Ghost Buster - Video Game Write-Up

Concept

Our game takes the player through a first-person, murder mystery experience, where they play the main character, Buster, who has just woken up with no memories. He realizes that he is a ghost, someone close to him must have murdered him. Determined to identify his killer, (and having nothing better to do) Buster searches his house for evidence to solve the case. Buster's cat leads the player around the house, talking you through everything. Around the house are "distraction" clues leading to 2 potential suspects, his cousin, and his ex-girlfriend, who both seemed to have problems with him. Scattered with these are "real" clues that show the cat's unhappiness with the player as their owner: a tattered bed, no toys, dry cat food, etc. The game concludes with Buster realizing that his beloved cat is the true culprit, who spitefully tripped Buster down the stairs as payback for all the years of mistreatment. In order for the game to end, the player must collect all of the clues, at which point they will be allowed to guess the killer. They must write in the name that they gave their cat at the beginning of the game, at which point they will reach the ending scene of the game.

Experience and Technical Execution

Our interactive narrative game was built using the interactive narrative development application, Twine. This program allowed us to create scenes and link them together in the desired order with minimal coding. In order to add additional functionality to our game, we also included elements of code in Harlowe, a blend of HTML, JavaScript, and CSS that Twine utilizes, to add specific functions to our game. We used Harlowe to create variables such as character names as well as booleans of whether or not certain clues have been found. We also coded a series of if, else statements which were used in the sidebar that holds a collection of clues, and adds a clue to the collection when a player visits the specified room. Once all of these conditions are met, a link to a scene that allows you to solve the case appears. We used a string comparison method between the variable for the cat's name, and the user input, to determine whether the player has correctly guessed the killer, at which point, the game links to an ending scene.

Role Assignments

While everyone assisted in creating the overall concept and script writing, below are the main role assignments.

- Elliot Bemis: Map-Making
- Amy Chen: Twine functions/code
    - Creation of the sidebar for navigation and clues

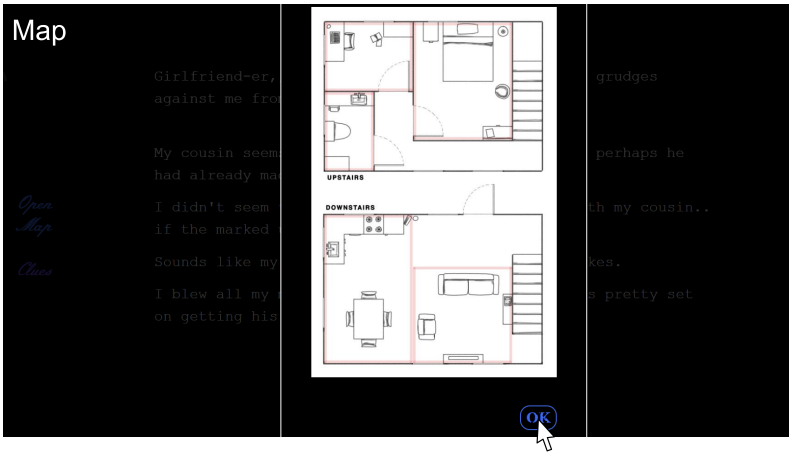
- Jennifer Light: Incorporating the script into Twine and twine functions/code
    - Naming cat ability and option to solve the case when all 8 clues are collected
- Anisa Wellington: Concept Builder; Twine story flow; POV drawings
- Joseph Zwiernikowski: Enhanced story flow

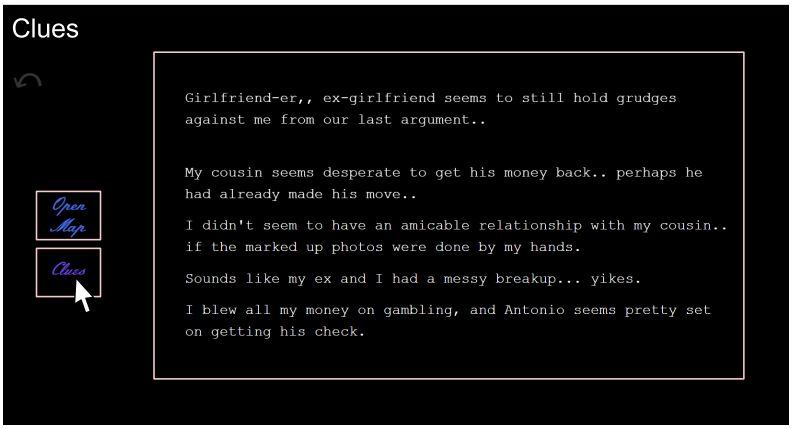
Game Play and Documentation

The player begins on the starting page of the game. They are to click the start button located near the bottom of the page, which leads them to the next stage of the story.

By clicking the blue links to continue in the story, the details of the main character, Buster, are explained with the help of a narrator and their cat. The player is given options to navigate the rooms in any order they want. On the sidebar, there includes the ‘Clues’ tab, which will include the clues of the story as the player collects them, and the ‘Map’ tab, which includes an image of the house plan.

These functions will help keep the game organized as the story progresses.





Further Developments

Although we finished the story of our game, and it is playable, there is some additional functionality we would like to add in the future to make it better. One concept we have in the game is memories which get unlocked when the player finds a clue that causes a flashback. One of our original ideas was to transport the player to a new scene each time a memory is unlocked, and have them relive the experience. We did not have time to implement this, but it would be a future goal of our game. In addition, adding a “memories” section to the sidebar where memories get collected could be a future addition that would make the game more organized. Lastly, adding more background drawings to the scenes would make the game feel more complete. As far as User Interface and Experience, we could work towards creating a better overall theme for the game, instead of just having a black background. Audio will also be considered, but according to some forum users, audio with Harlowe does not seem to be a good idea.