

Plates of Power Narrative Style Guide

Purpose:

Provide an easily accessible and referenceable guide to all things related to story and characters

Elevator Pitch

- Plates of Power is a roguelike game inspired by Latino Culture, emphasizing power, failure, and the importance of community. Returning home from college, Ale Zardoya learns of her sister's disappearance and must embrace her role of Champion and protect the town.

Narrative Pillars

- Communities supporting individual members: highlight how communities impact individuals and vice versa
- Low Player autonomy: The player can choose who they talk to and forge bonds with but they can't impact the ending of the story.
- Acceptance/self-actualization: Narratives drive characters to accept/realize things about themselves.

Plot Summary

Natalia Zardoya tries to bring Thiago Garcia back to Las Torres, but he's injured along the way. She uses her power to help Thiago, but it doesn't work. Natalia panics, causing her to output even more power, leading to an earthquake, and the town to be flooded with Los Miedosos.

Natalia's disappearance leads to Ale Zardoya (main character) taking up the role of Champion. Berto knows Natalia's alive, and says she's run off (since the Champion's power has a failsafe that allows the user to return home). No single person knows what happened to Nat, and the truth will be pieced together by talking to different NPCs in the game.

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Character Quick Reference

Name	Age	Role	Pronunciation	Pronouns	Personality
Ale Zardoya	21	Player	Ah -leh Zar-doy -ah	she/her	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarcastic • Disconnected from family • Determined
Berto Correa	looks ~50s (Over 500)	Mentor	Beh -rtow Co-ray -a	he/him	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot-headed • Grumpy • Huge sweet tooth
Mia Zardoya	15	Younger Sister	Mee -ah Zar-doy -ah	she/her	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aloof • Empathetic • Worried • Friendly, soft
Natalia Zardoya	27	Older Sister champion	Nah-tah -lia Zar-doy -ah	she/her	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent • Go-getter • Confident
Rosa Zardoya	52	Player's Mom Manager of Corazon de Arroz	Roh-sah Zar-doy -ah	she/her	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motherly, caring • Willing to make sacrifices for her family and community
Emilio Zardoya	49	Player's Dad Chef of Corazon de Arroz	Eh-mee -lee-oh Zar-doy -ah	he/him	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard worker • Lovable father • Loves cooking • Critical of the whole "Champion" role
Bruno Zardoya	72	Player's Abuelo Former Champion	Bru -noh Zar-doy -ah	he/him	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stubborn • Selfless • Handyman
Camila Zardoya	74	Player's Abuela	Cah-mee -lah Zar-doy -ah	she/her	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unofficial matriarch of the family • Loving • Firm
Arturo Garcia	looks ~40s	Worried Alteño Father	Ahr-too -roh Gahr-see -ah	he/him	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very stressed about his missing son • Was a goofy guy

Name	Age	Role	Pronunciation	Pronouns	Personality
Thiago Garcia	~looks 6	Injured Alteño child	Tee-yah-goh Gahr-see-ah	he/him	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innocent lil guy
Tito Gonzalez	75	Retired bartender of Corazon de Arroz	Tee-toh Gone-zah-lez	he/him	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jolly old man vibes • Content
Daniela Torres	30	Baker	Dan-yiel-a Toh-res	she/they	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident on the outside, but self-conscious • Very detail oriented
Ángel Torres	8	Fútbol kid (human)	Ahn-hel Toh-res	he/him	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reckless • Go-getter
Carmen Vazquez	54	Hairdresser	Car-men Vas-kehz	she/her	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honest (sometimes brutally honest) • Caring/frets • Good energy and positivity
Isa Vazquez	26	Geologist Ecologist	Ee-sah Vas-kehz	they/them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overworked, stressed (self inflicted) • Analytical • Friendly, curious
Elena Reyes	29	New Mother Lawyer	Eh-lay-nah Ray-es	she/her	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very professional • Has a “work-self” and “home-self”
Alonso Reyes	31	New Father Doctor	Ah-lohn-soh Ray-es	he/him	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always whistling or singing • Community and family-oriented
Maximiliano (Max) Reyes	9 months	Baby	Mah-xee-mee-lee-a h-noh Ray-es	he/him	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby
Yaneliz Hernandez	78	Nanny	Jah-neh-leese Ehr-nan-dehz	she/her	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motherly • Nosy • Lonely
Mariela Perez	30	Wine aunt Entitled woman	Mah-ri-eh-la Peh-rez	she/her	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obsessed with fashion/beauty • Marches to her own beat

Name	Age	Role	Pronunciation	Pronouns	Personality
Karina Mendoza	56	Town Gossip	Cah-ree-nah Men-doh-zah	she/her	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rough, judgemental exterior • Very vulnerable, interior
Javier Delgado	19	Fútbol Fan	Hah-vee-ehr Dehl-gah-doh	he/him	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loves fútbol • Very positive, happy-go-lucky guy
Valeria Acevedo	looks ~20s (in 70s)	Single Alteño Mom	Vah-lehr-ee-ah Ah-seh-veh-doh	she/her	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soccer mom • Determined, go-getter
Alana Acevedo	looks ~11	Fútbol kid (Alteño)	Ah-lah-nah Ah-seh-veh-doh	she/her	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dreams of playing fútbol for a living • Really interested in STEM
Miguel Miranda	22	Photographer	Mee-geh Mee-rahn-dah	he/they	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiting for the perfect picture • ADHD (photography is outlet)

Table of Names

A collection of all named items or places relating to the world, and a brief explanation. These are NOT characters.

Name	Description
Plates of Power	The name of the game Codenamed “Project Boca”
Puerto Oculto	The island which the game takes place on
Los Rios	The main town
Bajitos	Humans
Alteños	Alteños are the residents of Tierra Alta. Based off Vejigante Masks are used in celebrations and festivals in Puerto Rico representative of scaring away colonizers.
Tierra Baja	The Human Realm
Tierra Alto	The Alteño Realm
Hispania	The country that failed to colonize Puerto Oculto. The alteños came from Tierra Alto and scared them off.
Corazón de Arroz	Zardoya Family Restaurant
Crystal Cuts	Carmen’s Hair Salon
Sueños Dulces	Daniela’s Bakery
Reyes Medical Center	Alonso’s Clinic
Plaza del Sol	The Hub or Town Square
Champion	The “Chosen One” The person on the island who has power and role of escorting Alteños to the gates
El Corrodo	The “Corruption” The power from the Chosen One leaves corrupted artifacts, which can gather to create the game’s enemies
Mesmorite	A natural resource native to the Alteño Realm which absorbs the corruption Looks like a white/transparent crystal (Think salt crystals, quartz, or calcite)

Name	Description
Mesmorite Alloy	Refined Mesmorite Earth, Fire, and Water Alteños must come together to refine raw mesmorite into a usable material This is what the player's weapons are made out of
El Miedoso Los Miedosos	The game's enemies (based on common fears)
Primordial Guardians	The Three Primordial Guardians of each gate to Tierra Alta. These Guardians control different elements (fire, water, earth). These Guardians assist Alteños in returning to their realm
Behemoth	“The Behemoth” The Guardian of Earth and ancestor to all Earth Alteños (in MQP scope)
Leviathan	“The Leviathan” The Guardian of water and ancestor to all Water Alteños (not in MQP scope)
Ziz	“The Ziz” The Guardian of air/fire and ancestor to all Fire Alteños (not in MQP scope)
Las Torres	The Behemoth’s Gate Based on El Morro in Puerto Rico
LeviathanGateName	The Leviathan’s Gate
ZizGateName	The Ziz’s Gate
Core Stones	These stones is what the corruption forms around, creating the “fear enemies” Isa will trade you items for the core stones (Essentially per-run form of currency)
Plume	Main form of currency Player can accumulate currency across runs
Corrodito	Main form of EXP Player uses the EXP to get upgrades at the skill tree
The Recycler	Skill Tree or upgrade system This is at the training grounds and overseen by Berto
The Corrosion	The name for the power that all alenos have and the power given to the Champion
Plates	The general name for power-ups that you receive after each encounter Based on meals, snacks, desserts, etc.
Sister Blades	The Champion’s weapon

Lore Summary

Alteños

Alteños are bipedal, horned creatures. The Alteños and bajitos teamed up to drive away the colonizers as they damaged both realms lands.

All Alteños come from an ancestor, which is one of three Primordial Guardians, either the Behemoth, the Leviathan, or the Ziz. Alteños de Terra come from the Behemoth (earth domain). Aqua Alteños come from the Leviathan (water domain) and fuego Alteños come from the Ziz (air and fire domain).

Tierra Alta and Tierra Baja

The Alteño realm (tierra Alta) sits directly on top of the bajito realm (tierra Bajo), kind of like a blanket. They share the same geography, and changes to tierra Baja can directly affect tierra Alta. It's easy to travel from Tierra Alta to Tierra Baja, but not vice versa. Bajitos also physically cannot go to Tierra Alta, only Alteños.

Travel between Realms

1. Alteños can use their innate power to create a divide to travel through.
2. Alteños can fall through existing divides between the realms.
3. Gates. This is the safest and most reliable form of transportation. Each gate is effective with one type of Alteño, and has its respective Primordial Guardian

Primordial Guardians

There are 3 Primordial Guardians for each gate: the Behemoth, the Leviathan, and the Ziz, which represent earth, water, and air respectively. The Ziz's power (air) manifests as air and fire. In both realms, there are gates for each of the creatures. They are ancestors to all Alteños of their kind (Alteños de terra, Alteños de aqua, and Alteños de fuego respectively).

The Behemoth is a bull-like creature known for its size and strength. Its gate is at Las Torres.

The Leviathan is an iguana-like creature.

The Ziz is a bird-like creature.

Alteño Power

All Alteños have an innate, energy based power mixed with their lineage power. It is also the power gifted to the champion. When we begin the game, the player has a fraction of the power the champion normally has for training purposes. The roguelike aspect unlocks the full potential of the Alteños' power.

Enemies

A side effect of using any form of the Alteños power is El Corrodo. While minuscule, expanding the Alteños' power releases negative energy.

This energy latches onto rocks, stones, or minerals and gains a shape. These stones are referred to as Core Stones. This creates Los Miedos, which the player needs to destroy and absorb. Los Miedos are a reaction/manifestation of people's fears. Berto claims that the earthquake has caused a massive influx of enemies to appear.

Common fears (brainstormed below)

- Being forgotten
- Loneliness/abandonment
- Insects/Spiders
- Heights
- Snakes
- Tight Spaces
- The Dark
- Public Speaking
- Lack of Control(?)
- Losing someone/something you love
- Death
- Medical Complications(?)
- Failure
- Being stagnant/complacent
- Being vulnerable
- Accepting help
- Blood
- Airplanes/flying?
- Dogs
- Germs/Dirt
- Thunder and Lightning
- Holes (tryptophobia)
- Fire
- Unknown
- Rejection

Mesmorite

In Tierra Alto, a mineral known as Mesmorite absorbs and breaks down El Corrodo and recycles it. The weapons that the champion wields are made up of a mesmerite alloy. These weapons repurpose the broken-down El Corrodo, giving the user some of the expended energy back.

Las Torres: The Behemoth Gate

An old fortress built by Hispania during their attempt to colonize Puerto Oculto. It is the only remnant left from the island's colonial era. It is based off of El Morro in Puerto Rico. It stands at the edge of Los Rios and is the site of the Behemoth's gate.

Brief History

Puerto Oculto

Puerto Oculto is a secluded island in the Atlantic Ocean. The rest of the world sees it as dangerous and inhospitable due to Hispania's failed attempt to colonize the island a couple of hundred years ago.

(Failed) Colonization

Immigrants and natives lived together peacefully → Hispania invaded → Alteños intervened → alliance between natives and Alteños, creating the role of champion.

Some time after the champion role was created, Los Miedos started to pop up. To remedy this, the Alternos gifted the champion a sword made from mesmerite.

Culture

Plates of Power is inspired by Puerto Rican and Argentinian culture, as seen through many aspects of the game (some of which include...)

- Food
- Music and Dance
- Language and Dialect
- Mythology
- Architecture
- Family Dynamics and Values
- Clothing and Fashion
- Sports

Food

The Grasslands are on the West side of Puerto Oculto. Ranches and farms, animals include cattle, pigs, and horses. Crops include corn, rice, and wheat.

In the city, many people have greenhouses, window gardens, or rooftop gardens. They typically grow crops that take up less space, such as tomatoes or cucumbers.

Common dishes include:

- Alcapurria
- Alfajores
- Asada
- Bacalaito
- Cafe con leche
- Choripan
- Empanada
- Empanadilla
- Lechon/cuero
- Mate
- Media luna
- Merengue
- Passionfruit juice and soda
- Piragua
- Sandwiches de migra
- Tembleque
- Tostones

Music

Popular genres: trap, tango, salsa, reggaeton, bachata, and plena

Popular instruments: accordion, guitar, guiro, cuatro, bongo, and trumpet

Technology

The island is small, so cars are unnecessary, but many people have bikes or scooters. Cars are mostly used to transport goods or cross the grasslands.

Puerto Oculto has technology closer to the early-mid 2000s. They have their own isolated network.

Machine parts and technological parts are some of the *only* imports that the island has, since they don't have these resources naturally (they are self-sustaining otherwise)

Fútbol

Fútbol is incredibly popular on Puerto Oculto. It has a tendency to bring people together and tear people apart, but they remain united in their love of the game.

There are four main teams on the island. Three of the teams' mascots are inspired by the Primordial Guardians, the last representing the suburbs of Los Ríos.

Friendship System

Overview

We want to create a system that encourages building relationships with community members and being there for other people. The player chooses who to forge bonds with or spend time with.

Thus, there will be no “standard gift” that you can give to anyone because we want to avoid the feeling of “buying friendship.” There will be gifts to other characters, but these are specific to each character.

As you progress in a relationship, there may be certain obstacles that the player must overcome to continue building that relationship. We call these obstacles “locks.”

The point system is used for code only.

Types of Characters

There are multiple types of characters. Different types of characters have varying story arc lengths, number of total friendship points, and number of locks.

- Primary Characters: Ale, Mia, Rosa, and Berto, 20 Points to reach max friendship, 8 major story beats (roughly), 2-3 locks
- Secondary Characters: Yaya, Isa, Daniela, (Emilio if time), 10 points to max friendship, 4 major story beats (roughly), 1-2 locks
- Tertiary Character: Nobody right now (due to scope), No beats or locks, 8 points to reach max friendship, You can grow closer to these characters and have deeper conversations, but no beats (they may throw in a fun fact, or be more open to you)
- Standard Characters: Everyone else, These characters are named, and you can have a conversation with them, but they don't have a story arc, No points, beats, or locks.

Methods of Building Friendship

- Conversation (default interaction): Friendship is mainly earned through conversations in the hub, or saving someone during a run (Talking in the hub: +1 point, Saving someone: +2 points, Failing to save someone: +0 points)
- Gifts: these are per-character gifts (not collectibles you can give to anyone)
- Favors/Assistance: player completes a favor or provides assistance to another character

Friendship Locks

Per character, there may be one or multiple “locks” on the story arc. This means the player must do something before they can progress the story arc of that character

Types of Locks

- Action-based locks
 - Ale does something for another character (giving a gift or doing a favor)
- Interaction-based Locks
 - Based on interactions with other characters and player knowledge

Narrative Pipeline

Creating Characters

1. Draft the character profile (profile template below)
2. Iterate on the profile (at least 2 versions for minor characters, 3-4 for major characters)
3. If applicable, plot narrative beats (what does their story arc look like?)
4. Align story beats to friendship point level, and place locks on certain story events
5. Write conversations and character barks
6. Iterate on conversations and barks (at least two sets of revisions)
7. Review and create a dialogue ruleset (how do they speak?)

Character Profile Template

Name: _____

- Pronouns:
- Description:
- Apparent Age:
- Most noticeable feature:
- Defining Detail:
- Character Line:
- Story:
- Origin:
- Physical Description:
- Social Situation:
- Mental State:
- Fears:
- Problem:

Story Beat Template and Example

For primary characters:

Point Level	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	20
Beat								

Example (Daniela Torres):

Secondary Character: 10 points

Point Level	2	5	6	10
Beat	Daniela checks in and sees if her goods still have the effect on the champion's power, worried that it won't work on you and make her "useless"	She accidentally serves you a burnt pastry (gives lower stats) and freaks out	Daniela is relieved when Ale comes back after burnt pastry and confesses she thought Ale wouldn't return after that and reveals low self-esteem	Ale convinces Daniela to go out and socialize without bringing sweets and build relationships outside of the bakery to improve their self-esteem

Dialogue Ruleset Template

- Common words and phrases:
- Words and phrases they would never say:
- Preferred filler words:
- How they refer to the player:
- How they refer to other characters:
- Speaking patterns (accuracy, exaggeration, formality):
- Any additional quirks:

Brief Look into Crucial Characters

Ale

- Full Name: Ale Zardoya
- Role: Protagonist
- Pronouns: she/her, he/him, or they/them
- Personality Traits:
 - Sarcastic
 - Disconnected from family, but still deeply cares for them
 - Determined to find her sister at all costs
 - Wants to be independent (step out of her sister's shadow)
- Character Lines:
 - "You'd think the Champion can take care of herself."
 - "Why me?"



Berto

- Full Name: Roberto Correa
- Role: Mentor
- Pronouns: he/him
- Personality Traits:
 - Grumpy, hot headed, snarky
 - Deep down, he really cares about the player and is rooting for them
 - Huge sweet tooth
 - Very good teacher, when he actually teaches you
- Character Line:
 - "Back already? You miss me or something?"
 - "Dale! More kicking ass."



Mia

- Full Name: Mia Zardoya
 - Role: Younger Sister
 - Pronouns: he/him
 - Personality Traits:
 - Aloof to the player at first. Upset with you leaving
 - Worried about Natalia's disappearance
 - At her core, she's incredibly empathetic and sensitive to how others' are feeling
 - Will always care for you/tend to your injuries
 - Character Line:
 - "You're back? Huh..."
 - "Leaving again? Figures."
-

*Rosa*

- Full Name: Rosa Zardoya
 - Role: Mom
 - Pronouns: he/him
 - Personality Traits:
 - Motherly and incredibly caring
 - Willing to make sacrifices for the benefit of her family or community
 - Manages the family restaurant, deals with the stress of business
 - Often sacrifices making a profit for helping others
 - Strong moral compass
 - She puts a lot of pressure on Natalia to be a symbol for the community. Her father was the previous Champion, so she has high expectations
 - Character Line:
 - "Someone has to be there for the community."
 - "Let me know what I can do to help."
-



Daniela

- Full Name: Daniela Torres
- Role: Baker
- Pronouns: he/him
- Personality Traits:
 - Appears confident and headstrong on the outside, but self-conscious on the inside
 - Worried that her relationships are transactional (she only has them because of her delicious baked goods)
 - Always baking, puts pressure on herself to be the best
 - Extremely detail oriented, makes sure everything is perfect
- Character Line:
 - “I’ve never found a problem that a little sugar couldn’t fix.”



Yaya

- Full Name: Yaneliz Hernandez
- Role: Nanny
- Pronouns: he/him
- Personality Traits:
 - Very empathetic and caring
 - Loves romance
 - Often tries to set up younger folks on dates
 - Nosy
 - Lonely, she wants other people to spend time with
 - She doesn’t want to be a burden on others
 - Tries to be independent, and doesn’t like asking for help
- Character Line:
 - “Oh, I know you’re busy with your new role, but you should really take time for yourself. I found the perfect boy, 4.0, a goalie, and quite the looker if I do say so myself.”



Isa

- Full Name: Isa Vazquez
- Role: Geologist/Ecologist
- Pronouns: they/them
- Personality Traits:
 - Very interested in geology and rock formations
 - Puts a lot of pressure to make a name for themselves
 - The issues in town seem to be related to rocks or minerals, and they want to help however they can
 - Overworked, stressed
 - Very analytical, focuses on science and discovery
 - Friendly, curious
- Character Line:
 - “Got more stones for me? Let me take a look at those beauties”



Emilio

- Full Name: Emilio Zardoya
- Role: Dad
- Pronouns: he/him
- Personality Traits:
 - Very hard worker, and dedicated (to his job and community)
 - Lovable father
 - Enjoys cooking for the family, he likes being able to provide meals and bring people together
 - Critical of the whole “Champion” role
 - Feels that Rosa is putting way too much pressure on Natalia, and Berto is a bad influence
- Character Line:
 - “You’re stronger than you think you are, Ale.”
 - “Hungry? I can whip up some tostones for ya!”



Bruno

- Full Name: Bruno
 - Role: Abuelo
 - Pronouns: he/him
 - Personality Traits:
 - Cranky because Berto took the Champion power back from him (doesn't hold that against you though)
 - Overall, he's a very warm, sweet old man
 - He's very handy and fixes whatever he can (uses it as a distraction these days)
 - Like other Champions, he's very independent and determined
 - Admired by pretty much everyone in town. He helped a lot of people when he was Champion
 - Character Line:
 - "No no no, dame lo, I'll fix it"
 - "Y, dime algo, how's it going with Berto? Let him know I can come back."
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