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### Critical Paper on The Wolf Among Us

In this paper I will be critically analyzing the storyline of The Wolf Among Us. I will be specifically talking about the section in where Bigby (the protagonist) needs to check on a case from a call he received. He goes on to investigate the case to only to find an even bigger mystery. My reasoning is to find out why the story is very compelling and what might have led the scriptwriters write in a particular way with the story. In the end, I hope to find answers to how to make a story more compelling which in the end makes the game more fun. Lastly, I also would want to use what I have learned to help me develop stories as well.

In the first minute of the game, the introduction scene takes the player first to what seems to be a bridge in a park. Then, the camera transitions into the city, which gives the player the location in which the game is set in. The camera then takes the player to a car where the player gets to meet the main character, though they don't know his name yet. The camera transitions to the game title and transitions back to showing the man again. Finally, the game tells you then that you are in the Tenement Building in the South Bronx. The main player then proceeds to go inside of the building.

This first cut scene from the game is an interesting start. Where most games decides to tell the player background information, this game does not. Instead, it takes

you to what seems to be a bridge in a park with the radio playing. This gives the player a clue that this location will become important later in the game. This is very important because they choose to show this location first even before showing any character. The next thing the player sees is then the city. This gives the player a location in which the game is set. The game then finally shows you a character in the back of a car, which leads you to believe that they are in a taxi. However, because its dark outside it difficult to tell. This might be a small clue to the game. The setting starts off at night. The night symbolizes how hard it is it is to see and how hard it could be to tell if the people around are not to be trusted. The scriptwriter could have set the game during the day. But the day is seen as something that is happy, where nothing can hide. Also with the night that is when most crime happen. By deducing, clearly most of the things that will happen in the game will occur at night. Finally, the game gives you a clear location. The player is in New York City specifically in the Bronx. The Bronx has a lot of history of having terrible crimes and its residents doing illegal activities. With this location the main character is there probably looking for trouble. Also it being dark shows that he is there for something.

After the main character enters the building, he talks to a toad named Mr. Toad. They talk about glamour and why Mr. Toad doesn't have his glamour on. The toad calls the man Bigby and Bigby talks about how he just follows the law and doesn't make them. He goes up stairs and at that point the game becomes interactive, allowing the player to look around the environment. The player hears a commotion going on in that same environment and walks into the to find the happening the player sees a man slapping a woman. Bigby then goes to defend the woman, which then leads to an altercation.

At this point the player is still left with many questions but just a few answers. This is where the player starts to get drawn in because of the lack of information. The player finally gets to know the characters name, Bigby. They also learn that he has something to do with the law meaning he might be a cop. This is not factual yet because Bigby isn't wearing any uniform and road a taxi to where the problem was occurring. You also learn that witches are real and that they supply glamour that is probably a potion to hid the way creatures look. This shows that these creatures live amongst the human but hide (this could be also compared to the night as well). The player then gets to select a dialogue they want to say before going up stairs. The game then switches to the interaction part. This allows for the player to see how the game machines work early on in the game so they can get used to it. Finally, going in the door to see the problem the player is confronted with an altercation. The dialogue between Bigby and the man seem to indicate that Bigby is the big bad wolf from Little Red Riding Hood, and the man is the woodsman that cut him open to save little red and her grandmother. This makes sense with the title and also why his name is Bigby. This introduces the character to another character from a fable, meaning that maybe all of the characters in this game must be from fables as well (including Mr. Toad). This leads to the question what are fable characters doing in New York?

After finishing the fight with the Woodsman, Bigby then proceeds to talk to the woman that was severely injured. Interrupted by the woodsman again both of then fight one more time only to fall out of the window. The fight continues outside where Bigby is being choked by the woodsman. Bigby eyes start to turn yellow and his teeth began to grow but before he could do anything the woman hit the man with an axe. Bigby

proceeds to talk to her only to then turn around and see that the woodsman is gone. He finishes his talk with the woman and they both leave.

The fight scene allowed for the player to learn how the fighting mechanics work with in the game. The most interesting dialogue yet with the young woman how you never figured out her name. She is wearing a very tight low cut shirt with a black short skirt. Her wanting money that is owed to her by the woodsman leads the game to think that the girl is a prostitute. However, what makes her stand out is the purple ribbon she wears around her neck. Most prostitutes just want to look slutty in order to attract men. So why would she wear a ribbon? When it came time for Bigby to talk to her she couldn't say anything that can make him understand what was truly happening. The young woman says that she is, "I'm answering them, the best that I can." Her statement is very interesting. If she want to genuinely answer the question she would, and it doesn't seem like she wants to hide the truth from Bigby. She is basically saying that she wants to can't. This implies that someone above her is making sure she keep his or her secret or her life will be at stake. Even when it came down for her to talk she would try and change the subject. She would say, "Hey, you like my ribbon?" as a way to change the topic. What never made sense is why she would change the topic by talking about her ribbon. She could have talked about so much other things. This leads to the question is there something about the ribbon that she wants us to know? She is showing the character the ribbon as if she is trying to send him a message, which is very unclear. But by her pointing it out and the camera zooming in on the ribbon shows that this just like the bridge will play an important part to the story. With the conversation the player gets to find out that fable characters are stronger. The player also learns that Bigby may actual

now how to turn into an actual wolf but is hiding for a reason. With the old story of Little Red Riding Hood and Bigby being the bad guy in the story is showing how he wants to change and not be associated with his past actions. Finally the last interesting thing is what the young woman said. When it came time for her to talk, she couldn't tell Bigby what happen. She could have said "I'm not talking" but that would imply that she is taking it upon herself to hide something. Instead what she said, " These lips are sealed....Sorry." Meaning that her lips cannot tell him what he wants to now because someone sealed it for her. She never said, "My lips are sealed" because that would imply against that she is doing it. By her saying it the other way is showing that someone is doing it to her, and that she is sorry she cant tell Bigby what he wants to now.

In just the first 18 minutes of the game, and many players would have been hooked just like I was. The reason why this game is very compelling is because of its story. This is an interactive traditional story. It does have decision making in the game but its structure isn't really greatly changed. The ending will still be the same and it won't really change the sequence of the story as well. "The player is given a degree of freedom to interact with the world and characters." (pg 130-131). In the book Interactive Storytelling for Video Games it says that an interactive traditional story can still be fun if the decision a player makes matters. The Wolf Among Us does just that. It first draws a player in b not given them the whole entire storyline. It gives them just enough answers that still lead them to more questions. This forces the player to play the game in order to know what is going on but by then they are hooked. The game also allows for the player to make their own decisions, which is critical for a game so that the player can feel like they are in the game and not an outsider looking in. The game also has a marker that

shows the player when one of their choices will impact the game and how the character will look at you. Music, voice acting, art, and sound effect are also very important and are needed to help get the player to be more drawn into the game. However, without a strong base everything else will fall apart and that base is the story. It's the driving force that gives the player a goal to move through the game. It gives the player a purpose and satisfaction once the game is over. All of this because of a compelling story which The Wolf Among Us was able to achieve. It was the attention to detail and making everything they put into each scene important to the overall story that makes the game good.

Everything that is placed in the game has a purpose, it wasn't just put there to make the game look pretty. That's why the game is very fun and why players are willing to play the game with only a bit of information. The player knows that at the end everything will be resolved and they will have a satisfaction winning the game.

What the scriptwriters in Telltale games were able to make is very complex. It probably took them many versions of this story before finally having the final version. What I have learned while creating a story while in class is that you can't start a game before finalizing the story. It will only cause you so many problems. Every time having to go back to change something only to change the structure of the game. I had to change the game at least ten times and I'm still not done changing it. I've learned how difficult it is to make a story compelling and have the player have more difficulties to make a decision. The makers of The Wolf Among Us probably made a draft of the whole game as a story first. This way they would know everything from beginning, middle, and end. Then they will have to make the story into an interactive story with decisions. This way the story can be made into a game. But it's not very simple. Not only did they have to figure out

dialogue but also how the scene will look like, how the character will react, the facial expression they have to show, how the camera will be angled, what sound would be played as well, what the character will be doing, and how it will transition to the next scene. It takes a lot to finalize this draft only to have be play tested and shredded into pieces. Then they will have to go back and make changes until they finally have a compelling story. This is only made possible by play testing very new version they had. When they finally had the final version they will add in any last finishing things before it can finally be made into a game.

Furthermore, Telltale games probably took a few years before having a final story that was complete enough to be made into a game. Through all of this I've learned a few things that I will take with me before making a game. One, never start a game without first finalizing the story. Two, the first few draft will never be the last. Three, when writing I need to also consider how the characters will look like, what they will be doing, how the camera will be angled, this way when its made into a game it will be a much soother transition. Finally four always play test the story or else most of the efforts will go to waste if nobody likes it. With theses few things I will incorporate when I write to become a better scriptwriter. The Wolf Among Us is a very fun game to play but don't take my word for it try it out. You will see that once you make it to the end of the game that you will start to understand the beginning, just like I found out.

Works Cited

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