A Fable of the Owl and the Grasshopper	Reece Buckle (rtb1c17) & Kritagya Gurung (kg4g18)

How does your Story Engine work?

How does the narrative impact the game world?

Depending on the player's narrative journey, they may decide to interact certain characters more on subsequent days, or investigate other things further. Interactions with certain characters unlock new areas to explore and objects / evidence to find. For example:

- If the player talks to the sellsword (day 3), they receive a contract which the player can use in their decision on day 4
- If the player talks to the old man (day 3), they can search for a conspiracy letter which the player can decide to read/take and use in their decision on day 4
- If the player talks to Robin / Baker on day 2, they'll gain access to the Tavern
- If the player talks to Ibis / Scarlett on day 2, they'll gain access to the Owl House
- The player can skip any of these interactions limiting their options on day 4.

How does the game world impact the narrative?

The player has a journal - based system which they use to record information about the gameworld during gameplay. During the final day, if the player didn't unlock access to the Tavern / Owl House, their ability to find information and record in their journal is limited which ultimately what options they'll be presented with at the end. Finally they get to choose how to act on day 4 which again affects the ending sequence.

We also use a number of actions per day feature which means the player has to carefully choose who they wish to interact with on each day as they cannot interact with everyone! This is 3 out of 4 people on day 1 and 2, and 3 out of 5 people on day 3.

Feedback and Response

Feedback Given	Response
Themes of Romeo and Juliet (tragedy) vs Grasshopper and Owl theme might confuse the theme being portrayed - "Might feel like using a large crowbar to fit it in" Consider coming up with our own original idea to avoid clashing themes, or stating "this is not a story of Romeo and Juliet…" in order to tell a different story / theme altogether	Instead of creating a Romeo and Juliet spin-off where the overall theme is tragedy, we modified our storyboard plan and created our own character names and profiles so the player didn't have any Romeo and Juliet tragedy pre-conceptions. Our narrative now uses (Ibis - House Owl, typically the Grasshopper House's enemy) to illustrate deception and flattery to end House Grasshopper. Because a lot of planning was already done, the overall theme of two houses was still used, but for the final ending 1, we instead took inspiration from Game of Thrones' infamous red wedding.
Place more story focus on what happens with the player's story, with Romeo and Juliet in the background.	We put more emphasis on the player's perspective of the world however the ending sequences are still primarily built around the other characters that the player interacted with due to the heavy planning that we had already outlined.

Consider how gameplay affects narrative e.g. player gaining trust with someone in the opposing house in order to access new areas / interactables	We incorporated a total of 4 pivotal actions in which the gameplay changes the narrative options available to the player. However, it could be argued that every interaction impacts the player's narrative journey. Furthermore, the use of an action point system forces the player to consider their decisions carefully on each playthrough

Feedback from Playtesting

1. Playtester didn't realise the letter / contract were added to journal so missed this feature
    a. Change: manually displayed this when found
2. Playtester ended day prematurely on first day by accident
    a. Change: added a large warning prompt
3. Playtester spammed E in some situations (changing buildings/sleeping)
    a. Change: added a 1 second interaction cooldown + smooth transition
4. Playtester skipped some of the lengthier dialogue parts
    a. Change: made sentences as short as possible with only the important information
5. Playtester occasionally left during interaction and missed important dialogue
    a. Change: we froze their position until initiated interaction was complete
6. Playtester didn't quite understand the ending outcome:
    a. Change: added more information to this!

Narrative Structure

- The story is based on the Owl and the Grasshopper fable and occurs over 4 days and is told via the player's perspective of the NPCs that reside in the world
- The decision points and agency are represented by the action system in which the player has to choose carefully who to interact with on each day
- Day 1 is insignificant to any ending outcome and serves as a tutorial level for the player to become familiar with the limited action - point system.
- **Day 1**: the player will typically learn about the history between the two houses, and Robin and Scarlett's desire to get married. This day encapsulates the illusion of choice.
- **Day 2**: the player's agency is realised as the player can talk to NPCs to gain access to new locations on days 2 & 3. Although it is possible to skip interactions and thus not unlock the Tavern / Owl House on day 2 & 3, most players will logically exhaust all their action points which guarantees they'll have all options available on day 3 regardless of who they talk to.
- **Day 3**: the player's agency has a major impact on the available ending choices that they'll be presented with on day 4. This is when they need to search for incriminating evidence to arrest Ibis and warn Robin
- **Day 4**: the player is presented with a choice based on the information they found on subsequent days. This leads to an animation ending sequence:
    - **Ending 1 (Robin's murder)** is always available
    - **Ending 2 (Secret wedding)** requires the player to find at least one peace of evidence in order to warn Robin not to attend the feast.
    - **Ending 3 (Arresting Ibis)** requires the player to both find the letter (interact with old man in Owl House day 3) and contract (interact with sellsword in Tavern day 3)
- The player is then redirected to the main menu and presented with the ability to replay the game to unlock the other endings
- See Appendix A for the full narrative story board

Appendix A

Max 3 actions a day

Start:

Old man → Wants houses to be together to end conflict

Talk to Robin → Info regarding wedding e.g location, time

Talk to Scarlett → Plans to ask for her Father's permission

Talk to Baker → Tensions are growing between the two houses

In **Day 1**, you can talk to the Old man, Robin, Scarlett or the Baker and you will receive basic information about the world and the current event.

In **Day 2**, you can interact with Ibis, Robin, Scarlett and the Baker and from these interactions, you gain more information as well as getting access to new locales such as the tavern.

Day 2: Start

Talk to Ibis → Has invited you to his household

Talk to Scarlett → Ibis wishes to throw a wedding feast

Talk to Robin → Plans to celebrate at the Tavern tomorrow

Talk to Baker → The news about the wedding is now public

Owl's house is now accessible

The tavern is now accessible notification

In **Day 3**, you can talk to Ibis on the main town level. If you have the tavern unlocked, you can talk to the Sellsword, Robin and Scarlett. If you have the Owl's House unlocked, then you can talk to the old man and investigate the bookshelf for clues. The Sellsword interaction and the bookshelf interaction are key for unlocking more "pivotal actions" and thus more endings. If you do not have either locations mentioned above unlocked, you can simply rest at your house to avoid being softlocked.

Day 3: Start

Is Owl's house grounds accessible? → Yes

Talk to Ibis → Is making preparations

Is the tavern accessible? → Yes / Yes / Yes

Talk to Old man → Ibis is making preparations in his study

Investigate Bookshelf → You find the conspiracy letter

Talk to Sellsword → Ibis is hiring sellswords, learn about the contract

Talk to Robin → Intends to go the feast tomorrow

Talk to Scarlett → Has invited you to the feast

Has both pieces of evidence been found?
- Yes → Can now accuse owl (As a pivotal action)
- No → Can now warn couple (As a pivotal action)

Some of these choices do not add any additional information

Depending on the information in your Journal, different options will be available

Accuse the Owl of conspiring against Robin and his house → You see the contract and conspiracy note. This is meant to be the Best ending.

Let the marriage go through, "nothing will happen" → Not enough significant information, this choice is always open

Warn the couple to run away → Upon discovery of contract, conspiracy letter or both

KEY

Game condition Check

Possible action

Start / End (Except *)

Note

Information Gain (Recorded in Journal)

New option / action available

Event day:

Marriage goes through like nothing happened

Ibis accused?

Couple warned?

Marriage goes through like nothing happened → Yes → Robin dies

Couple warned? → Yes → Both Robin and Scarlett survive, but they leave town

Play a cutscene for each ending

Ibis accused? → Yes → Both Robin and Scarlett survive and stay together