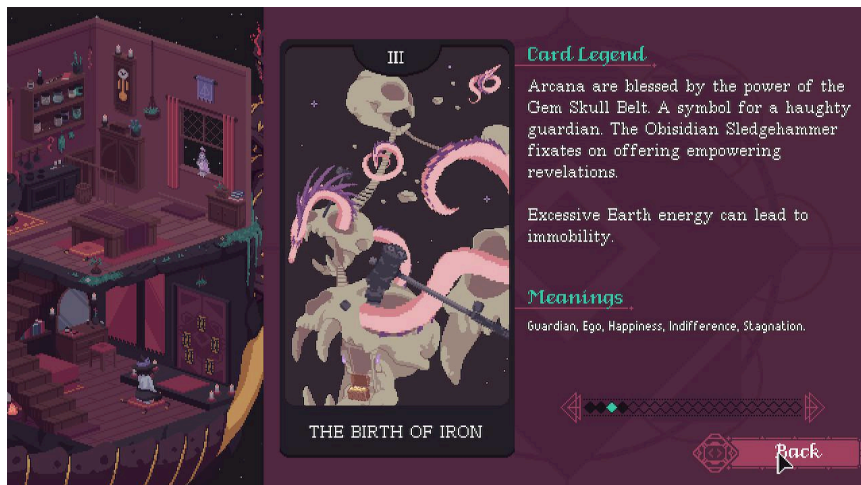


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For this assignment, we chose the game *The Cosmic Wheel Sisterhood*. This is a 2D visual narrative where you play as Fortuna, a witch who was exiled by her coven. You give tarot card readings while also seeing your future being played out.

One choice players face is choosing dialogue lines that describe yourself (whether you answered from what Fortuna would choose or based on your moral values). This type of dialogue choice would ask you about “How do you want to be perceived?” to “What do you want to become your main source of determination?”. A note is that the character asking Fortuna these questions always emphasized how “Choices will alter your fate”. Another type of choice you get to make in game is what elements you want to build for your tarot card (each card requires a base, arcane, symbol). After you choose from all three categories, you get the opportunity to customize your tarot card via moving, rotating, and adding/deleting elements associated with the characteristics you chose. Different combinations of these elements and the placement of these elements will change how your card gets perceived and you’ll only find out after you choose all three categories. The last type of choice you get to make is whether you welcome visitors to your home or not. If you don’t invite any visitors in, you only have the option to make a tarot card. But the order of choosing these things matter (ex: making a tarot card then

inviting a visitor). When a visitor is welcomed into your home, you will eventually do a reading for them. If you made a new tarot card, this tarot card would show up for the visitor in the reading (which can offer different futures for that character). But if you didn’t, the deck would recycle your current cards.



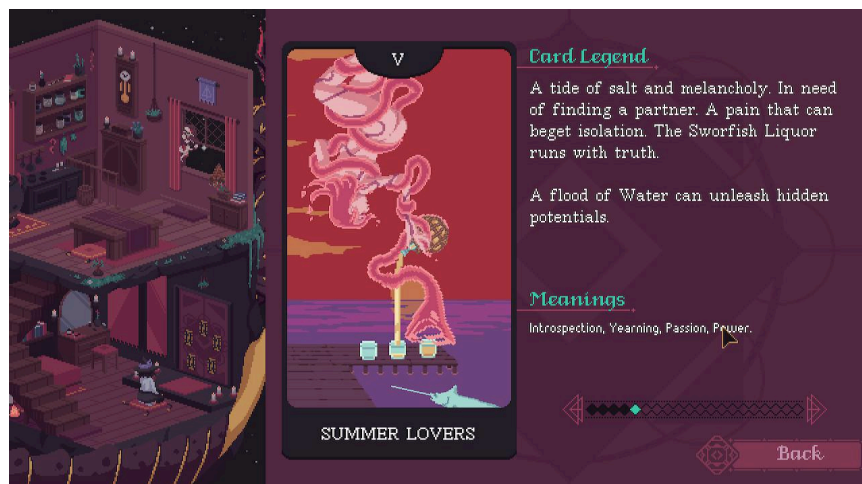
We decided to play this game together. Since the game was broken down into chapters, each person got to play one whole chapter (new dialogue sequence to end of the tarot card creation), while the others watched and commented on the gameplay. But when we were given a choice in dialogue, we did a voting process and a 2/3 majority vote. These choices were acting in response from Fortuna’s perspective. We tried to choose the answer most sounding like Fortuna but also trying to make the most morally reasonable long term decision. With three people there most discussions boiled down to decisions for Role play and Avatar play. As the Game carried on however, we switched to only voting on decisions that hinted, either explicitly or implicitly, they would have long-term ramifications. This was mostly to speed up the process, and deciding whether a choice was important fell to whoever was playing the game at that time.

In addition, when we got to the card making process, whoever was in control was given creative liberty to make a card. We did have limited resources determining what kind of cards could be made, so the player also had to work within those limitations. The Base, Arcana, and Symbol of the card all cost resources and had stats mirroring their cost. In general though we all tried to fill out our deck conceptually, trying our best to have each new card made tie into some concept the current deck wasn't representing. This could qualify as Power play, though we were shooting more for a variety of concepts from our understanding of the cards, not the stats the game assigns. In this way it arguably is closer to Role Play.

Lastly there were readings. When delivering someone's fortune, you draw a random card from the deck and are given a list of ways to read it based on the card's stats. The menu will show the amount of total possible readings, but only let you actually read the ones you can choose. Each reading in

addition will give you different kinds of resources. We chose these readings democratically, but were often split between trying to give a reasonable sounding reading (Role play) and trying to get more of resources we were low on (Power play).

Cosmic Wheel Sisterhood was mostly salience-based storylets, with the next event being chosen for the player. The one exception was when both Fortuna's closest friends gave the player a choice who visits first. So far the most obvious impactful choice seems to be the four dialog choices to describe Fortuna when you first unlock each resource. When picked, flags are raised that explicitly affect outcomes in the story. In our playthrough, we said we wanted Fortuna to be pitied and as a direct result a character acting on behalf of the government granted Fortuna visitation rights, unlocking multiple



storylets with other characters. Other dialogue choices so far have had no obvious effect. However the reading choices do affect future storylets. We were unable to verify if it also affects which storylets are accessible.

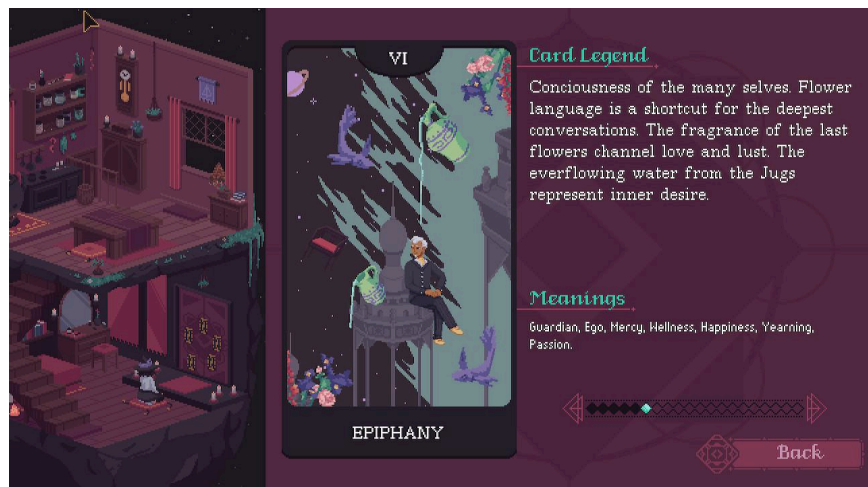
We believe this overall our methods were quite beneficial because we could gain insight on



people's different perspectives on making choices. It was also quite interesting how our team also used different modes of engagement throughout the game. At the Prologue Chapter, we tended to take more of an approach to Role Play. We came into playing with the mindset of playing with Fortuna's perspective as priority. Since this is a decision making game that shows impact on what you choose, we valued the idea of seeing the outcome if we played as closely as to what Fortuna would have done.

Although we were analyzing the game, both Analytical and Exploratory play were unintentionally kept at a minimum. Even though Role play and Power play were the most predominant form of engagement, the wiggle room for who Fortuna is as a character allowed for a certain amount of Avatar play early on. Our version of Fortuna was definitely informed by who we are as people and what we would want from Fortuna's situation.

The Readings and, as a result, the Tarot card making process were probably the most emotionally impactful choices in the game. Since readings predict the future or show truths about the participant, they felt more like defining reality than trying to understand it. This not only made the readings tense as they offered opportunities to affect the characters' fates, but since readings are limited by the cards you draw, made the actual crafting of the deck more cerebral, as thought had to be put to both what the card could mean in a reading AND how the balance of the deck would affect the odds of reading good or bad outcomes. Easily the highest energy moments of our playthrough was when a card was being drawn for a reading, because it both was a tense moment that would dramatically paint the direction of the reading, but also was when we had to switch to make a decision regarding how to read it. The tension on making a decision was only heightened by the fact that the game shows you the total amount of possible readings, while only letting you read the ones you can make. It drew into stark relief how many possible futures the player COULD have picked from if they'd only made/drawn a different card, and made the player feel trapped with the few choices they could make.



Overall, Cosmic Wheel Sisterhood starts with four very blatant story altering choices, but very subtly starts indicating to the player how deep its systemic components will directly affect the story. This creates a juggling act, where players feel like they have to start optimizing the cards in order to keep the story from descending somewhere unintended, both for Fortuna and the players themselves.