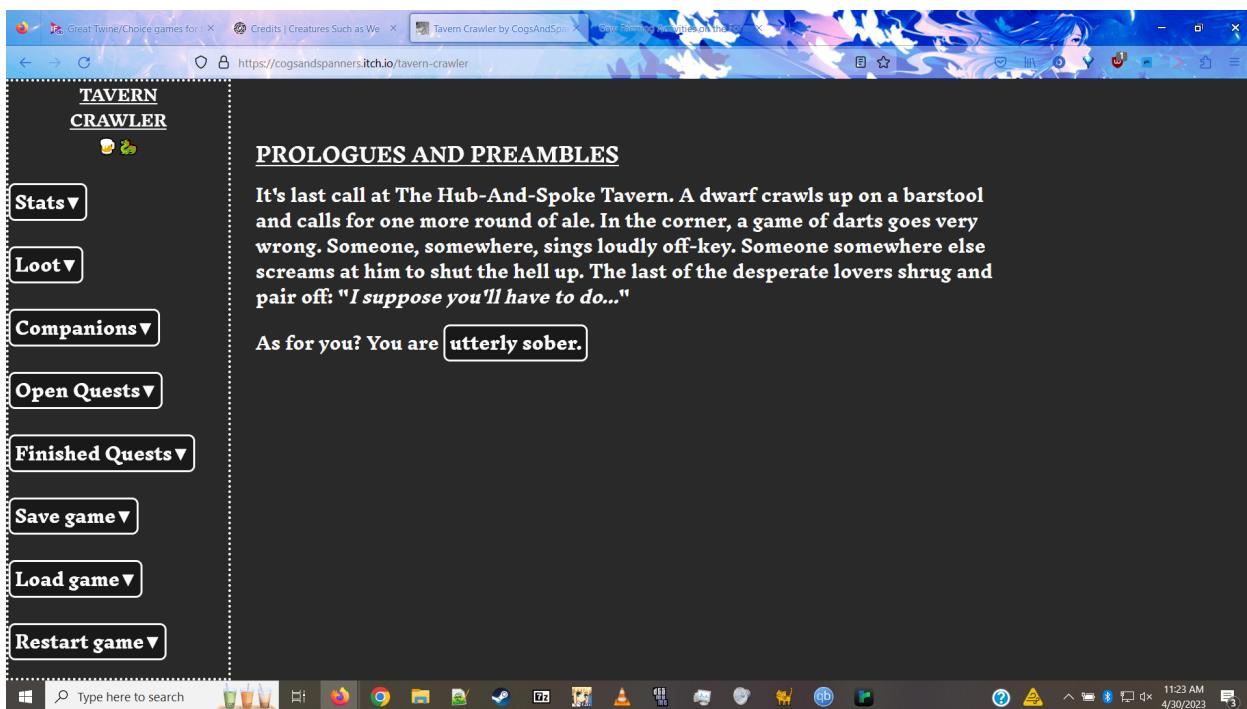


Figure 2.2 Here the player is introduced to their standin.

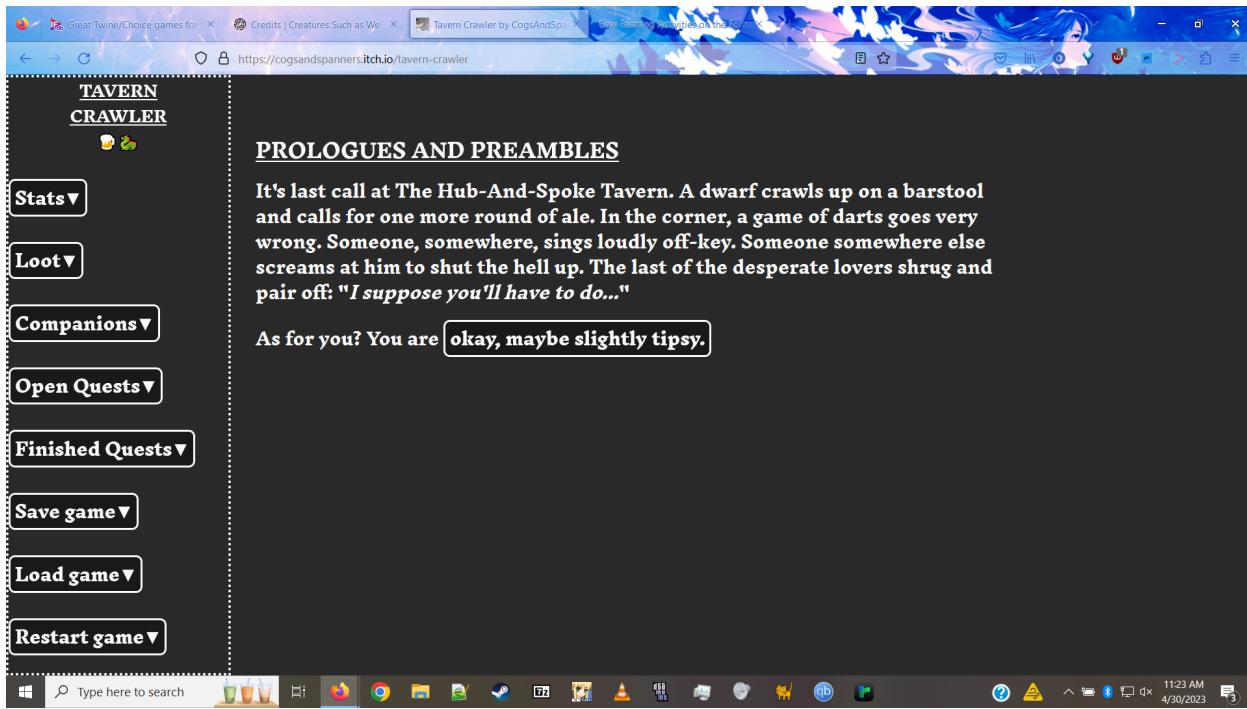


Figure 2.3 Who, is shown to not really be as reliable at first glance.

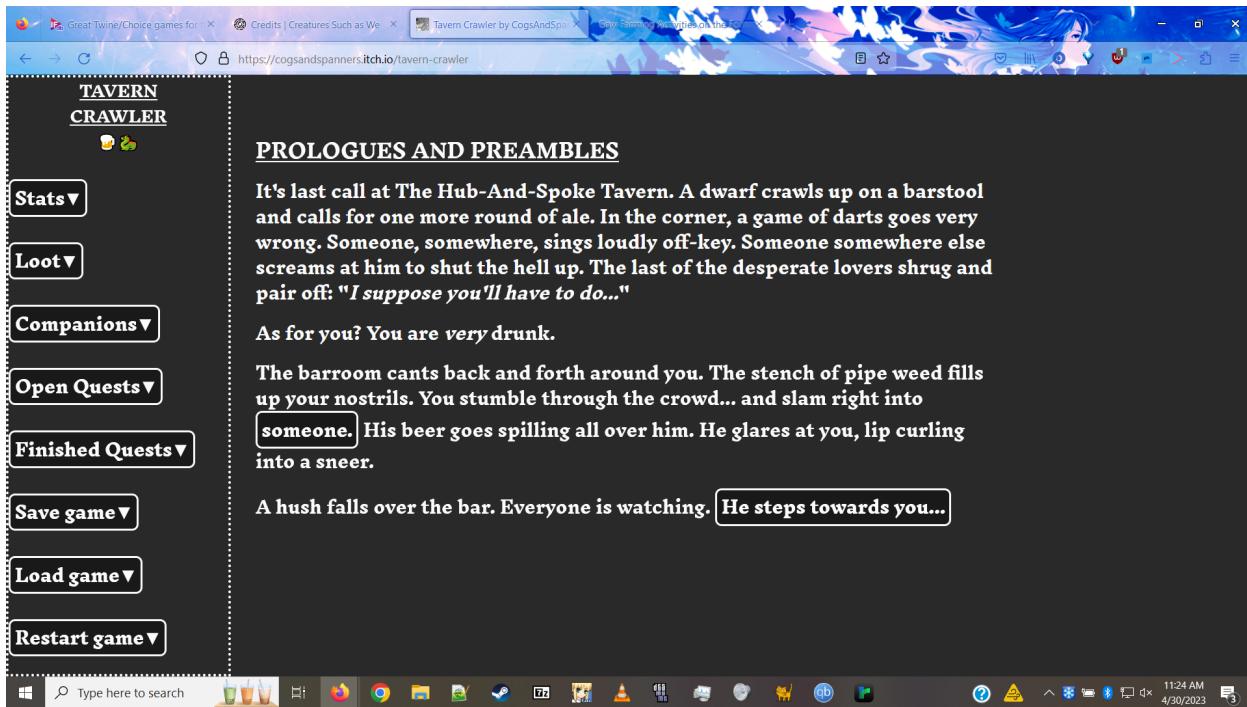


Figure 2.4 Another example of changing dialogue

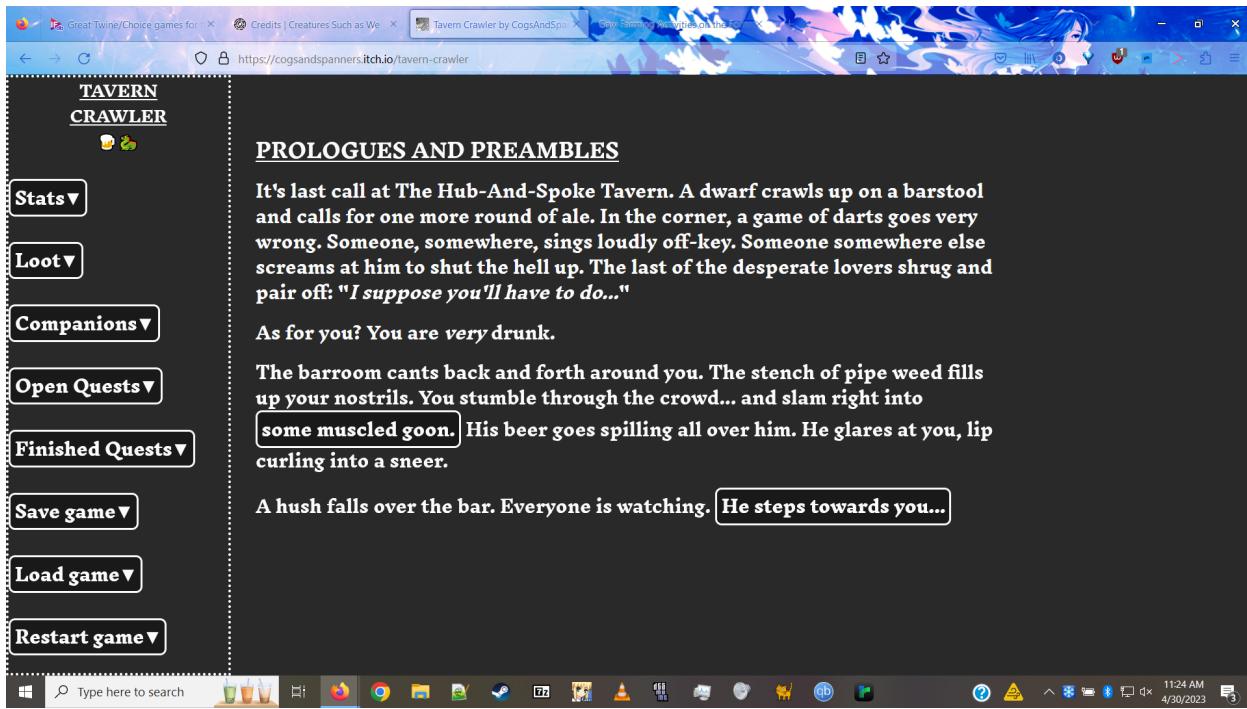


Figure 2.5 The dialogue isn't done quite yet.

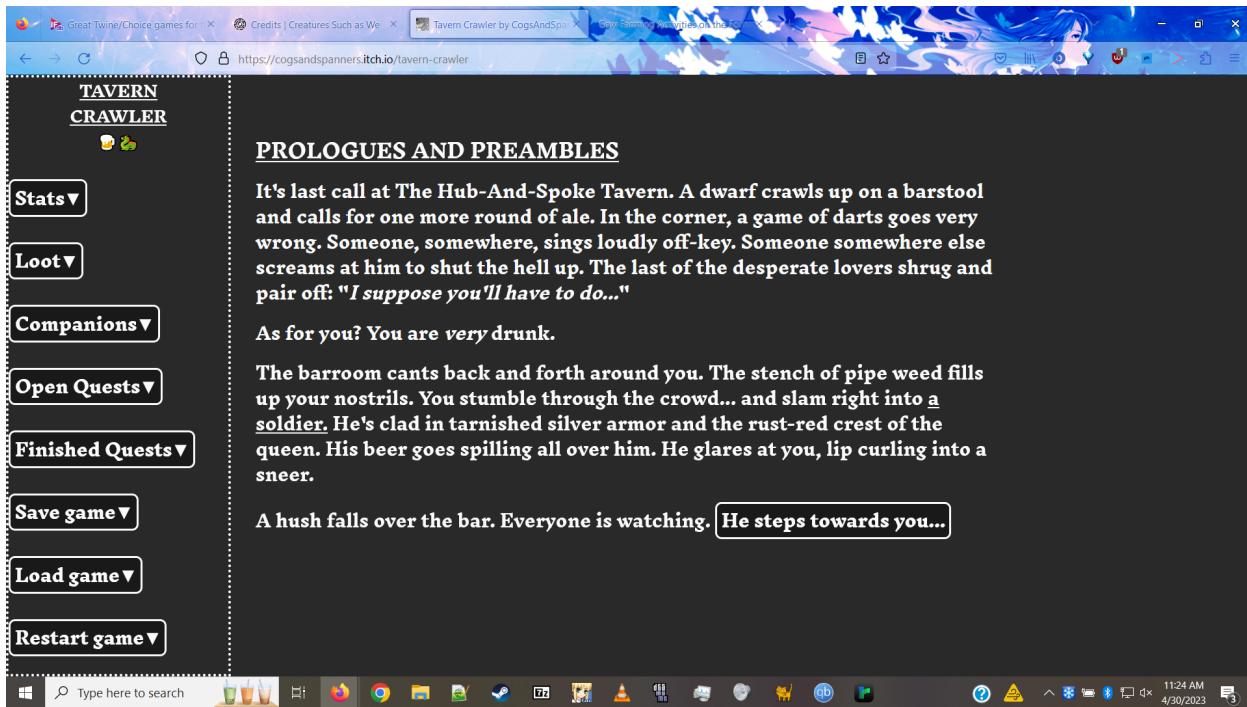


Figure 2.6 The final state of the dialogue, in a form that is accurate to what is actually happening in the scenario.

Why I choose a narrative storytelling format

When one hears the term Orwellian, essentially slang for a totalitarian society, it is to his fictional writing the term is referencing, not his journalistic writings or essays-perhaps ironic in the sense that his writing was intended to serve as a warning.

This project partially sprung from a question: Why is it that George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* is so unknown to the general public, in comparison to his two other popular novels, *Animal Farm* and *1984*? One could perhaps see this as a natural offshoot from my personal observation of having encountered zero mentions of the Spanish Civil War throughout my public education. Particularly, when paired with reading the other two novels as part of said public education-one might think it would be reasonable to presume the questioning would end roughly around there. The answer could theoretically just be there's a reason to discuss books directly related to the cold war and not civil war in Spain. It should be clarified that *1984* and *Animal Farm* being widely known is very much not a bad thing. The issue arises however with *Homage to Catalonia* alongside a view of the broader overall context that is behind those two previous novels, being a far distant third. Taking this into account, the question has transformed from merely desiring an explanation of the success of the other two to how to bring a greater level of success and attention to this account.

What is narrative storytelling? According to the Nashville Film Institute, narrative is defined as storytelling technique, “wherein characters describe the events of a story, experience, or details from their point of view.”²² According to this definition, all three of Orwell’s works fall under narrative storytelling. It is not precisely just that which the project is changing. *Homage to Catalonia* is, however, more of a personal experience narrative than that of *Animal Farm* or *1984*-for those two novels, there is more of a concrete plot, an end goal, which the reader observes while going through the story. Whereas in *Homage to Catalonia*, Orwell is more of a vehicle to learn about the setting. While he himself experiences many things that can be framed in a more traditional story, this is not his goal nor overall purpose. The reason for him being the vehicle is to show the reader the situation, rather than to just talk about himself. It might sound contradictory, in essence, Orwell is the vehicle for looking at the historical situation, not the centerpiece. Now, fiction is far more popular than non-fiction; although biographies are on the higher end of non-fiction, fiction still outsells it by a large margin.²³

Looking back to *Animal Farm*, an Allegorical retelling of the Russian Revolution and the rise of Stalinism, published 7 years after *Homage to Catalonia*, it is reasonable to see Orwell as developing a key and ideal way to try and facilitate his political messages and historical narrative to the public. It is certainly a more digestible story in comparison to a more typical text-book style recounting.

²² (Anonymous, 2023)

²³ (Yucesoy et al., 2018)

However, by being constrained to one dimension, a purely linear story, Orwell's novel becomes similarly constrained in what messages and themes it can present. It leaves itself very much subject to potential subversion of the messages he hoped to get across, to the same extent that time can enable the death of the author. The potential for increased storytelling dimensions offered by interactive media can attempt to alleviate that aforementioned temporal decay. It should be clarified that death of the author isn't inherently a negative thing-and perhaps stated that ironically the essay which coined the term 'death of the author' has experienced its own death in the common use of the term-the essay, by Roland Barthes was arguing a much more restricted interpretation than the present phrase has-he argued that the author wasn't a god, that not every action or word choice was deliberate, and it may be left to the reader may impart some level of meaning into that in the act of reading [and thus arguing for the death of the author as a divine-esque concept, and to be replaced with the concept of reader], not that the intent of the author was meaningless;²⁴ but for works such as these, in which they aren't necessarily intended to function primarily as a work of art, it is a relevant concern nonetheless. The death of the author, in the causal sense, goes against the usage of *Animal Farm* and *1984* in an educational setting-it directly contradicts the purpose they are supposed to serve from both Orwell's perspective and those using it.

²⁴ (Barthes, 1968)

The intention of this project be described as occupying the crossroads: the intention was to create some form of art, even if that term is perhaps a bit too flattering-otherwise it could've merely been in the format of an essay on his book, but there are ideas, stemming from Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, which should be presented.

Now, target audiences also play a role in terms of choosing a medium; For me, this influenced both my choice of medium and the motif used within. I feel like nerds and gamers are inherently those who are most attracted to interactive stories-not that they have any disillusionment with traditional media (like reading *Lord of the Rings*), but they've generally already embraced it to a decent capacity from the current trend of growth of their hobbies. Now, I would like to say that I attempted to hone in on that target audience via usage of video game styled narrative and references to monsters from popular tabletop games such as *Dungeons and Dragons* (D&D) -but the truth of the matter is that's simply what appealed to me.

Inspiration for Characters

I like Slimes, the round gelatinous creatures ubiquitous within JRPG's and more-ranging from *Dragon Quest XI S: Echoes of an Elusive Age - Definitive Edition*²⁵ to *Minecraft*²⁶. They're cute, although their original D&D depiction may be a little less so, and generally speaking, easy to draw. Slimes, giant bats, pixies-monsters and magical beings- just so happened to fit very nicely within this

²⁵ (Square Enix, 2019)

²⁶ (Mojang, 2011)

general structure-and the usage of dungeons coincidentally coincidences with the name of a book Orwell would recommend on the Spanish Civil War, *The Spanish Labyrinth* by Gerald Brenan.

The target audience for this project is admittedly constrained-those who are opposed to the political views expressed by Orwell or this narrative are not likely to be swayed by the writing. The target audience and purpose is more so to inspire thought and awareness, to prompt thinking on the subject, much like The Clash's song *Spanish Bombs*²⁷ did for me, back in 2015.

What is Twine and why did I choose it

Twine is, as the creators put it, “an open-source tool for telling interactive, nonlinear stories.”²⁸ It’s accessible on the user end as an html file that runs in the browser, and basically operates in a manner similar to a Role-Playing Game (RPG) or Choose-Your-Own-Adventure novels. One definition of an RPG is a, “game genre where the player assumes the role of a character throughout play,”²⁹ which isn’t inherently tied to a specific medium.

Choose-Your-Own-Adventure novels, a kind of solitary predecessor to the RPG as a genre, was described by scholar James Ryan as “a radical idea, [in which...] you can pack multiple plot paths into a book and let the reader decide which paths to take,”³⁰

²⁷ (The Clash, 1979)

²⁸ (Klimas et al., 2023)

²⁹ (Murray R., 2021)

³⁰ (Ryan J., et al., 2018)

In *Twine*, the user's choices impact the story they're presented with-by clicking on hyperlinks-which is how Twine connects each passage in the creators story-assuming that's how the creator designed the story-and there is plenty of flexibility in that. I feel it has usefulness in the planning or world building, with a more personal usage-mapping chronology/a general timeline and the ripples across it, for instance, or detailing the backstory details of characters. *Twine*, as stated, removes most barriers to target audience in terms of technology-it simply needs a browser to run; and thus doesn't have too much of a technological barrier. The complexity of a project made with Twine is up to the creator and what they think is appropriate-it can approach that of a more traditional game even. It's definitely something that I would recommend to others, particularly in an educational setting.

Some examples of twine projects I've looked into include: *You Will Select a Decision* by Brendan Patrick Hennessy-an, in setting, english translation of Russian Choose-Your-Own-Adventure stories, set in the american wild west and space; *Tavern Crawler* by CogsAndSpanners-a story emphasizing the social situations and navigation of a band of heroes through various bars and the lies along the way, rather than the dragon slaying. *Tavern Crawler* also leans more into the game aspect with stats and relations being tracked in regards to the choices you make in the story-something that I would very much like to look into in regards to future work.

I was particularly inspired by the idea of Visual Novels, although obviously what I have here is not one. In particular, the notion of Visual Novels, can generally be described as a Choose-Your-Own-Adventure game with higher production values. First off, as the term ‘visual’ implies, there is a level of art sprite work that is necessitated-the visual novel doesn’t rely solely upon text to convey the story. The quality and extent of the art and other visuals can vary, and with that sliding scale, one generally encounters some level of music and sound effects, used to further enhance the story telling-although, music and sound effects can be encountered in a Choose-Your-Own-Adventure game, as they aren’t the distinguishing characteristic.

In visual novels, it is relatively common for the protagonist to be an existing character rather than purely a blank slate for the player to project upon. This is demonstrated directly, generally by the usage of first-person pronouns instead of second or third-person, but it generally also carries story implications. While can select what the protagonist does, there are limits on what the protagonist might do. This project draws inspiration from this line of storytelling. Oozewell, for instance, will not switch to fight for the invading Empire. This is obviously a lot more railroaded in comparison to something such as *D&D*, which may be seen as less fun from the players perspective, but that level of complete openness would get in the way of constructing a narrative without a similar explosion in scope-one that would be unmanageable for this project. *D&D* is generally a more open collaborative effort between players and the Dungeon Master (the person

detailing how the world reacts to the players) to create a story-a process which is constantly ongoing. That is neither the goal or within the scope of this project.

The visual novel, *Steins;Gate* in particular served as an inspiration for the flow of text-with observations and thoughts of Oozewell being displayed at various moments. The emphasis upon choice is to carry the player along a story path, not construct a completely new story.

One might wonder what the difference between a Visual Novel and a *Twine* game/story are. Simply put, while a twine game/story can be described as a visual novel, visual novels aren't limited to just using *Twine*. *Twine* possesses some limitations that might not be encountered if one were to use another program, such as Unity Technologies' *Unity* engine or the open-source *Ren'py* engine. Some of *Twine*'s limitations stem from the web-browser side of things-such as not being able to auto-play music without the user interacting with the page at least once, while others are more specific to *Twine*.

Homage to Homage to Catalonia

Within my project, Homage to the Dungeon, I attempt to take the events of Orwell, explicitly from around the May Day Events onwards, and tell them in the format of an allegorical story, similar to his own Animal Farm for the Russian Revolution and rise of Stalinism. With Twine, and the element of user interaction, however, instead of being limited to the set in stone path of yesterday, it provides alternate outcomes-a level of theoretical learning and teaching that admittedly

step outside of the bounds of traditional/straightforward depictions of history. Here, I'd like to address some of my attempts at representation, as well as some technical inaccuracies that resulted from my attempt at creating a coherent narrative.

Characters

Those Directly In the Story:

Alexander the Bat

Alexander the Bat was a combination of multiple people, some unnamed, but most notably Georges Kopp and John McNair. McNair, explicitly, I made sure to reference the story Orwell tells of him risking his life to bring him and an unnamed friend two packs of Lucky Strikes Cigarettes-although I place this event as happening before the May Days stand in, and I have Orwell's wife as the second individual, rather than the unnamed friend. I'd argue this is fitting from the perspective of the three-way friendship of the trio.

Peter the Spider

Peter is explicitly meant to represent the unnamed friend that Orwell had in the Communist Party-specifically attached to the Spanish Medical Aid. Here, he is portrayed as a more active character, but I base his activities within the start of Homage to the Dungeon primarily upon the actions Orwell notes of the friend-the anxiety and desire to convince the English ILP members to switch; However,

during the second part of the story, Peter is directly involved in the violence of May Days, something that would be very unlikely for Orwell's medical friend. Additionally, while I hint at Peter having some pull within the medical division, I do not outright cast him as a Cleric within the confines of the story-although the discrepancy in regards to participation in such a maneuver is smaller for a fantasy cleric than Orwell's friend.

Nia the Pixie

An anarchist, she is serving in the place of numerous unnamed individuals from Orwell's account, such as the anarchist friend who with great difficulty, managed to get Orwell a "tiny 26-mm. automatic pistol, a wretched weapon, useless at more than five yards."³¹ It should be noted, as a result of plot necessity, some of these individuals were not actually Spanish Anarchists, but fellow British members of the POUM; Additionally, as a result of how the story progresses in one of the other paths, I decided to give put her in the roll of George Kopp, during his arrest, rather than Alexander the Bat.

Slimeleen

This is intended to represent Orwell's first wife, Eileen Blair. She was very influential on Orwell's writing, and actually wrote a poem entitled 1984 before she met him. Unfortunately, I haven't read much of her writings before the completion

³¹ (Orwell, *Homenaje a Cataluña* 1938)

of this project, which may result in mischaracterization of her as a person.. However, she did accompany Orwell to Spain, after having been married to him for just six months-this itself after having known him for just under a year, and she certainly endured great hardships during her life with Orwell-often times because of him.

Oozewell

George Orwell was a pen name, possibly drawn from the patron saint of England and a local river-his actual name was Eric Blair. One can describe Orwell as rather pessimistic, which, I try to present in a few of his dialogue options; I also tried to give him some elements of dry humor and dad joke-which, was one thing he seemed to desire quite a bit-to be a father-which was fulfilled when he and his wife adopted a son; He was also known for being the butt of humor related to his stature, which while I've not made Oozewell clumsy, I tried to add a little sense of physicality to his personality.

Characters not directly present in the story:

Saint Nick

This is intended to represent Joseph Stalin. In universe, Saint Nick (aka Santa Claus) is the leader of a country of elves, who've seemingly cast off the chains of the human empires, and the organizing factor behind the Saint's Party [Originally,

I planned on having his title be Saint Emperor, but with the casting of the right wing coalition as an outside Empire, I scrapped the Emperor portion]. He is not an elf himself.

Dungeon Lord of Mewmoon

The Dungeon Lord of Mewmoon is meant to represent Andreu Nin Pérez, leader of the POUM. Historically, he briefly served as Trotsky's Secretary in Russia, before returning to Spain. He was tortured and killed by the NYKD, several months after the events of May Days. Even before then, he had been expelled from the cabinet of Lluís Companys' government, at the request of the Soviet consul. I attempt to blend the significance of the Nin's representatives removal from government with a general awareness of a crackdown on the POUM and perhaps an association with his later fate, but this is entirely ahistorical-it wasn't even formally revealed that he had been executed, and Orwell was not paying anywhere near that level of attention to the political situation-in fact, the sacking of Nin from his cabinet position occurred before Orwell had even arrived in Spain, about 7 days after at the earliest. Mewmoon was not very creatively arrived at from breaking Catalonia into 'Cat' and 'alonia', getting Meow from 'Cat', and twisting 'alonia' into lunar, before combining them into a phrase similar to 'New Moon'-aka wholly unrelated to the actual meaning of Catalonia, which fits a little bit better with the Dungeons part admittedly.

General Master

This is intended to represent Leon Trotsky. He is not prominent within the narrative as an actual character-much like how Trotsky didn't exactly encounter each Orwell-one being in Spain and the other in Mexico, but his name still would come up a lot. In real life, he would be assassinated during his exile, by a Soviet agent, who was using a Canadian passport of an International Brigades volunteer, seized during the Spanish Civil War. This assassin also purportedly spied on Orwell.

For the core cast of characters, I constructed a matrix detailing core aspects of their personality. From there, I extrapolated how they would most likely respond to the particular events in the story.

When the players moves through the game, they read a description of dialogue and events, from the eyes of the protagonist, Oozewell, before clicking a hyperlink. This hyperlink transition is generally centered around Oozewell's reaction to the scene he just witnessed and generally ranges from dialogue to physical actions.

Ideally, the player would play through all of the main branches-each branch has a limited amount of information, corresponding to what the protagonist naturally encounters in the events of that branch. The glossary, which contains some plot spoilers, however, is intended for both players who don't have a desire to play through the other core branches and for players who would like a more detailed explanation of what is going on in the story.

Future Work

The project was initially intended to be a visual novel rather than a purely text based experience, and the intentions are for it to still become one in the future; In addition to expanding the script and choices the protagonist Oozewell can make, ideally there would be something along the lines of expanding the story to include other protagonists the player could choose from-causing them to experience a different story in the same setting-drawing from others experiences in the Spanish Civil War, rather than just Orwell's. Taking into account personal biases, it would be staying firmly within the non-nationalist side of things, but the setting has a level of versatility to it that would work well with that desire to add in additional stories. Additionally, I'd like to add a spoiler warning into the glossary, to allow players to 'opt in' to seeing story details that they haven't encountered yet-with the opt-in disappearing once they've encountered those details.

On the art aspect, I intend to make the sprites (which would be displayed alongside the dialogue) myself, in pixel-bit form to match the character aesthetic, but ideally I'd like to have more standard and well done CGs-which while it literally stands for Computer Generated, in the actual context of visual novels, generally just means cutscene art, where no sprites are shown, around moments of tension, which would likely require some commissions. Music is also an important aspect of visual novels and interactive media storytelling, and if I went beyond royalty free music, I'd likely require commissions as well-particularly

depending on the style of music, although I do have a little familiarity with some beginner level composing software-although between the two, I have more potential contacts for visual art commissions. Music in particular, as a result of twine's usage of the browser, would be another factor to switch engines; I did actually include some music as a proof of concept, if one visits the glossary page, there is a recording of me performing some simple exercises and tunes on a Vibraphone. I initially intended for it to play on the homescreen, but music cannot actually autoplay in most browsers without the user first interacting with the page-if I was dead-set on music playing on the home screen, I'd need a splash screen beforehand, which would be otherwise void of purpose.

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The Script:

?: Oozewell, your wife is here to see you

Groaning, I started to shift my body towards the sound of the unfamiliar voice.

A sharp burst of pain filled my being, and my eyes burst open, to a kaleidoscope of blurry colors and shapes.

My mouth started to curve, when a comforting voice told me not to move.

I then stop struggling and relax.

?: Do you remember what happened, Oozewell?

After a brief pause, the voice continued.

?: I'm worried that he might have suffered a concussion-Alexander told me he fell around 2 meters after being struck by the bolt.

Attempting to speak, I fail to produce any intelligible sounds.

After a few attempts, I eventually find my voice, but more importantly, I realize the familiar voice belongs to Slimeleen.

Oozewell: What's going on?

Slimeleen: We're on the Bicorn Line, moving you back to see a cleric-the lad here is just an apprentice.

With that, my eyes come into focus, and with that, my mind.

Slimeleen: Can you tell me what you remember, Oozewell dear?

With that, I try and run through the basics.

Oozewell: I'm Oozewell. Yes...

[["I'm a Slime,"]]

**[["We've been fighting against the Empire in the Dungeons of Hisparians
for the last few years, away from our homeland of Steeliton,"]]**

***"I'm a Slime,"**

Slimeleen: Yes you are. We both are dear.

Slimeleen turned around to a small goblin and whispered something that I could just barely make out.

Slimeleen: You're sure he is 'perfectly alright' as far as his mind?

[["I can hear you still, you know,"]]

**[["I think I disagree with his assessment-you did say he's just an
apprentice,"]]**

"I can hear you still, you know,"

Slimeleen's face blushed momentarily, filling with a sharp blue, before returning to her typical shade of orange.

Slimeleen: Yes, yes, through the vibrations dear. I was just testing your hearing-you couldn't hear anything the other day.

Slimeleen: Now, how long have we been in the Dungeons of Hisparians?

**[["A few years now? I've never been good with keeping track of that sort
of thing."]]**

[["The Dungeon of Hisparians?"]]

"A few years now? I've never been good with keeping track of that sort of thing."

Slimeleen chuckled.

Slimeleen: True, that is. Not something that would get fixed with an injury.

Oozewell: Way to *kick* an injured slime when he's almost one with the ground.

[I laughed at my own joke-as slimes we had no feet-as she rolled her eyes.]

I laughed at my own joke-as slimes we had no feet-as she rolled her eyes

The apprentice squeaked up, a tad bit awkwardly

Apprentice: This is actually part of the paperwork.

Oozewell: Oh. Sorry. Ummmm....

Oozewell: Well, we've been here for a few years now, fighting against the Imperial invasion of the Dungeon. I'm enlisted with the Mewmoons Battalion, as they were the group affiliated with the local group back home in Steeliton that was willing to help me get over here.

Oozewell: Ignoring the day-to-day stuff, I remember serving near the southern gate of Mewmoon, and preparing to come back to the main floors, and that's about it.

Slimeleen: That's all the information that he was missing I think. He knows the rest, about the cross-bow bolt-well, we can see it.

With that, I prepared to turn my eyes inwards and look down.

[[roll eyes]]

To my surprise, I could see a large gash, right below my eyes, and within the hole, which admittedly wasn't leaking, I saw the crossbow bolt, just floating around, idealistically, as if it were avoiding responsibility for the opening.

I started to feel queasy and closed my eyes.

Slimeleen: It's okay dear. How about you go back to sleep for now?

At her suggestion, almost as if by magic, I felt my consciousness slowly fade and

....

[[zzzzzz....]]

"I think I disagree with his assessment-you did say he's just an apprentice,"

The apprentice looked shocked, and began to frantically flip through his clipboard.

Slimeleen: He's just joking, his mind is as good as gold.

With that, I attempted to change my color to gold, but found myself unable.

The apprentice muttered indignantly, before taking a breath, as I awkwardly strained in vain.

Apprentice: Well, are you able to fill out the paperwork?

I attempted to shake my body side-to-side, but stopped as soon as the pain started to flare up.

Oozewell: N-no.

Apprentice: Then please take this seriously.

[[Oo-ok]]

Oo-ok

Oozewell: Well, we've been here for a few years now, fighting against the Imperial invasion of the Dungeon. I'm enlisted with the Mewmoons Battalion, as they were the group affiliated with the local group back home in Steeliton that was willing to help me get over here.

Oozewell: Ignoring the day-to-day stuff, I remember serving near the southern gate of Mewmoon, and preparing to come back to the main floors, and that's about it.

I wince, as a sudden jostling of the carriage causes something floating in me that I had blissfully been unaware of to move about.

The apprentice quickly grabbed a piece of glowing wool, and touched my forehead with it, and I felt both the pain and my eyes drift peacefully.

[[zzzzzz....]]

"We've been fighting against the Empire in the Dungeons of Hisparians for the last few years, away from our homeland of Steeliton,"

The apprentice chimed in almost immediately

Apprentice: Can you please go on sir?

Oozewell: Well, I'm serving with the Mewmoon Battalion at the moment-have been the last few months, although it's more a matter of convenience and common cause than one of political conviction.

Oozewell: Well, aside from the conviction to push the Empire back I suppose.

The apprentice nervously laughed and accidentally knocked a jar of glowing wool over.

The wool drifted downwards onto me, and... into me?

It was then that I felt the pain reemerge, but to my brief relief, the wool flashed a bright yellow, and both the pain and my consciousness faded.

[[zzzzzz....]]

zzzzzz....

With a start, I wake up.

Looking down, the crossbow bolt has been removed, and the gash has been magically fused shut, although it, uh, frustratingly itches.

I then look back up, and it's obvious I'm no longer on the Bicorn carriage-both the apprentice cleric and my wife are gone.

I'd assume that the official cleric had performed the healing ritual and surgery and had moved them out of the room, perhaps sent Slimeleen to a nearby inn, but...

This room was certainly not any kind of hospice.

Books and spider-webs coated the entirety of the small, cramped room.

I attempted to move and quickly learned that my part of the room was also coated with dust.

cough *cough* *hack*

After that fit, a voice, a voice that I felt I was familiar with, but in the way one might be familiar with the voice of a neighbor's loud friend-not very familiar with their friend themself.

? : Ah, Oozewell, it seems you're back with us-well me

A fuzzy leg moved a stack of books and revealed an arachnid, who looked a little familiar.

Oozewell: Peter!

I said, as the knowledge snapped into place.

Peter was a fellow Steeliton, serving with the Saint's Party-a group that had previously rejected my request to come to defend the Dungeons of Hisparians-Which lead to me going to a more smaller, local group, whom then connected and sent me to the Dungeons with the native Mewmoons Battallion,

Peter: Yes, it is me, in the flesh.

I shook myself, having started to get lost in my thoughts.

Peter: As I was saying, I know your health is still poor, but I had something urgent to ask you again-and so I had the cleric bring you straight here. About the offer.

["The offer?"]

"The Offer?"

Peter: Yes, Oozewell, have you given any thought to my offer to get you into the Saint's Party? I know you had been considering trying to join before, and I know this might seem sudden, but it's urgent. I can't say why, but as they say, flesh doesn't last forever, and I really could use you to try and help convince the others.

["Flesh doesn't last forever, but a broken bone is hard to mend once you're dead. I told my wife that I'd like to relax after that nasty incident with the ranger, and I meant it."]

["While the flesh is on the bone, that is indeed the time to find one's home. I'll submit my papers to you tomorrow."]

["Bah, I'm a slime-that never really made much sense to me-my wife and I don't have any bones and you can hardly call our membrane 'flesh'. I think I've decided, that while the Silverwings Battalion is not headed to the front lines, my wife and I's hearts go with them."]

Route 1

"Flesh doesn't last forever, but a broken bone is hard to mend once you're dead. I told my wife that I'd like to relax after that nasty incident with the ranger, and I meant it."

As soon as the words leave my body, I hear the anxious pattering of Peter's many legs.

It seems my answer didn't satisfy him and only drummed up his anxiety.

Peter: "Can you at least make sure that the offer has been passed on to all the other Steelitions?"

With a sigh, I slowly jiggle my body up and down.

The latest web-ogram reports of the front hardly suggest the urgency for his requests, but maybe he's heard something from higher up the web.

No matter. I doubt I, without knowing his reasons, would really accomplish anything by sharing his offer, and so a few more days before doing so wouldn't hurt a fly.

[[leave the room]]

leave the room

I slink out of the Inn.

Time to clear my mind of such thoughts.

Like I said, I'm still recovering from that graze with the enemy human ranger.

I just want to take it easy for a few days.

....

....

I think taking a stroll around the floor before I go back to the inn my wife and I are staying at would do that-I can talk to her about what I saw here, as she's presumably spent the day exploring that one.

[[Go for a Stroll]]

Go for a Stroll

I hardly hopped 3 meters forward before I heard a familiar voice call out to me.

?: Howdy, Oozewell.

[[I turn to the direction of the voice, staring blankly]]

I turn to the direction of the voice, staring blankly

Nia: Howdy, Oozewell. Been a bit since I've seen ya. How was the front you went to?

I heave a sigh, and prepare to give a brief recount of my experience upon the front once again.

[['"Miserable. Awful conditions-still trying to get some of the mud out of me, and then right before I was due to come back, an enemy ranger got me, dead center, with an arrow."']]

"Miserable. Awful conditions-still trying to get some of the mud out of me, and then right before I was due to come back, an enemy ranger got me, dead center, with an arrow."

Nia: Oh shit, glad to see you're still with us.

Oozewell:I'm up and able to move around now, but I'm not returning quite yet-my wife and I are still hoping to take our last few days here to relax.

Nia: Ah, I can try to update you on all the changes that's been happening here as of late-most not for the better, in the opinion not just myself but the rest of the fliers.

["I was hoping to take it a lil easier, but I guess hearing about it is quicker than having to see it."]

"I was hoping to take it a lil easier, but I guess hearing about it is quicker than having to see it."

I spread myself out a lil bit upon the curb, preparing myself for what I feared would become a lengthy discussion.

Nia, quickly descended down to the ground, sitting opposite of me-while of a similar mind, although from the elemental energy swirling excitedly behind her, she was obviously eager to share.

Nia: I'm sure you've noticed the redecorating of the floors-vivid red/black and red/yellow/purple pallets from your last visit are gone-all that remains is a ghastly different shade of red. This change-in-color is no mere coincidence. It's a sign. A declaration of war-amidst-the-war. The dungeon lords have come out against us. I froze. I had noted this surface level change in color, along with the temperature. As a Slime, I hadn't thought too much of the colors-I myself change colors naturally, but was very much aware that temperature had indeed become

hostilely hot. This was very much something within the Dungeon Lords' powers.

However, I felt skeptical

[[“The Dungeon Lord's? Why would they make war with us now?”]]

“The Dungeon Lord's? Why would they make war with us now?”

Nia: Yes. They've become nothing more than puppets of Saint Nick-and as such continue the war from the north. You know, the Dungeon Lords were always hesitant about our independence in resisting the empire's invasion.

Nia: Hah! It was our independence, our freedom, that was responsible for our immediate call to arms and counter attack that stopped the church from taking the dungeon whole.

While the Dungeon Lords sat quaking in their boots, it was we who fought back against the imperial menace on our doorstep.

You've seen the concessions we've made this whole bloody war.

Nia: We've worked with them from a desire to stop the Empire-but not to protect the order the former dungeon lords represented.

The change in membership has turned for the worse.

I fear they've decided the time is nigh to cross a line-to cross a line that we cannot let be crossed-not least we sully the names of our friends who've perished to get us here.

Oozewell: That is true, it was you who prevented a complete takeover of the dungeon by the empire.

I paused. Saint Nick and the war from the north. I had no idea what she was talking about. Wasn't it Saint Nick who had came to the rescue of the dungeons earlier?

[[“The war from the north you mention, I can't say I'm to familiar with that”]]

“The war from the north you mention, I can't say I'm to familiar with that”

Oozewell: And what about Saint Nick-

Nia: I'm not here to give you a history lesson on the last 20 years of global politics, but surely you can at least trust your eyes. You can see the influence he's had on the Dungeon Lords-for his weapons, they sing his tune. Even the few dungeon lords on our side have all been stripped of their position at Saint Nick's orders.

Nia: The red of the dungeon isn't just a declaration of war, with Saint Nick's calling card, but a message meant to be fleshed out with our blood.

Wait.....

.....

.....

What was that again?

[[.....]]

.....

I think she said that some dungeon lords had been stripped of their position, but that can't be right.

Surely I misheard her, her passionate speech moving too fast for me to make out.

[[“You aren't saying that Dungeon Lord of Mewmoon-”]]

“You aren't saying that Dungeon Lord of Mewmoon-”

Nia: I am saying that, they're now the former Dungeon Lord of Mewmoon. I know you weren't in the main part of the dungeon, but you really didn't hear about that? Weren't you fighting with the Mewmoon battalion?

[[...]]

...

What.

The oppressive heat of the dungeon wasn't enough to stop my blood turning cold at the news.

[[“I think I've got to link up with my wife. She's going to need to hear this.”]]

“I think I've got to link up with my wife. She's going to need to hear this.”

With that, I pulled myself together and propelled myself down the street, leaping across the cobblestone,

Without turning around, I shout, hoping Nia would catch the meeting place.

[[“I'll meet back up with you near the Bicorn Line!”]]

“I'll meet back up with you near the Bicorn Line!”

I proceeded to crash into a fuzzy blob in the middle of the air.

As I reoriented myself, I realized that blob was none other than Peter-I had never seen him standing at his full height before.

Peter: Oozewell. Glad I-I caught you

He pauses, in an attempt to catch his breath.

Peter: I know what you said earlier, but you've got to make a decision now. Are you going to join the Saint's Party? There's no time left. Yes or No.

[[Yes]]

[[No]]

Route 1A

No

Peter makes some kind of quick motion behind him, and then, after his eyes rapidly roamed over the entire area, like search lights, he leaned in.

Peter: This is all I can do for you then. Do not go back to the communications district. Go back to Slimeleen and stay in for the rest of the evening.

With that, he climbed up a thread I didn't notice was there beforehand, and disappeared into the night.

Soon after, I heard the sound of a small pair of fluttering wings behind me.

[[turn around]]

turn around

I turned and saw Nia.

Nia: What the hell, Oozewell?

Surprise momentarily eclipsed the panic, but only for a second.

Oozewell: Nia, I think it's happening. Peter just told me to avoid the communications district-

Nia:-Which is where the Silverwings Battalion set up camp. Shit

Oozewell: I'm going to try and get to my wife. If they are targeting y'all, it's no longer safe for any of us on this floor of the dungeon.

[[race towards the inn]]

Route 1B

Yes

Peter motions towards the shadows, and a giant ant comes out.

Peter: This is GiAnt. Follow him to the communications district, He'll explain the situation later.

With that, Peter ascended upwards, on an invisible line of spider silk, disappearing into the murky clouds above.

Wait.

While I had no sense of smell, we were well underground. There shouldn't be clouds here.

It must be smoke.

GiAnt interrupted my moment of deduction to hand me an elven crossbow and a satchel of bolts.

GiAnt: Let's go

[[leap across the road]]

Route 2

"While the flesh is on the bone, that is indeed the time to find one's home.

I'll submit my papers to you tomorrow."

I see a good deal of Peter's many eyes close momentarily and his legs flutter outwards, as if a terrible boulder had been removed from his back and he could now finally relax.

Peter: "I'll hold you to it. You won't regret a thing-and I think I'll be able to get you that crossbow you were asking for,"

[exit the room]

exit the room

Feeling excited about the new direction I was making, I decided to hop to the inn as fast as I could, to talk it over with my wife.

Slimeleen: So excited to see While the flesh is on the bone, that is indeed the time to find one's home. I'll submit my papers to you tomorrow.me, again? You've only been gone for for half an hour

Oozewell: Surely you know absence makes the heart grow fonder-and my heart only grows, never shrinks.

Slimeleen: Well, what's with the papers there? I thought you were just visiting Peter to chat, not to do more work-you really should rest more before that.

I felt my head grow a little fuzzy upon hearing her concern.

Oozewell: That's what it was supposed to be, yes. He seemed very much interested however in having me switch to the Saint's Party however, and I finally decided to just bite the arrow.

Slimeleen: I know you had been talking about exploring the possibility, but I'd have thought you'd wait until you had fully recovered at least.

Oozewell: I wasn't the one who raised the issue; but get this: He said he'd be able to get me the crossbow I'd been asking for-which I think is a good enough crutch to rely upon, compared to that little dagger it took Nia forever to get for me

Slimeleen: That wasn't from a lack of trying-the Silverwings Battalion is just as poorly armed as the Mewmoon Battalion-I'm surprised she was able to get you anything at all.

I jumped a lil in agreement

Slimeleen: Weren't you going to try talking with Nia and Alexander first? I think it'd be a shame to become separated from them so soon-I know that you wanted to fight at the main stronghold, but that's quite a deals away from where the Silverwing Battalion and the Mewmoon Battalion's are posted.

I had in fact. The thought somehow hadn't crossed my mind when talking with Peter, but with the pattering of his legs, it was certainly a little hard to keep my thoughts organized.

Oozewell: Well, there will still be a few days before then-and Peter did ask me to try and see if I can try and convince any other Steelitions to join up with us as well-so I'll definitely try to do so.

Her eyes squinted with suspicion as soon as I said that.

Slimeleen: Specifically Steelitions? That sounds a little weird. We're spread out all over the place, and that's probably for the best-don't want all your eggs in one nest after all.

Oozewell: Isn't that just like what I was already doing?

Slimeleen: There's a difference between asking one or two friends and trying to get every Steelition. It just shakes me the wrong way.

knock *knock* *knock* *knock*

[[I open the door, and find a giant ant standing at the door]]

I open the door, and find a giant ant standing at the door

GiAnt: My name is GiAnt. Peter sent me to tell you that the paperwork's been approved, but to hurry to the communications district-seems there's been some kind of emergency.

No sooner than the words left his mandibles, he handed me an elven crossbow and a satchel of bolts.

I accepted the items, and turned towards my wife.

Oozewell: This is quite the surprise, but orders are orders. Love you, jelly.

Before she could offer a word in protest, I bolt out the door towards the communications district, GiAnt right beside me.

[[leap across the road]]

Route 3

"Bah, I'm a slime-that never really made much sense to me-my wife and I don't have any bones and you can hardly call our membrane 'flesh'. I think I've decided, that while the Silverwings Battalion is not headed to the front lines, my wife and I's hearts go with them."

Peter's many legs twitch in visible agitation, before he sighs and straightens out again.

Peter: "Fine. If that's your decision, I won't stop you. I wish you luck."
depart the room

I bound out of the inn, feeling energized by my declaration.

Time to keep the groove flowing.

I decide to visit the Mewmoon Battalion to inform them of my desire to transfer to the Silverwings Battalion, and head off towards the makeshift base.

[[enter makeshift base]]

enter makeshift base

Upon entering, I spot Alexander, hanging upside down from the ceiling, from his usual post, his back to the entrance.

Almost as if it were a reflex, Alexander turned around and groggily faced me-day time shifts weren't normal for a bat, but he was doing his best.

Alexander: Ah, yawn Oozewell, it's good to see you. Wasn't expecting you back so la-I mean early in the day-thought you were taking it easy?

Oozewell: As easy as anyone can take it with the Imperial Army at the doorstep.

[[I chuckled, before taking a deep breath.]]

I chuckled, before taking a deep breath.

Alexander was one of the friends I had made while serving with the Mewmoon Battalion. He was the one who brought me back after the imperial ranger got me. I remember at the cleric's station, when my wife was finally admitted and asked how I was, I jokingly said I was fine aside from the lack a glass of pond scum to drink-and that batty bat went out, in broad daylight, to get 2 buckets-one for me and one for my wife, despite the nearest pond being near no-man's land.

I was determined to deliver the notice for my departure for the Silverwings Battalion, but I just wanted to make sure he knew it wasn't anything personal.

Oozewell: Well, I'm actually here to request approval for my transfer to-

Alexander: To the Silverwing Battalion, yes? I know you're more in line with them as a whole, got that vibe during our time at the southern gate. You never seemed particularly enthralled by Mewmoon's way of running things. The war and revolution are inseparable, right? Yet he seems content to put it on the backburner. I can't blame him. This heat's pretty intense-now's not the time for infighting.

A twinkle in his eyes allayed my worries.

[[“You've read me like a book.”]]

“You've read me like a book.”

Alexander: Well, you are pretty transparent.

With that, we both erupted into hearty laughter.

Alexander: I'll miss ya, but your transfer's approved. I just gotta hand in the paperwork and get a signature from one of their folks and you'll be with the Silverwings and Mewmoon no more.

[[I heave a sigh of relief]]

I heave a sigh of relief

With the twinkle in his eyes alone, he had belayed my fears in their tracks.

Alexander: Come now, I'll go turn in the paperwork and you can find out where you'll need to move to.

With that, he glided out the door, and I quickly hopped after him.

[[hop out the door]]

hop out the door

Alexander: I know you were never super into the internal politics of our group-you were connected to our sister group back at your home by chance, but there's definitely been some friction as of late.

This took me by little surprise. While I didn't pay particularly close attention, I could hear the shouting at night.

Oozewell: between the direction of the Dungeon Lord of Mewmoon and his former General Master?

Alexander: That's right. While the Dungeon Lord prefers to play things more by ear, the General Master pushes for a stricter line. He feels that the Dungeon Lord is too beholden to the interests of the other Dungeon Lords, and that he is sacrificing our cause in the process. Mewmoon, on the other hand, is more concerned about not losing the dungeon to the imperial army-for that would spell immediate doom for the revolution,, and as such has come to increasingly relent to their demands. Rumour has it we might get reorganized into the main army-in which, off the wing of course,,I feel a move like yours is the better call.

That was certainly a surprise to hear.

Oozewell:Then why aren't you moving?

Alexander: It's only a rumor for the time being, and someone has to feel out the paperwork for those transferring.

Fair enough.

[[Arrive near the Silverwings Battalion base]]

Route 1A Part 2

race towards the inn

A flurry of arrows stopped Nia and I in our tracks-and nearly ended our lives.

A familiar voice yelled out,

"Here, quickly!" as a door on our right swung open.

[[barrel through the door]]

barrel through the door

The door quickly shut itself, the instant Nia and I were inside.

Looking up, I saw the familiar face of none other than Alexander, although something seemed off.

The realization hit me like a wall-his face was crudely wrapped, with a makeshift bloody bandage covering one eye.

Oozewell: What the hell's happening?

Alexander: It seems the guards have attacked the Silverwing Battalion headquarters-and moved to try and attack ours as well, from our association.

Nia's face went pale.

Just because she predicted it, didn't mean there was any dampening of the shock, the hurricane force from the reality and suddenness of everything.

Oozewell: Is there any way for me to get to the inn? I need to make sure Slimeleen is safe.

Alexander grimaced.

Alexander: They've taken up positions in the nearby buildings-you're lucky they missed their shots.

I let out a nervous chuckle

Oozewell: I guess I can always count on the skeleton's having bad aim-it's not like they've got eyes.

I heard the chattering of teeth, and turned around.

Those teeth belonged to a small skeleton, sitting in the corner audibly, and it was only then I noticed the other occupants of the building.

There was a mixture of civilians, including children, along with some of the Mewmoon regulars, along with a human porter-seems he had been transporting food when all this started.

The children seemed to really take to the porter, as he was sharing his food freely, which had the added effect of calming them down.

And that strangely enough began to calm me down, despite the enemies outside.

Route 2 Part 2/Route 1B Part 2

Leap across the Road

Arriving at the communications district, the air is audibly filled with the cries of violence.

Clanging of arms, screams of pain and the whizzing of arrows fill the air, whereas smoke had begun to block off the actual ceiling.

After adjusting to the commotion, I suddenly realized where I was.

With the adrenaline still surging, I hadn't processed that the Communications district was where the Silverwings Battalion had set up camp.

I turned towards GiAnt, and wheezed

Oozewell: What's happened here?

GiAnt: The Dungeon Lords had ordered the Silverwings Battalion to cease its activities within the communications district and to hand over control to the Rulass Guards immediately.

Oozewell: They had been running the webogram operations the whole war-it's what many of them had been doing pre-war in fact. Of course they wouldn't want to just hand it off to a bu-

GiAnt: Look pal, they refused to leave and responded to the Rulass Guards with violence. I'm not here to question the orders of the Dungeon Lords, only to enforce them.

GiAnt: And such disobedience during the war is treason. IF they surrender, that's the time to sit around and chat. For now, we need to remove them-alive or dead.

[[Weakly, I nod]]

Weakly, I nod

I feel sick, drained of all the energy I had earlier.

What kind of cruel joke would it be that my first act as a member of the Saint's party would be to fight my spiritual kin.

The only reason I hadn't already joined the Silverwings Battalion before the first conversation with Peter was because I wanted to fight the Empire on the front lines

This was the farthest thing from that.

It took me a second to notice that GiAnt had already left, running into the fray.

I stood meekly, my new loaded crossbow drifting loosely.

?: Oozewell? Is that you?"

A familiar voice cried from within the smoke, as my heart began to sink towards the bottom of my body.

[[stare despairingly into the smoke]]

stare despairingly into the smoke

Soon the silhouette of a bat engulfed my vision.

I desperately hoped it wasn't who I thought it was—that it wouldn't become increasingly familiar, but my hopes were soon dashed.

Alexander landed beside me, his fur matted with ash and his own blood.

Alexander: Listen, the Rulass Guards attacked not just the Silverwing Battalion but the members of our battalion as well.

Alexander: Not that it would've mattered, as an attack on the Silverwings would be like an attack on Mewmoon.

My body and heart continued to descend even further—I was now less than a quarter of my normal height.

["Please leave, Alex. I'm with the Saint's Party now, and they're with the Rulass Guards—this is all at the Dungeon Lords' orders,"]]

"Please leave, Alex. I'm with the Saint's Party now, and they're with the Rulass Guards—this is all at the Dungeon Lords' orders,"

Alexander's mouth opened in shock.

Alexander:"You mean, they aren't just acting on their own? Wait, when did you sw-"

Oozewell:"I'm not going to attack you, but please leave. As far as they're concerned, we're-you're all traitors,"

I closed my eyes, before I heard a gasp of shock, a loud crunch and felt a spurt of a metallic tasting liquid hit my face.

[[Open my eyes]]

Open my eyes

I open my eyes and to my horror, see Alexander crushed between a pair of giant mandibles.

As his body falls to the ground, cleaved in two, I see GiAnt, covered in Alexander's blood.

GiAnt: Good thing Peter put that web on him-otherwise this winged rat would've got you there. C'mon, get back up mate,

I limply stare at his corpse.

Route 3 Part 2

Arrive near the Silverwings Battalion base

We got about 15 feet to the headquarters for the Silverwings Battalion, before we were spontaneously surrounded by a group of armed Skeletons, who's armor identified them as members of the Rulass Guards.

One of them starts rattling

Confused, I wait for Alexander to translate for me.

Alexander: They've asked to see our identification papers.

I pull out my papers, and alongside Alexander, hand them over.

One of the Skeletons moves forward to accept it.

They glance over the papers, step backwards, and give a curt nod to the rest of the group.

Rattling from the other skeletons fills the air, and I turn to look at Alexander.

Oozewell: What's going on? Why didn't they return the papers? What're they saying?

Before he could respond, and while a look of utter shock had just started to spread across his face, I felt a sudden sharp pain in my back, followed by a torrential wave of pain and heat

Alexander then fell to the ground, and I realized that we had been pelted with arrows-and the heat I was feeling was from some of them having been lit aflame.

As my body slowly started to melt, and I began to lose consciousness, all I could do was pray that Slimeleen would be safe.

Route 1A Part 3

[Under Revision]