

Together, I

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of

Master of Arts

in

Digital Musics

by Piper Hill

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Examining Committee:

Professor César Alvarez

Professor Ash Fure

Professor William Cheng

F. Jon Kull, Ph.D.

Dean of the Guarini School of Graduate and Advanced Studies

Abstract

Together, I is the story of a group of people living in The House That Looks Like Me. In the form of a graphic-novel-adjacent home tour led by Eochaid — the “default guy” — you’ll learn more than you wanted to know and not enough about the characters living there and the projects they’re working on. Spoiler alert: it’s two musicals. Cutie Pie Crust is overseeing *A Show that Is a Game (and Is Also a Party and Is Also an Elaborate PowerPoint Presentation)* — *A Musical*, of which we had three workshop performances this past fall (2021). Goopy Juice is in charge of the Sims Musical (title TBD), an ongoing, serially released machinima-musical made from *The Sims 3 & 4* in-game footage.

As Eochaid works with them to explain their process and progress while sharing backstories and documentation, you won’t just be able to follow him around passively. This is a demanding household; you’re gonna have to help with some chores, and you’re going to have to make some decisions.

Acknowledgments

Dear Everyone,

Words are not enough to thank any of the parties responsible for this, but here is where I will try:

First and foremost, I'm grateful to the land I've been on the whole time I've been writing and developing this thesis. Most of the time, that's been here in Ckuwapohnakiyik by the river Kwanitekw, on the unceded lands of the Western Wabanaki nation, who've stewarded these lands and waterways for 13,000 years. I want to give more specific thanks to the Abenaki people of this area, many of whom were killed and displaced due to The Great Dying and the Wentworth Grants of the 1600-1700s, and to their descendants, the Odanak Abenaki people, most of whom reside in what's now known as Quebec.

While I am grateful to have been sustained by this beautiful land, Dartmouth College has been a major force in colonization in many dimensions, so I would like to pay my broader respects in full understanding that the material support I've received from the college was obtained at the expense of many. This includes the Abenaki people who were displaced by its founding, but also all the Indigenous students taken in and converted by Dartmouth and urged to proselytize Christianity to their people, and also the numerous enslaved black people who were forced to help construct this school and staff it in its early years, and also all who've been devastated by war for fossil fuels funded by companies that Dartmouth only recently announced its plans to divest from, and countless other people and nations, recognized and unrecognized.

In addition to writing here Ckuwapohnakiyik, I spent several fruitful days of thinking and writing on the unceded land of the Massachusetts nation in what was formerly a Massachusetts town known as Mystic. Eighty percent of the Massachusetts people in Mystic were wiped out due to plague, and many more were killed, displaced, or converted according to the 1629 Charter of the

Massachusetts Bay Colony. I want to pay my respects to the Massachusett people for the time I spent there.

Before my time here, I spent most of my life in Ohio, namely in the Scioto River Valley, but also farther north. The Myaamia, Kaskaskia, Shawnee, Wyandotte, and Iroquois people in Ohio fought fiercely against US Soldiers in for decades, until in the late 1700s and early 1800s they were forced to give up their last land despite having signed treaties promising otherwise. Many relocated to Oklahoma and Indiana, but there are still people from many Indigenous nations living in the Scioto River Valley today. Thank you for sharing the land with me.

I'm grateful to all whose land I've been a guest on and whose land and labor I've been sustained by. Thank you.

Now, I want to thank the individuals who've been on my team during this process, either explicitly or implicitly.

To César Alvarez, my advisor: you've been transformative to my life, work, and writing, and your support means the world. I am continually grateful to have you as a teacher, inspiration, and friend.



To Ash Fure, my professor and committee member: ever since the very first seminar, it's been such a pleasure to learn and grow from you, intellectually and artistically and emotionally, thank you.



To William Cheng, my professor and committee member: beyond the magic that was VGML and the gift of hearing live-in-person music during the pandemic, thank you for all your feedback and encouragement and for letting me hang out with Leo (Ack!) Both of you were crucial to this process!



Thanks to Michael Casey and Sunny Nam for helping make this process possible.



I want to thank Yvonne Pelletier, without whom I couldn't have started this thesis work, and Julia Waswo, without whom I couldn't have finished!

To my cohort, Trevor Van de Velde and Hamed Sinno: y'all know I can't say much here without tearing up, but seriously this whole time would've been vastly different and arguably worse if it weren't for our Amooz Boosh team. Love you more than words can say.



To the current first years, Olivia Shortt, Armond Dorsey, and Eli Berman: I am so psyched that we're contemporaries. Thanks for making this year amazing. So much love!



To the class before us, Jack Langdon, Grace Carney, and Bridget Slone: thank you for paving the way so that our path has been as smooth as it is. The risks you took with your work have emboldened me to take the ones I have.



Thank you to Aurie Hsu, Tom Handman-Lopez, Holly Handman-Lopez, and Peter Swendsen, my mentors from Oberlin who helped me get here in the first place.



Thank you to my dear friend Allie Murillo, whose apartment, presence, and friendship have served as refuge in these past couple of years, without which I would be lost.

Thank you to my dear friend and partner Kate Budney, whose creativity, leadership, and kindness have inspired me in life and in my work. Also, thanks for being my dramaturg hehe.



Thank you to Willow Weiner, my dear friend who has lent an ear to many of the kooky ideas you're about to read and provided invaluable insight.

I also want to thank the following friends who've made the last two years much more bearable: Alisya Reza, Lexi Warden, Claudia Hinsdale, Max Addae, Victor Jiao, Kevin Tse, Phoebe Mapes-Frances, Brody Jefferson-Howell, Gennie Faber, and Mikey Bond.



Thank you to the cast and crew of the workshop performances of *A Show that Is a Game*, those who haven't yet been named: Isaiah Brown, Griffin Kozlow, Ana Noriega Olazabal, Valeria Pereira Quintero, Lexy Piton, and Brandy Zhang.

Huge thanks to Sam Candon, Jason Merwin, Bri Parry, Grant Cook, Lisa Hayes, Richard Beaudoin, and Victoria Aschheim.



Shoutout to the Twitch followers who've been showing up and supporting the creation of my Sims Musical, including some folks already mentioned, but notable folks who haven't yet been mentioned include: manayu26, pip_tds, Charve7440, and SebastianPlaysThis.

Some other folks who've helped a bunch along the way: Mary Daley-Moore, Julia Ellis, Sam Robbins, Lynnette Bissell Turner, Jon Dawson, Jacqueline Loughry, Bill Somerlot, Brian Alegant, Dmitri Kondrashov, Stephen Van Hedger, Abby Aresty, Ted Bourget, Kat Mazur, Ko Takasugi-Czernowin, Elie McAfee-Hahn, Mobéy Lola Irizarry, Dani Miriti-Pacheco, Sam White, Jack Hamill, Will FK Tokunaga, Julia Robaidek, Julian Guerrieri, Calder Laban, Barnaby Woods, Helen Hé, Marly Gonzalez, Oli Bentley, Sourgum, Obertones, and Voices.

There are countless other folks I'm grateful for, but I cannot name them all.



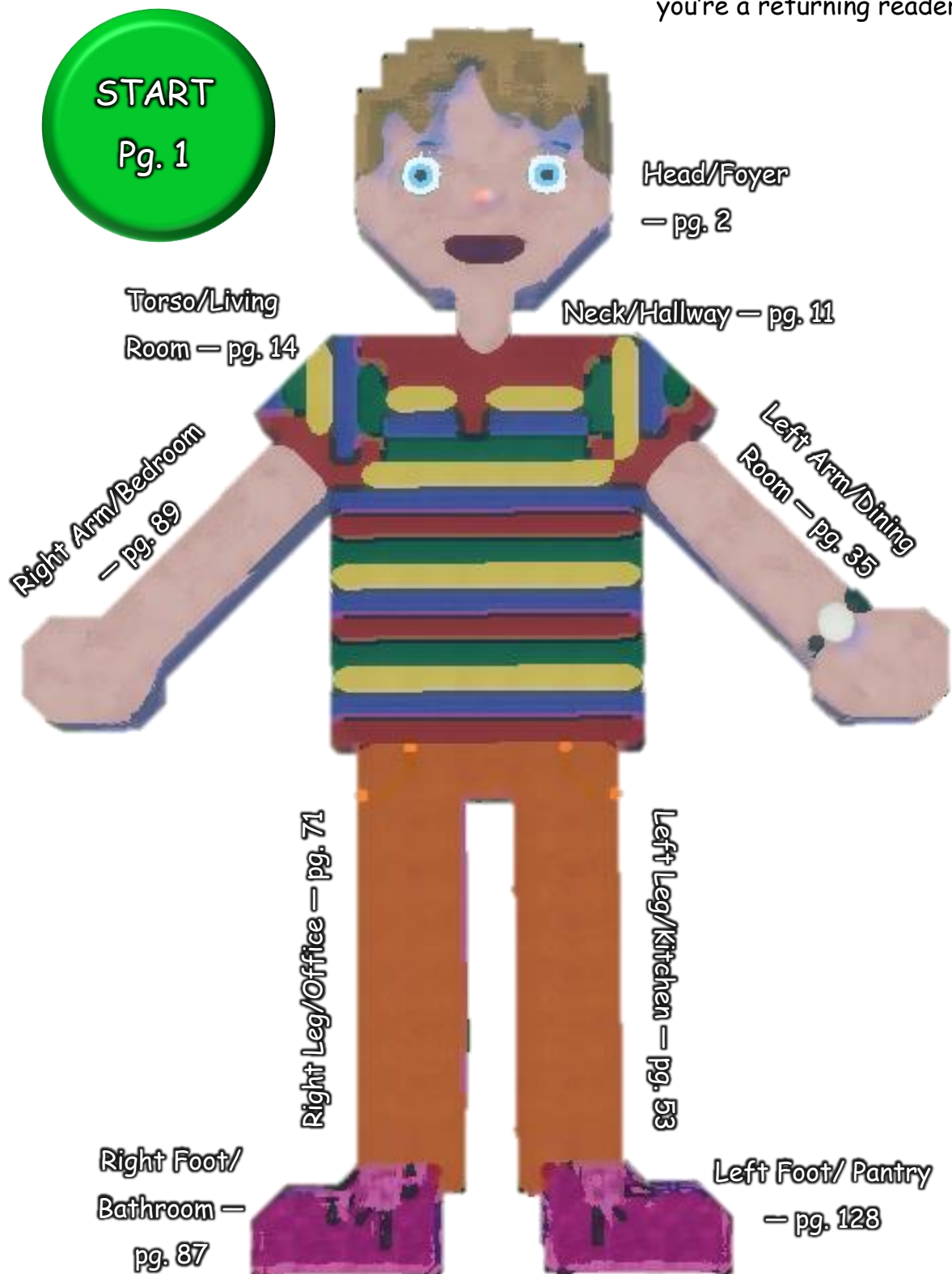
Lastly but not leastly, thank you to my family: Mamma, Daddy, Jackson, Bobo, and extended family as well. I can't thank you enough for supporting my art and encouraging me to pursue what makes me happy and also raising me as a human being and all that. Thank you thank you thank you!



P.S. thanks to whoever is reading this if your name isn't already up there!

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(pls only use this map to find where you were if
you're a returning reader)



List of Other People's Pictures

There are so many pictures in this thing, I am not listing all of them. All the pictures I am not listing are images I made, either by taking a photograph or a screenshot, and then editing it using Microsoft Word's generous set of photo-editing tools. The vast majority of the images are screenshots of things I made in *The Sims 4*, though there are some I made using *The Sims 3* and some using PowerPoint. Anything else unlisted is just an AutoShape. The figures listed are not numbered, but you'll know what they are if you go to the pages.

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Welcome to
our house:

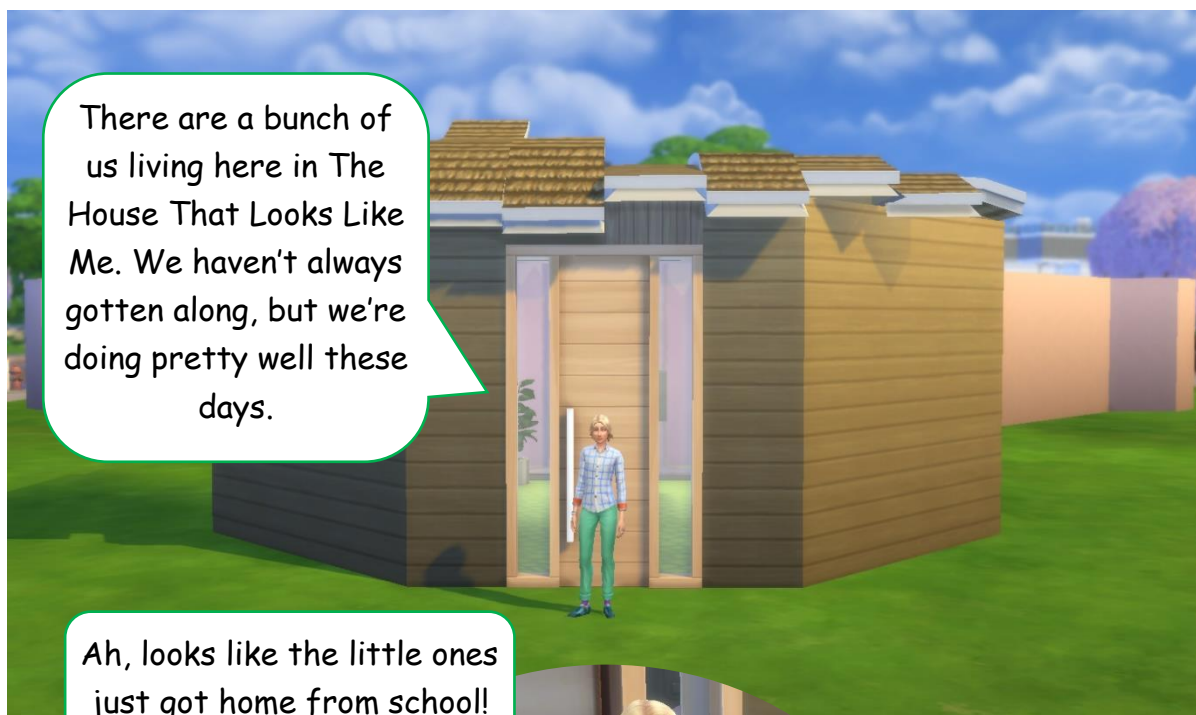


The House
That Looks
Like Me!

My name is
Eochaid*, and I'm
going to be leading
your tour this
afternoon.

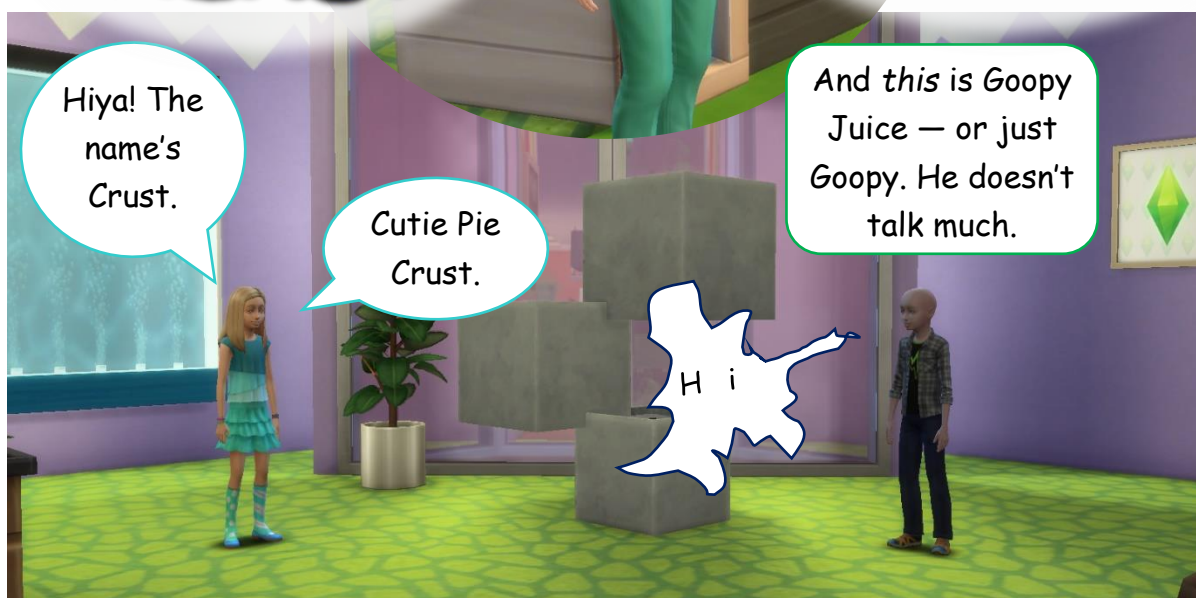


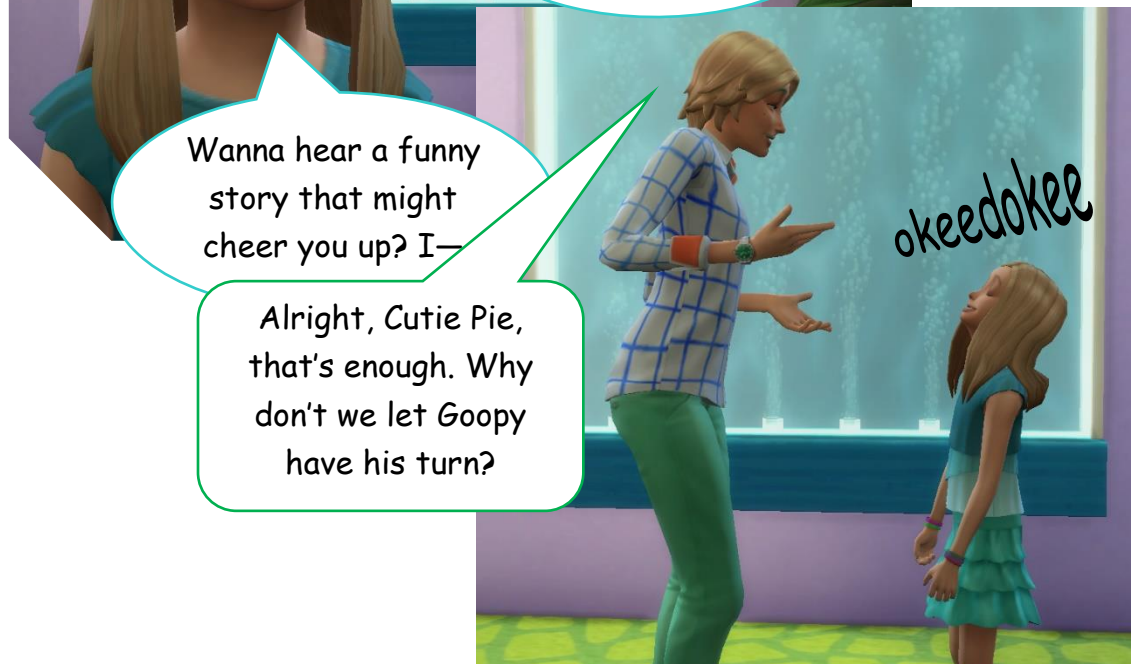
*pronounced "yo-KAID" (like "okay")

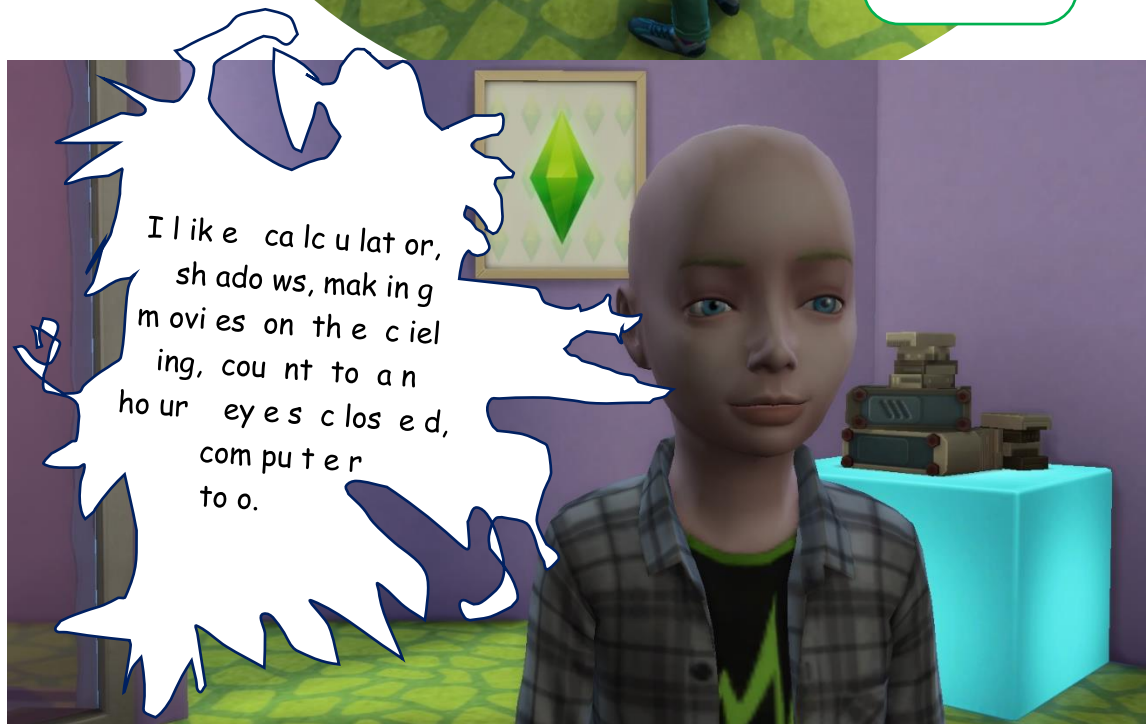


HEAD:

FOYER



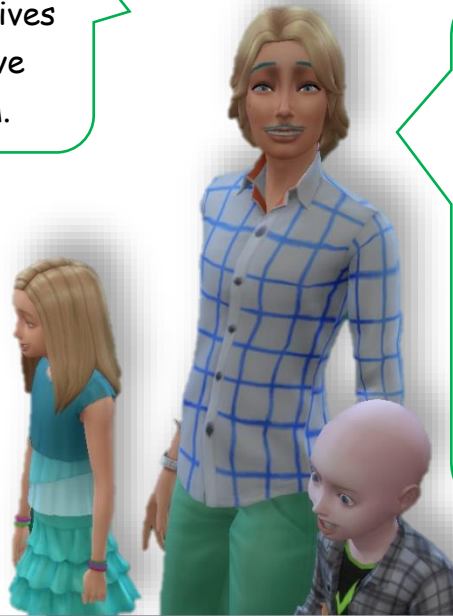




Aren't they precious? Our lives sort of revolve around them.

Oh, and me? I'm Eochaid. Eochaid Piper. I'm just the default guy these days. I'll serve as your narrator for most of this.

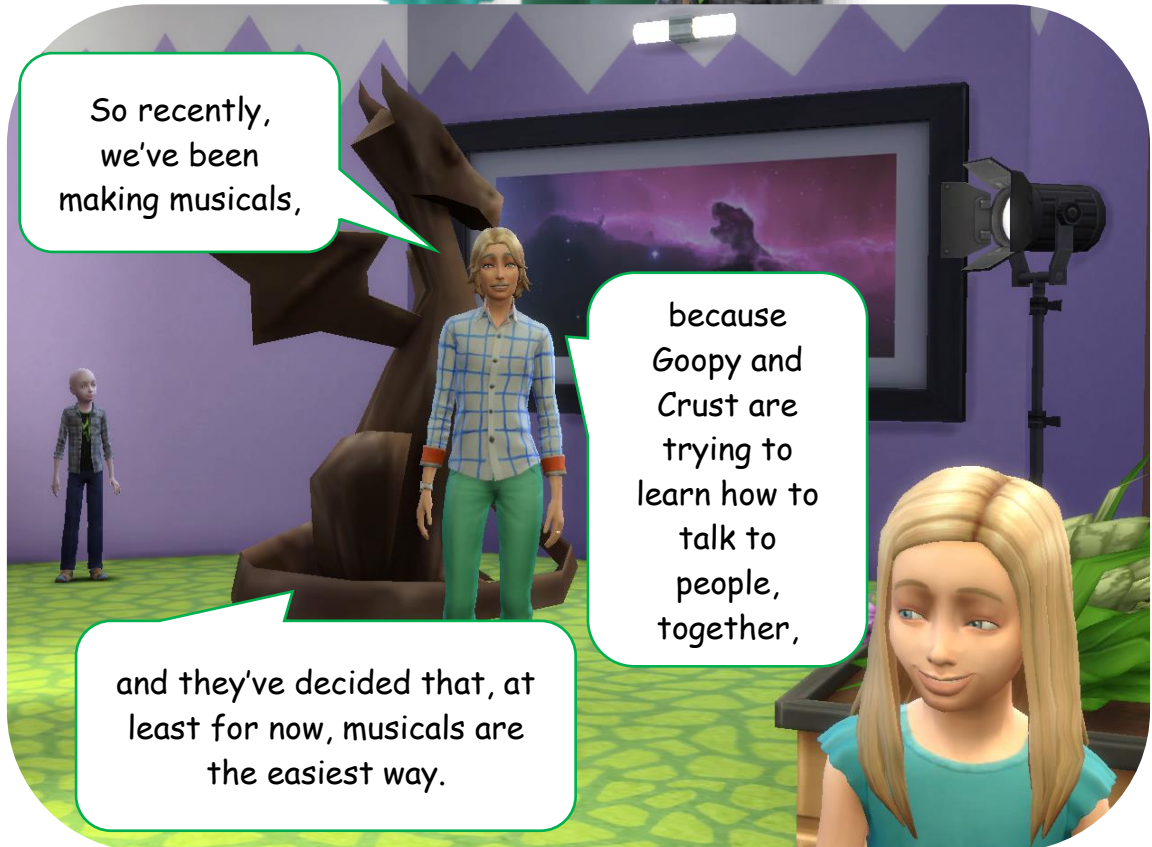
The reason we've invited you over is so you can see what we've been working on. Things are finally tidied up enough around here that I thought it was time we give you a little tour.



So recently, we've been making musicals,

because Goopy and Crust are trying to learn how to talk to people, together,

and they've decided that, at least for now, musicals are the easiest way.



Crust has been in charge of making a live musical called *A Show that Is a Game (and Is Also a Party and Is Also an Elaborate PowerPoint Presentation) — A Musical*, and it's exactly what it says it is.

Yeah! The audience is in three teams and they have to work together to travel around three virtual realms in the PowerPoint

and encounter new challenges in each realm in the form of mini-games where they earn points for their team

and then something goes wrong

and the main character in charge who is really this house gets sad but then it's all okay

and the grand prize winners are the people on the team with the least points because we love them and want everyone to know that they're worth so much more than what they've been rewarded for and that sometimes rules make things more fun!

yippee!

And you win the award for longest sentence.



"So much of survival depends on inhabiting a state of not-knowing, a preventative strategy of cultivating a fog that occludes the obvious ('I am trans' maybe...) The other side of the survival mechanism is to know precisely how every person in any given room you're in feels about, say, the size of your hands."

The word of Colby Gordon, from the book of Twitter, on the fifth of August, in the year of Our Lord, two thousand and twenty-one.

<https://twitter.com/badinfinity2/status/1423340920683081732>

vi de o
ga m es



Yes, thank
you, Father.

np, np!





Sometimes this fog Gordon speaks of is so thick that it forms a virtually impenetrable solid container. We think of it more like walls, some with doors, some with locked doors, some with no doors. Sometimes the hidden "obvious" becomes its own creature. And the other side, that hypervigilance, becomes all that the rest — the thing left outside of the fog box — knows how to do. That's sort of what happened here. Of course, there are more ins and outs to it than this, but essentially Goopy, for a long time, was that creature in the box, and Crust was the alert one outside.

In the last few years, our doors and fogs have been scrambled. While this is for the better, it can get confusing.

Not everyone has this experience of compartmentalizing themselves so thoroughly as we did. Still, for the people like us who did, the person we didn't get to be — the person behind the walls — still has to grow up once they get out — go through puberty, through young adulthood, etc. Some of us are performing a role we haven't learned the lines for yet. We're being adults who had to split their so-far time in this world up, only getting to grow up piecewise.



For many years, Goopy never got to see much of the outside world. Therefore, at least in this house, especially for Goopy's sake, we want to support his effort to uncover his memories and help him write an origin story for himself — and for us.

That's what the Sims Musical is attempting to do (and in part, so was the process of getting this house ready to show you.)



Sometimes we worry about whether we're merely succumbing to the urge to prove Lady Gaga right, or if instead we're proving Weird Al Yankovic right, and it's really just, "Perform This Way." We don't *have* to prove anything, but we want to chase this path as far as it'll lead us to help Goopy tell his tale. It's fragmented, scattered about, each piece heavily guarded, so we've had to work together to heist this story.

It hasn't all been cute or easy, and it won't all be cute or easy. There have been and will be many doors to force open, and none of us can do it alone, but we have to try. He deserves that much.

Whether "Born This Way" or "Perform This Way," or a little bit of both, Goopy and Crust have lived together for quite some time. Goopy didn't



just materialize out of nowhere. Too much evidence points to the contrary. Evidence that we don't need to provide. Instead of proving and providing, we're just trying to recover and translate Goopy's story in a way that will feel the best for him. Hopefully, in doing so, it may resonate with the goopiest parts of you.

This house tour is a collective effort to help you get to know us.

This whole thing is just us trying to communicate with you in a way that makes sense to all of us, in as true a way as possible — or maybe it's us trying to explain how we're trying to figure out how to communicate with you in a way that makes sense to all of us, and hopefully to you, in as true a way as makes sense, at this moment.

So follow me!

NECK: HALLWAY

A little word about the font, that we have prepared for those who may be wondering why we chose it:

For one thing, this is how our voice sounds. We can't actually make sound in a PDF or on paper, so this is the closest we can get to what our voice sounds like.

Secondly: Comic Sans scoops up the origin of letter learning and reading out of the brains of a large swath of a generation. For those people, Comic Sans is probably going to be the easiest to read. This tour speaks to things that resonate the most within this generational window of people who grew up with computer-type-fonts like that. Using a different, more professional-looking font might intimidate people (such as ourself) who are easily spooked by academic texts but might benefit from reading something like this.



For those who don't know, many elementary school students (including us) learned to write print letters by tracing large, typed-out letters on a sheet of printer paper with a grid — not in Comic Sans, but a similar font. We're not sure how many people this speaks to, but at least at our school, in later elementary school, many teachers would use Comic Sans to indicate a "small" or "fun" assignment, not to be fretted too much over. For serious papers and tests, it was all about Times New Roman. Even in High School, if a

teacher wanted to signal that something was low stakes, they'd often use Comic Sans on the handout. For us, it's the kind of thing that automatically lowers our heart rate. And we hope it can do the same, at least for some people reading this.

This is not to say we want to alienate or exclude people who did not grow up reading Comic Sans — it's not an objectively *difficult* font to read for people who didn't. The only people we'd like to alienate are people who, after reading all of this, still think that Comic Sans is stupid. But our guess is that if that were you, you wouldn't have even made it this far.


We'd rather be dismissed as juvenile than feel elitist or inaccessible.

Another note, this time about pronouns: When I use an unspecified "we," I'm usually referring to all or most of this household. If I use "I," I'm probably referring to just me, Eochaid, but I could also be referring to all or most of this household. If it's unclear at any point, it probably is unimportant or is as unclear to us as it is to you, in which case it's on purpose.



About third-person pronouns: everyone in this house uses he/him, except Crust, who uses it/its.

Shall we head in now?



Before we talk about
these musicals,

I need to give
you a bit of
history about
our household

that I've pieced
together from
what everyone else
has told me.

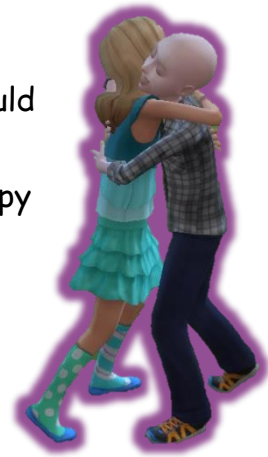
TORSO: LIVING ROOM

And all of this is from before
we built this house, back when
we lived in the old house.

Now, as far back as I can remember, I'd been in my office, writing and painting. I didn't come out to see what all the fuss was about 'til much later.

Goopy and Crust seem to be the ones who'd lived there — in the old house — the longest. And there was a time, toward the beginning, when Goopy and Crust were good friends.

Whenever they'd listen to music together, Goopy would make up little movies to go along with it, while Crust danced and sang. Whenever the world was quiet, Goopy would sing songs without words to keep Crust entertained. Goopy was the duo's imagination and instinct, while Crust was their alertness, observation, communication.



Typically, when friends came over to play in the yard with them, Goopy would hang back, find a nice shady spot under a tree, and let Crust do the talking. He doesn't have that many words, so it was easier that way. But if things ever got too scary, Goopy would step in to protect Crust's hypersensitivity, absorbing all the spookiness until the coast was clear. They made a great team.

Usually, when Crust left the house, Goopy'd stay home. Which was alright. They needed to be apart sometimes. The kids didn't sleep much, so when it was time for bed, they'd go to their room and write songs together or read stories. When Crust got tired from its day out in the world, Goopy would make movies on the ceiling for Crust to watch as they fell asleep.

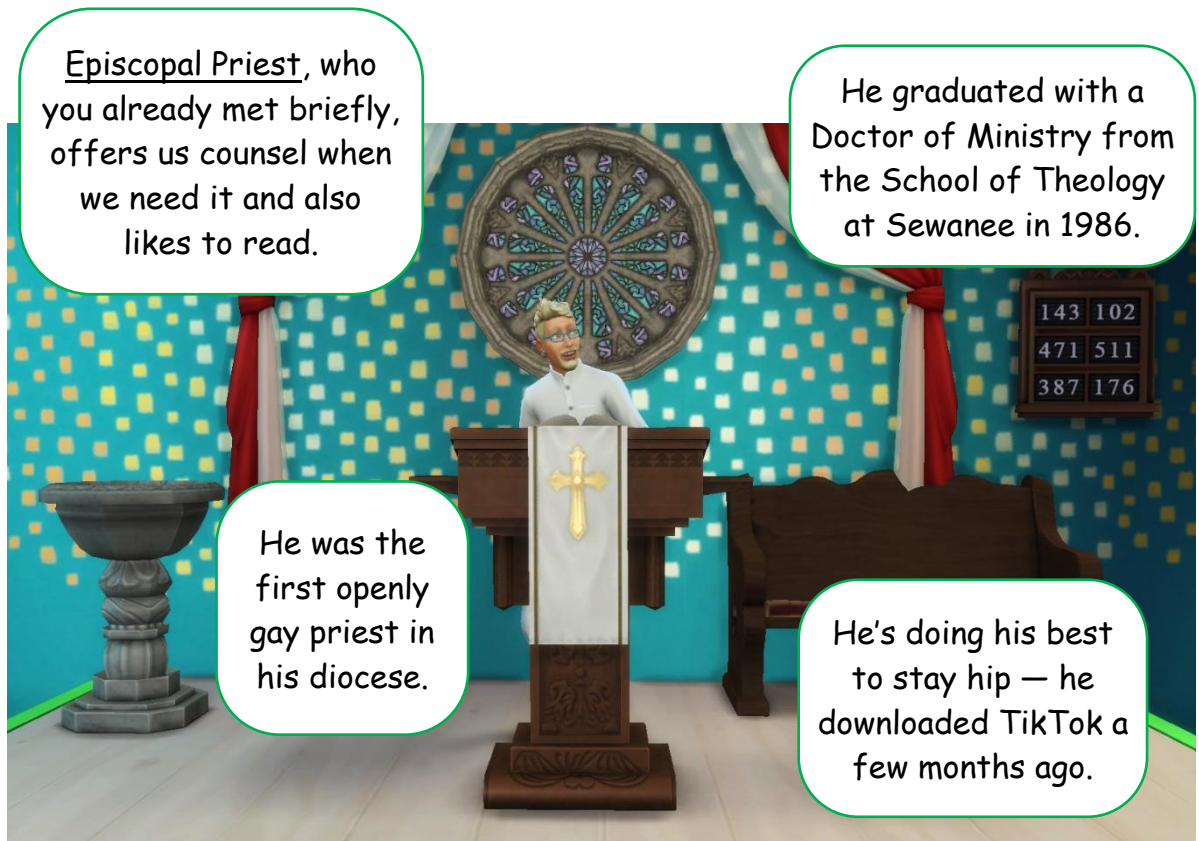
Somewhere along the way, some other characters emerged.

Like Handier Man.

I know he likes to fix stuff around the house, but I'm not sure how long he's lived with us.

There's only so much he can do, but he does his best. He has large arms, and he's not on socials. He prefers to email his friends.

There's also Pianist Dealin', who mostly just plays the piano. Look at him go.



Now, back in the old house, our landlord used to be largely unconcerned about our house's situation, as long as nothing was broken. But after about nine years, times were changing, the neighborhood was growing, and suddenly he felt it was essential for us to keep up appearances. Property values and all that.

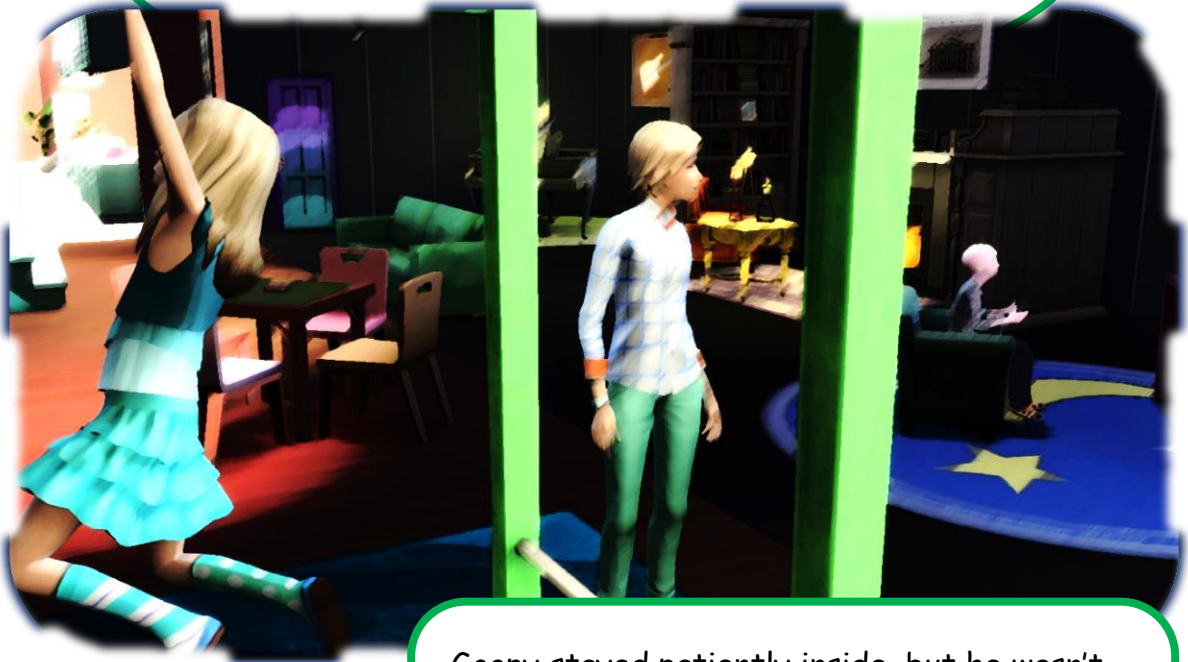
We all had to do our part to keep the house looking nice. But Goopy didn't really know how — he would run through the flowerbeds, break little limbs of tree branches as he climbed, dig for worms in the grass. He was used to the yard being a wilder thing, and he'd liked it that way. But Crust, who didn't like being in trouble, pulled him aside one day.

Goopy, I know you mean well, but I'd much prefer it if you stayed inside and out of the yard for a while, okay?



So, he did. Crust did everything it could to keep the yard and the house's exterior looking nice. In addition to the external pressures, there was a new chemical in the grass, some pesticides. The vapors wafted into and outside the house, making Goopy more tired and making Crust more vigilant and irritable. Handier Man offered to help, but Crust had grown so paranoid about how things would look that it shamed Handier Man's fashion choices and said he wouldn't look good working in the yard.

Eventually, Crust asked everyone to stay inside. And Crust stopped coming in. It worked in the yard day and night, always insisting on a fresh coat of paint for the siding, a new bed of flowers here, a fence that needed repairing, hedges that needed trimming.



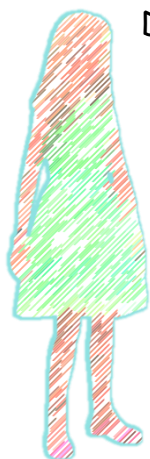
Goopy stayed patiently inside, but he wasn't used to being alone with all the adults, and he got scared. He retreated to the bedroom.

Goopy waited.

He worried about Crust, so all the while, he kept singing, louder now, so that Crust would never be left with that lonely silence.



Meanwhile, Crust, who'd been outside so long it'd forgotten what inside was like, forgotten about the others, forgotten about Goopy, didn't know where the music was coming from. Thought it was imagining it. Crust didn't like being alone at night during these times, because sometimes, when it'd take a break to rest for a minute, it'd catch a glimpse of Goopy in the window. It didn't understand who he was. Didn't remember.



Crust started throwing garden parties. After the parties, guests would linger in the yard well into the evening. Crust kept them over as late as possible so that it wouldn't have to be alone.

Then the pesticides finally washed all out of the yard, so Goopy wasn't weighed down by their heady fumes anymore, and Crust was no longer as anxiously on top of things.

So, now that Goopy was fully awake, he started getting sad. After many years of steadfast perseverance, he began to realize that Crust had forgotten him, and would never come back if he didn't make himself known. He'd wait in the windows to scare the garden guests. He'd scream and cry from inside the house. Crust started to figure out that something was wrong, but still didn't know what.



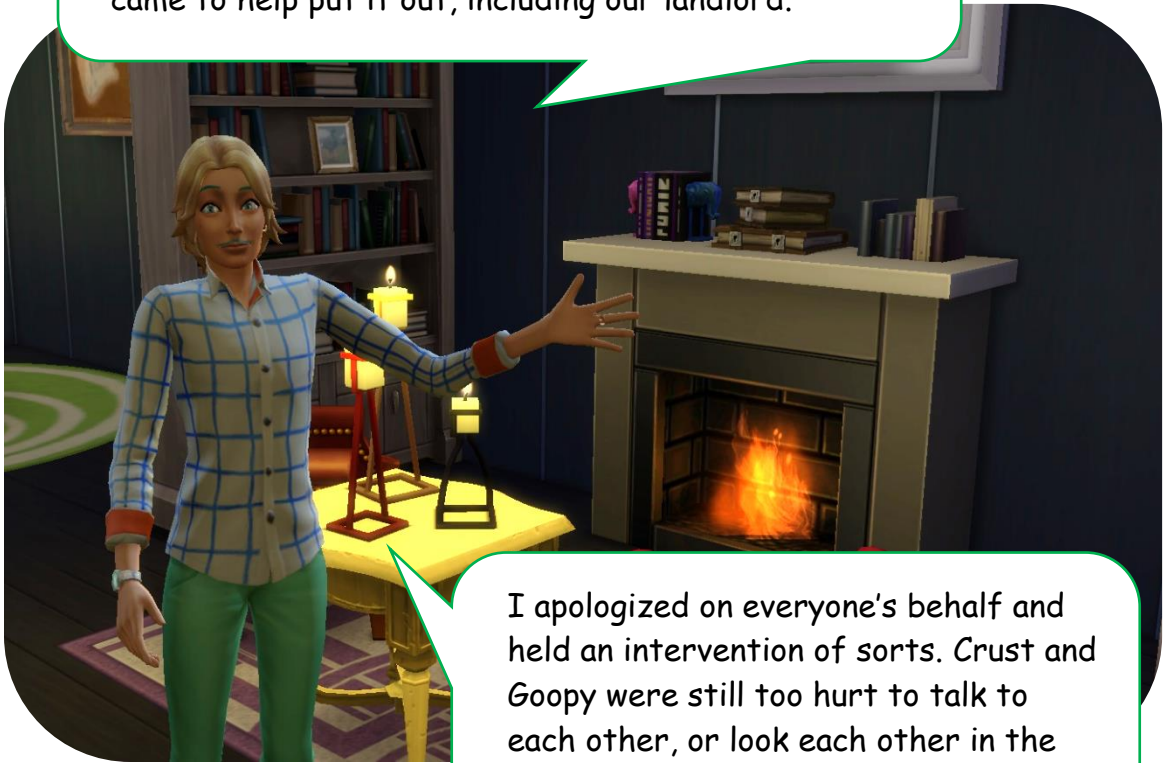
So Goopy got louder. He grew angry and resentful. He'd been stuck inside the house for too long. He slammed things into the door, howled, even occasionally broke windows.

Crust started to lose it. It stopped taking care of the yard. It found a good tree to climb and sat in it and cried.



One day, Goopy set fire to the house.

I, who'd been completely oblivious to all of this, alone in my office writing, painting, and listening to music, smelled smoke and rushed out immediately. Everyone came to help put it out, including our landlord.



I apologized on everyone's behalf and held an intervention of sorts. Crust and Goopy were still too hurt to talk to each other, or look each other in the eye, but at least Crust couldn't completely ignore Goopy anymore.

Handier Man tentatively started helping out with repairs on the fire damage and the exterior disrepair due to Crust's neglect. Crust let him and invited other people over to help too. Episcopal Priest tried to offer counsel. Pianist Dealin' tried to play. But Goopy continued to sulk and weep and scream. He couldn't forgive.



Crust spent all its time organizing the repairs, and once the house looked alright again, it continued to host garden parties. Everyone kept to themselves once more. Only this time, I became a messenger between everyone. If Goopy wanted to express something to a guest, he'd tell me, who'd tell Crust, who'd decide whether it wanted to tell the guest.

Goopy also had ideas for décor. I helped him get some of those through. Crust felt guilty and let him have his way.

Then, very suddenly, the air got bad. No garden parties could be had. Everyone in the neighborhood had to stay inside their homes.

Since nobody was coming over, nobody was driving by, Crust stopped caring so much about the yard. So did the landlord.

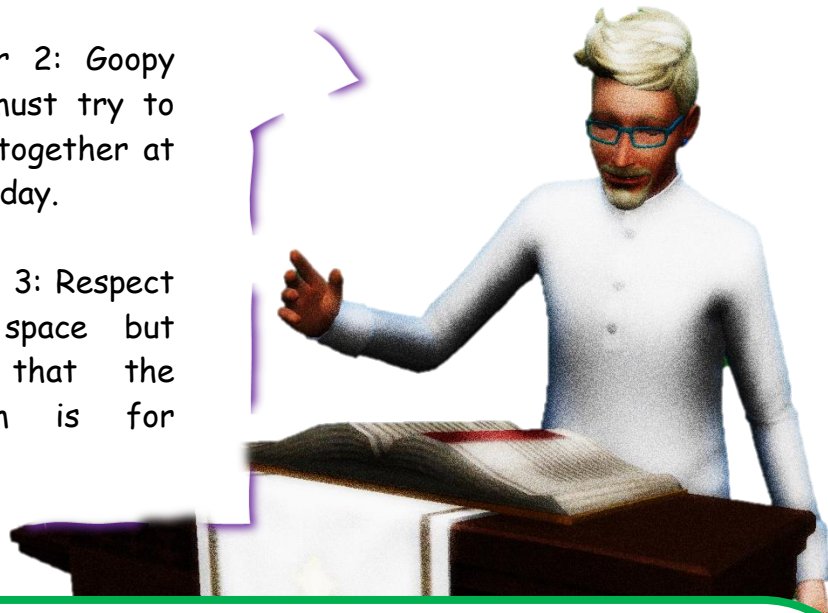
Crust ventured inside for the first time since the early days. It was confusing, because the house was very different than they'd remembered. With everyone in there, things quickly grew chaotic. Until Episcopal Priest came up with some rules.



Rule number 1: everyone must get enough sleep.

Rule number 2: Goopy and Crust must try to spend time together at least once a day.

Rule number 3: Respect everyone's space but remember that the living room is for everyone.



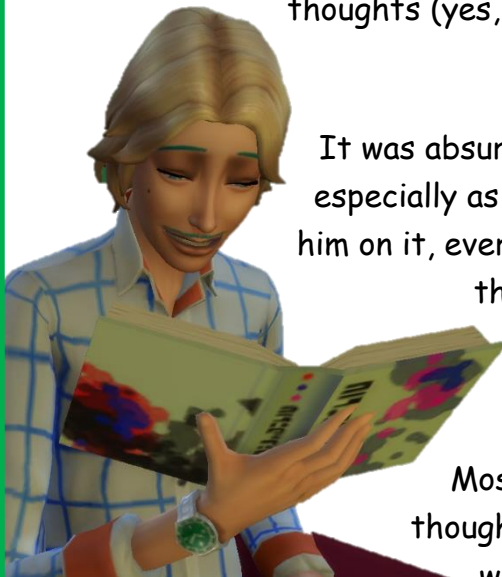
It *kind of* worked. But once the air got (slightly) clearer and people started coming to the yard again, we got trapped back in our old routines. I was usually the only one talking to the guests at this point. Goopy didn't know how, and Crust was tired.

Eventually, after a lot of work that's kind of hard to explain (which the Sims Musical will get into) Goopy helped us organize a heist mission on our own house, freeing everyone from their compartments, gathering all the necessary things, and destroying the house in the process. Then we built a new one together — this house! Here, we decided, we would figure out a way to talk to people so that we could all feel like our perspectives were represented.

This has been very tricky to do, because language is not enough for that task. But as the writer of the bunch, it's my job to try.

Translating a thought into text can range from immediate to impossible. If the thought itself is made out of words, as they sometimes are, as some of Crust's thoughts are, as *all* of my thoughts are, then it can be relatively straightforward. As easy as echoic memory. The only thing standing in our way at that point is potentially shame, or perhaps the explicit rules of a given environment. Or maybe a bad cold.

We had a professor in early undergrad who once argued that all thoughts are made up entirely out of language. He stated this to our little seminar as though it were an indisputable fact. Well, I'm sure you could guess that we got nothing else done that day — I spent the rest of the class arguing with him about the existence of languageless abstract thoughts (yes, we were *that* kid).



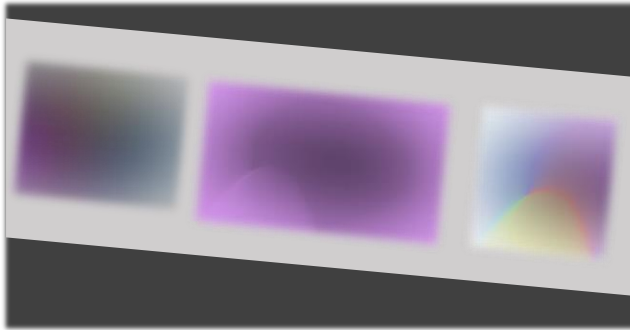
It was absurd to us that he'd even say such a thing, especially as a neuroscientist, but until I'd challenged him on it, everyone else nodded and took notes. During the debate, our friend Victor was the only one to join our side in this.

Most children, I think, have non-verbal thoughts. We call it imagination, I guess. But when you submit yourself to a system that doesn't give a hoot about your imagination, only cares about what you can smartly articulate, you begin to go through a sort of compression* (not lossless).

It's what happens to some thoughts themselves when we try to externalize them.

*Special thanks
to our friend
Willow Weiner
for this analogy

Goopy had a thought just now, and I'm fortunate enough that he's sharing it with me at the moment. It's a mess of shapes sliding through the screen of our mind. And it's not actually a mess of shapes, nor is it actually sliding, nor is it actually being projected onto a screen, but those are the closest words I could find to describe its most salient aspects. And in using those words, the imagining itself has changed. The attributes of it that were closest to "mess" and "shape" and "slide" and "screen" have intensified. Those that I failed to approximate in my first sentence have faded into something that I will disservice by calling "the background." Everything below the threshold of sayability attenuated and everything above amplified.



By the time I've gotten to this sentence, the thought has taken the form of a film-strip-like surface, where each frame is a

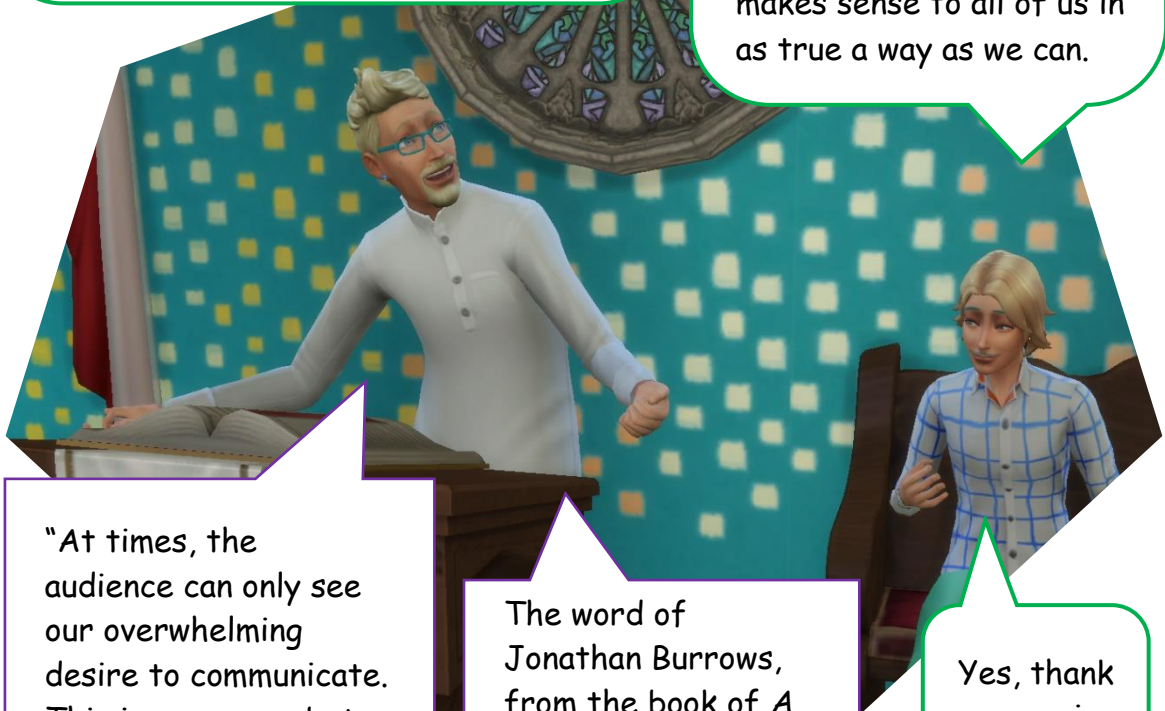
separate image, a collage of shapes and colors, sliding by slowly against an empty background. It's easy to tell you about now, because it's become the words, but a lot has been lost.

Crust is who's best of us at doing that whole process efficiently, or at least has the most experience, with Goopy's thoughts in particular. But when Crust makes art that doesn't tap into Goopy's blobby ideas, it usually sucks — for example, songs from our high school days that ring hollow, that lie or exaggerate for dramatic effect, sometimes not knowing they're lying, only made interesting by the melody or effects that Goopy helped inspire.

With this home tour, we're trying to convey thoughts that cannot be literally conveyed in words by using fiction and image, like the me you see here.

It's sometimes easier to say what something is like than what it is, but we can delete the "like" in fiction, so that's why we're doing what we're doing.

That's why we're making musicals — story, talking, singing, visuals, movement, music — we need all of them to try and communicate with you (and each other) in a way that makes sense to all of us in as true a way as we can.



"At times, the audience can only see our overwhelming desire to communicate. This is a common but accidental subject of many performances."

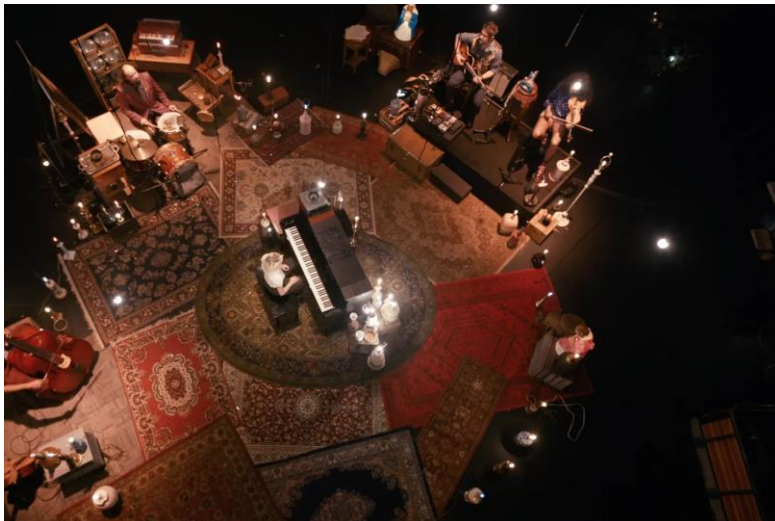
The word of Jonathan Burrows, from the book of *A Choreographer's Handbook*, Page Thirty-Three.

Yes, thank you again, Father.

On that note, yes, this is as much about the tryingness of saying the thing as it is about whatness of what's said.

But anyway, we're making musicals. We've seen and listened to many musicals in our life, but the one I'd like to tell you about right now is Heather Christian's *Animal Wisdom* and how it functions in our heart. We've seen the film version three times now — all within the past year — and we listen to the soundtrack regularly in the car.

Heather Christian's *Animal Wisdom* is an at-least-semi-autobiographical first-person musical about all the ghosts that have accompanied her through life, in the form of her very own Mississippified requiem ritual.



We've only ever seen a couple of ghosts (and none that follow us around), and we've never lost anyone so close that their presence would naturally cling to us in that way. But

when Heather Christian talks and sings about sitting alone in her room as a child, terrified of an unknown sinister spirit tormenting her, and of the angelic friend Johana who came to her aid, we're suddenly wrapped in memories of our own childhood and all the weird stuff that Goopy could see in the room.

She takes the supernatural harassment and companionship of her childhood ghosts so seriously, gives it so much weight that we can't help but believe, regardless of what level of metaphor we think she's working on. Regardless of what level of metaphor her visions were working on as a child.

She devotes herself to a phenomenon that she knows is true, but probably has a hard time finding a believing audience for (at least not without making a whole show about it). She shares so much of the ins and outs of her inner world with us. We were struck by the role that music played in the delivery of that information, and that the whole thing was a ritual — which we know is a type of game — a make-believing that is no less real than what we believe it to be. *All* of that is liberating. In that show, we felt a Big Permission given — to share some of the less explainable parts of ourself, to go ahead and share them as stories, not hiding behind metaphor, but using it as the structure for truth. And then everyone can decide for themselves how much of their belief in it they want to carry outside of their experience of watching it.

These dimensions of the show (along with her apparent cosmology around Christianity) are most applicable to Goopy's Sims Musical. His musical is also trying to give others access to our inner world, and by proxy help them discover new things about theirs. We'll come back to that.



Animal Wisdom also hit us with truths that helped us make *A Show that Is a Game*. Initially, Crust was trying to make *A Show that Is a Game* using heavy creative input from everyone involved — it was gonna be a fully collaboratively “devised” piece — and I don’t just mean collaboration of us inside this house, but *all* of the folks Crust was planning to work with on the show. We’d lose sleep at night wondering how Crust would manage this effectively.

But after watching *Animal Wisdom* (twice in two days, when it was assigned by our professor César Alvarez, and once more with our parents when we were visiting them), after years of thinking collaboration meant everyone was equally in charge, we realized that giving everyone that much creative control wasn't necessary for everyone to feel good and get the most out of the experience. We had to complicate our understanding of collaboration.

Heather Christian wrote all the songs, and there's no doubt the show is about *her*. Still, all of the other musicians (who also function as ensemble members in storytelling) still seem to have agency to be themselves within their parts — a thought we had even before learning that many of them helped with orchestration as well. She treats them all with such care, as people first, then performers.

With that spirit, we remembered that it's okay to be a leader sometimes. Not everyone has the time or energy to make all the decisions. If everyone feels like they're working in their own best interests, and consent is obtained, and boundaries are respected, it's okay to ask people to help you manifest your vision. It's okay to make the decisions or create guidelines for people that then allow them to play freely within the realms you've set up.

So, this is what we tried to do during the workshop production process of *A Show that Is a Game*.



Animal Wisdom also reminded us of the power of simpler music arrangements, the warmth of a sparse piano part, the tangibility and vulnerability of instrumental performance, even when your relationship with said instrument is somewhat fraught. Originally, Crust had envisioned our grand-collaborative-interactive-multimedia show as having hyper-poppy karaoke tracks for every song. That makes sense for some of the songs, but for the most intimate parts, sticking to piano and voice, or guitar and voice, or just voice, was very effective in the workshops. Sometimes, I think the simpler an action, the easier mimesis becomes for an audience member. It can feel like a way in.

In watching and listening to Heather Christian, we felt an accessibility to a lot of the music — like we could do that — that helped it hit harder. Pianist Dealin' learned most of the piano parts to most of the songs in *Animal Wisdom* relatively quickly, despite being very out of practice, and Goopy and Crust learned all the vocal melodies, and Crust and I learned all the words, and we practiced each riff along with her in the car on long drives.

While I sometimes enjoy the flashiness of a "Woah, how did they do that?" moment, Crust is now trying not to alienate people with shadows of things resembling virtuosity. That's not to say that we don't want to perform magic. Heather Christian performed a spiritual rite that we're not capable of (not even Episcopal Priest). We're awed by it, but it didn't rely on lots of tricks that we didn't understand. That's how we want *A Show that Is a Game* to feel — simple ingredients, potent result.



The Sims Musical, on the other hand, is a little less concerned with accessibility. Goopy is trying to make something for himself. It's taking the whole household's input and skill, but at the end of the day, it's his.

He's not forcing us to do anything we're not okay with, but he is nudging us outside of our comfort zones. Part of this is because he's getting us all to remember things that are tricky. Because we're implicated in some of his past suffering (we could've prevented some of it and didn't, maybe didn't know how to). But if everything's on the table, it'll be easier to pull off this heist to steal back Goopy's story. We can't open these doors without acknowledgement and remembrance, and maybe a few explosives.

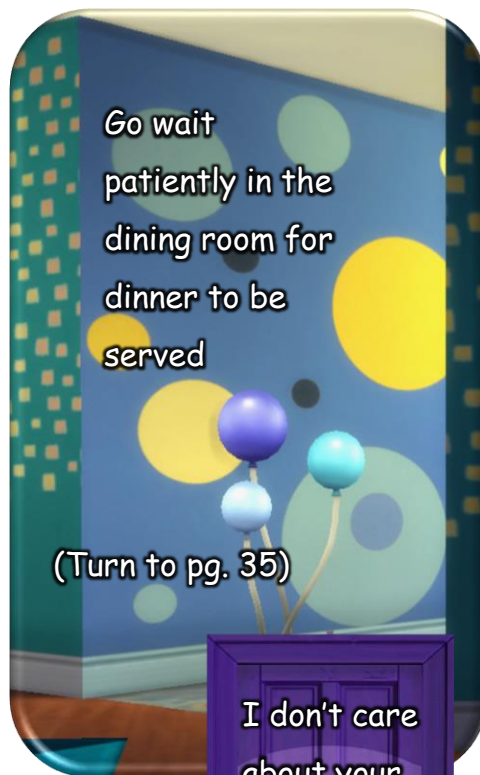
The Sims Musical will attempt to explain itself much less literally than *A Show that Is a Game*, or much more literally, depending on how you look at it. Goopy has cast all of us to play ourselves and reenact the evolution of our relationships. It's an attempt at a true creation myth for us.

And we're all trying very hard to believe in him without micromanaging him. He's had enough of being restrained, so we're doing our best to let him have free reign. Setbacks still come up when neither Crust nor I know how to articulate or enact something he's come up with. Luckily, we all have our perspectives and memories we can draw from. We just have to be careful of forgetting things each time we walk through a door...



Something smells delicious! Should we go check out what's happening in the kitchen?

Decision time!!! If you're reading a PDF, click on an image below to confirm your choice. If you're reading a hard copy, turn to the page listed by each choice.



I don't care about your stinkin' food, let's go play video games

(Turn to pg. 71)





Alrighty, let's head to the dining room.

This is where we'll talk about *A Show that Is a Game*.

Cutie Pie, why don't you tell our friend about your show?

Yesyes!

A Show that Is a Game is an arm reaching out, trying to give people a Good Time.

My prime directive has always been to try to stop the people around me from having a bad time, so what better way to prevent that than by giving them a Good one?

We tried to think of what Good Times we've had that have taught us so much that it actually decreased the number of bad times we had in the future. Like...

...A friend telling us that they'll still love us, no matter what mistakes we make. That's one of those *Good Times*.

Or a musical that shows someone else's inner world so well that it gives us new ideas about how to show ours. Like *Animal Wisdom* did.

Or when you see a series of paintings that give fresh meaning to the idea of what it means to tell a story, what it means to be inspired, and reaffirms your faith, like Hilma af Klint's *Paintings for the Temple*.

Another *Good Time* is when you find a music video that depicts gaudy trans-masculinity with an honest performativity you've never seen before. Like Dorian Electra's *Flamboyant*.

Yes, or maybe a class that helps us internalize the value of games and shed the guilt and shame we had surrounding them, like Professor William Cheng's *Video Games and the Meaning of Life*.

A n i m e
w h e r e
I a m
l i k e
a s u p e r
p o w e r

mn.

He's talking about *Bungo Stray Dogs*

Or working with a professor and mentor like César Alvarez, who constantly pushes against and rejects shame as an influence, helping us find where it's hiding and uninviting it from the party.

Yeah, all of those are the *Good Times* that I am talking about.

Both Crust and Goopy want to make work that does these types of Goods. However, Crust doesn't quite know how to shed shame the same way that Goopy does. Crust has a hard time avoiding the tendency to worry about others before itself...

...whereas Goopy has trouble giving a [unclear] about anyone else.

shrugs

So, the goal with *A Show that Is a Game*, correct me if I'm wrong, Crust, is to create a space for this Good Time.

Yeah!

By the way, how hungry are you? Do you want to hear more about the food before we eat, or would you rather just eat it and maybe have a Good time and I can tell you about it afterward?

Wait a little before eating to get some context
(turn to pg. 39)

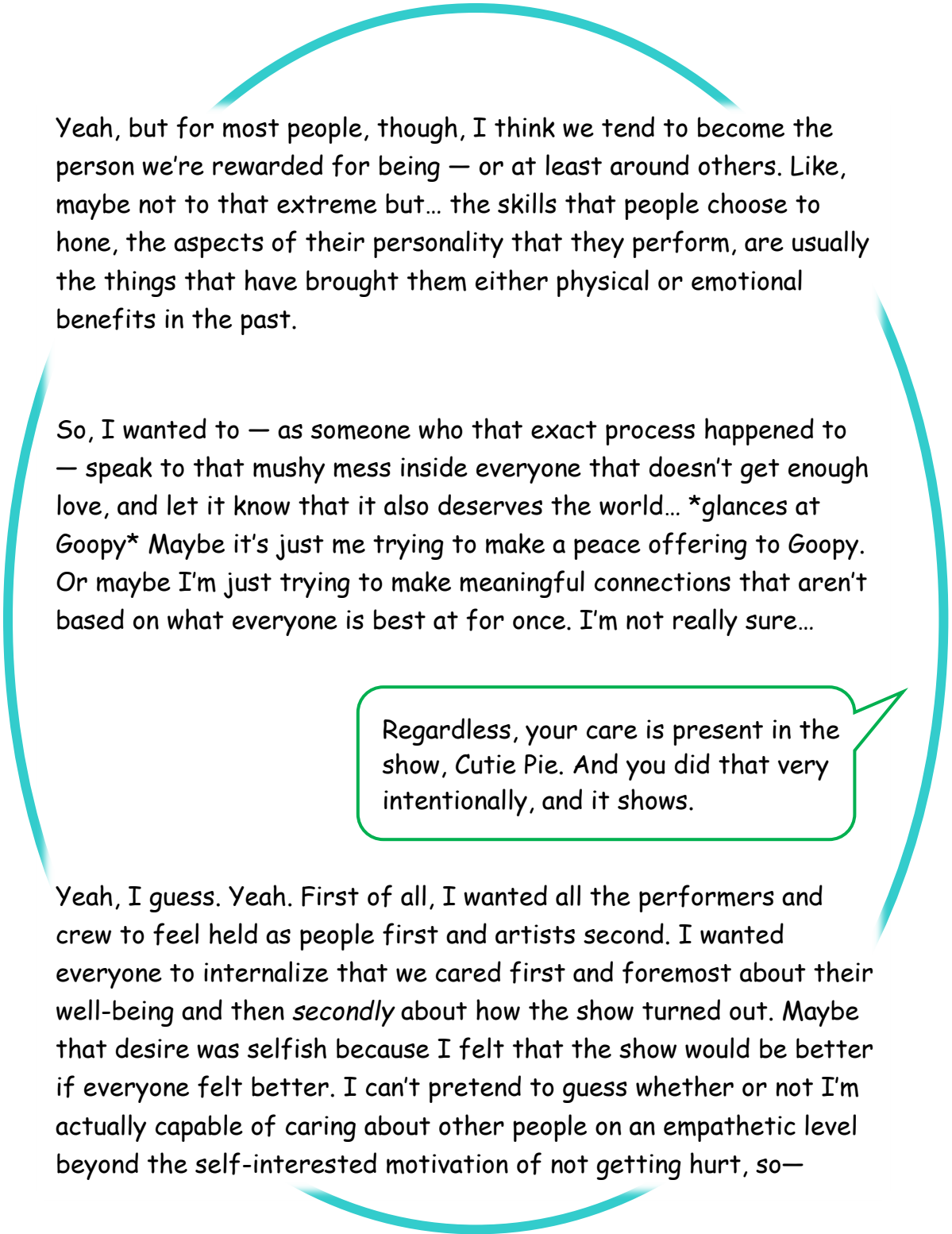
Eat now, context later.
(turn to pg. 46)

Okay, so, in the show, I start by reassuring the audience that they will not be shamed for doing whatever they need to do to get their needs met. However, I gently encourage them to get out of their comfort zone if they are ready.

The audience is then divided into three teams and has to work together with their team to do stuff. Even though they're competing with the other teams, in the end, it doesn't end up mattering how much anybody won or lost. The goal is to develop an environment of care that supersedes the competition. To remind people that they are "worth so much more than what [they've] been rewarded for!" That's even part of a song.



One might even say that's the moral of the show if there is one. And I just wanted to clarify our thoughts on that statement — "you're worth so much more than what you've been rewarded for." (This statement might not apply to billionaires in terms of straight-up value of the rewards. However, in terms of the aspects of that person that have been rewarded, I'd say it still holds up. Whoever they are, they've almost definitely been rewarded by shaping themselves to fit a particular way of being, and their gelatinous insides are starving, locked away.)



Yeah, but for most people, though, I think we tend to become the person we're rewarded for being — or at least around others. Like, maybe not to that extreme but... the skills that people choose to hone, the aspects of their personality that they perform, are usually the things that have brought them either physical or emotional benefits in the past.

So, I wanted to — as someone who that exact process happened to — speak to that mushy mess inside everyone that doesn't get enough love, and let it know that it also deserves the world... *glances at Goopy* Maybe it's just me trying to make a peace offering to Goopy. Or maybe I'm just trying to make meaningful connections that aren't based on what everyone is best at for once. I'm not really sure...

Regardless, your care is present in the show, Cutie Pie. And you did that very intentionally, and it shows.

Yeah, I guess. Yeah. First of all, I wanted all the performers and crew to feel held as people first and artists second. I wanted everyone to internalize that we cared first and foremost about their well-being and then *secondly* about how the show turned out. Maybe that desire was selfish because I felt that the show would be better if everyone felt better. I can't pretend to guess whether or not I'm actually capable of caring about other people on an empathetic level beyond the self-interested motivation of not getting hurt, so—

I'm not sure that matters too much, Cutie Pie, if you can make people feel cared about and you really want to do that. Empaths can do a lot of harm. Even while feeling another person's emotions profoundly in their soul, people still manage to make a situation worse. And I also know people who say they don't understand other people's emotions at all and aren't really emotionally affected by another person's pain or pleasure, yet they are functionally some of the kindest people I know, because they've observed what works and want to be agents for good in the world.

But all that is tangential. Crust, I'm sure you're somewhere in between those. And I know that you try hard not to let the amount of care you give a person not be based solely on how well you can project yourself and your own troubles onto them.

Well, yeah, that would exclude most people. Except for people who aren't real. It's easier, both for me and for Goopy, to emotionally resonate with a character than a real person. Probably because we're psych

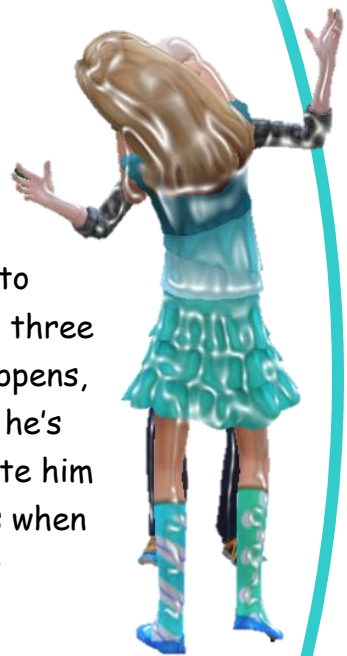
Yes, yes.
Yeah.

This is probably not a productive line of thought for when we have guests, Cutie Pie. No shame intended; I'm just trying to keep everyone safe. Let's talk about the musical, remember?

Yes, yes. Yeah. So. Yeah, anyways. I wanna nurture that unrewarded pile of slush inside of people, which is what this musical is about.

So, the rehearsal process tried to be very person focused. I can tell you more about that if you help us do the dishes after we eat.

In the show itself, we ask the audience to breathe, and we're very vulnerable in front of them, singing songs we wrote ourselves. When they've obtained a reward, they're encouraged to give it away. When they've made it through the three main realms, there's a sort of breaking that happens, where I let Goopy seep out onstage, as bare as he's willing to be except for my attempts to translate him lyrically, admitting that there are lots of times when he wishes he wasn't doing this, but instead just playing with toys or video games by himself.



Then that part moves into us thanking my performers and crew, saying that no matter what the rewards of this show are, no matter how well it goes or whether people like it or not, we are still happy to have them all on board. For me, I feel like it sometimes takes a constant reminder from those in positions of power over me, or even friends, sometimes, for me to actually internalize the belief that they want me around.

Together, though, we've grown less anxious about that in the recent years, but only because we've developed securer relationships (between each other, and with friends outside the house) in which people actually do demonstrate that unconditional care — or maybe not unconditional, but the conditions are only kindness, respect, and the expectation of whatever effort is manageable.

Yeah, so we want to thank the cast and crew for that and let the audience observe that process, but not let them hear what we're saying. We want each performer and crew member to have a message intended only for their ears, accompanied by soft singing voices of the audience who help create a soothing bath of love in the space. We want the audience to understand that the relationships and warmth built up between us are so much more important than (and yet central to) the success of the art that we're willing to interrupt everything to do this.

It's also useful to give the audience something to do there. César helped us figure that out. The audience's singing aids in the privacy of the moment. It's harder to worry about what I'm saying if you're making noise yourself. I think my goal with that is to also help the audience see us and our relationships as something bigger than the show. Like I said, I never want them to think that the performers are performers first, then people.

After all of that is said and done, the team with the least number of points wins. They get serenaded, and reminded, by everyone else in the space, that they're worth so much more than what they've been rewarded for. Also, everyone gets to keep the goodie bags and little sculptures and cubes that they've received.

The hope is that by the end, that mushy mess inside everyone has been fed a little, no matter whether they were "good at" the games or not. And that by seeing a bunch of people be silly and serious and vulnerable and caring toward each other onstage, they somehow leave feeling more at liberty to be silly and serious and vulnerable and caring for their gooey bits as they return to the world.

And since we have all those Good Times that we told you about earlier as evidence, we know that stuff has done that for us before, so I don't think it's a futile effort.

It's not done, we're still tweaking the recipe, but let's eat what we have, if you haven't already.



I've
already eaten
(turn to pg. 51)

I haven't yet.
(turn to pg. 46)



Here we have a video of the entire show from last October and November's workshop performances. It's a rich dessert, so feel free to pass or come back to it later.

pg. 49

For now, we recommend a serving of this casserole, the Teaser Trailer video.

pg. 49

If you have the appetite for it (now or later), this is the entire revised script of a version of the show as of January. We understand that not everyone eats meat though, so absolutely no pressure. We can always put the leftovers in the fridge.

Done eating?
pg. 51

pg. 134

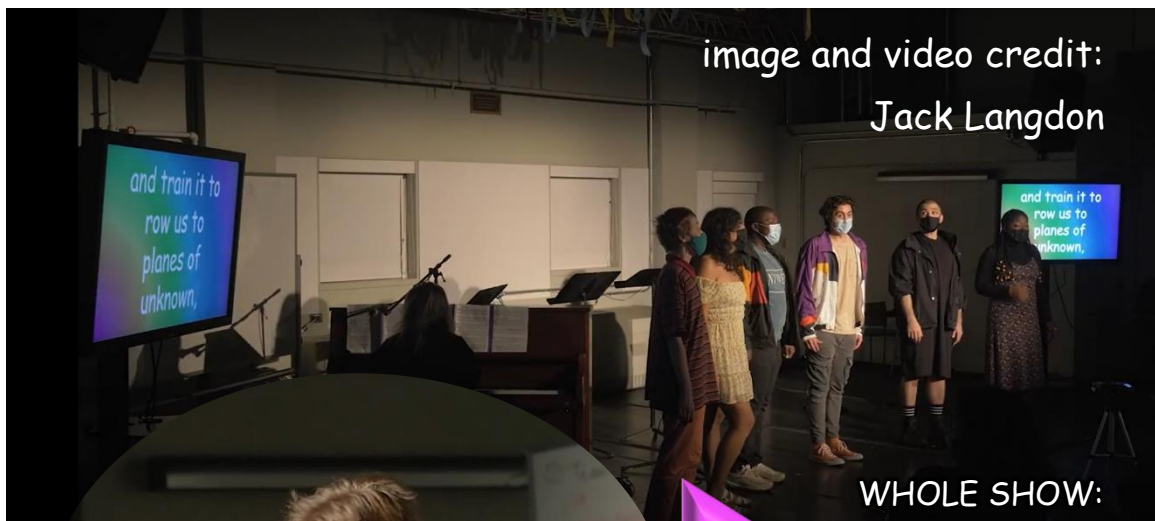


image and video credit:
Jack Langdon



WHOLE SHOW:

[https://youtu.b](https://youtu.be/4JNWWM59)
[e/4JNWWM59](https://youtu.be/4JNWWM59)

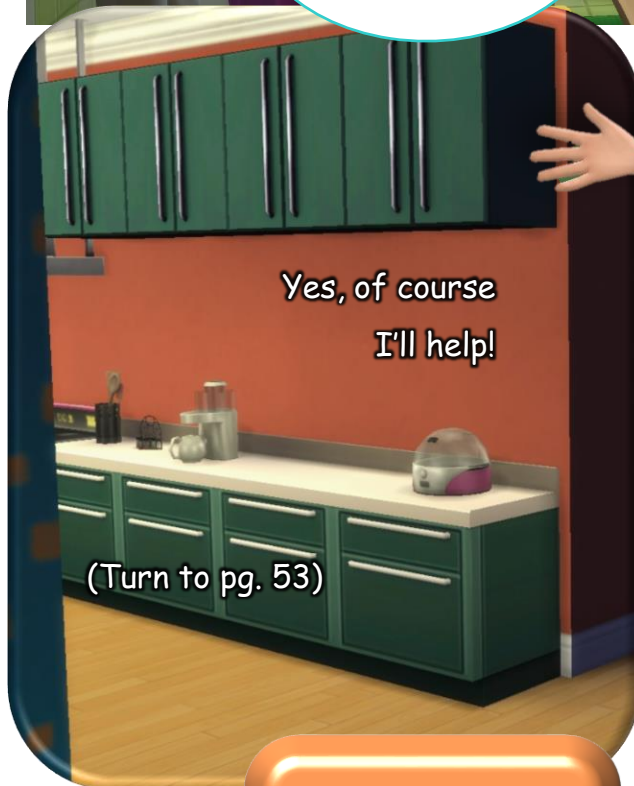
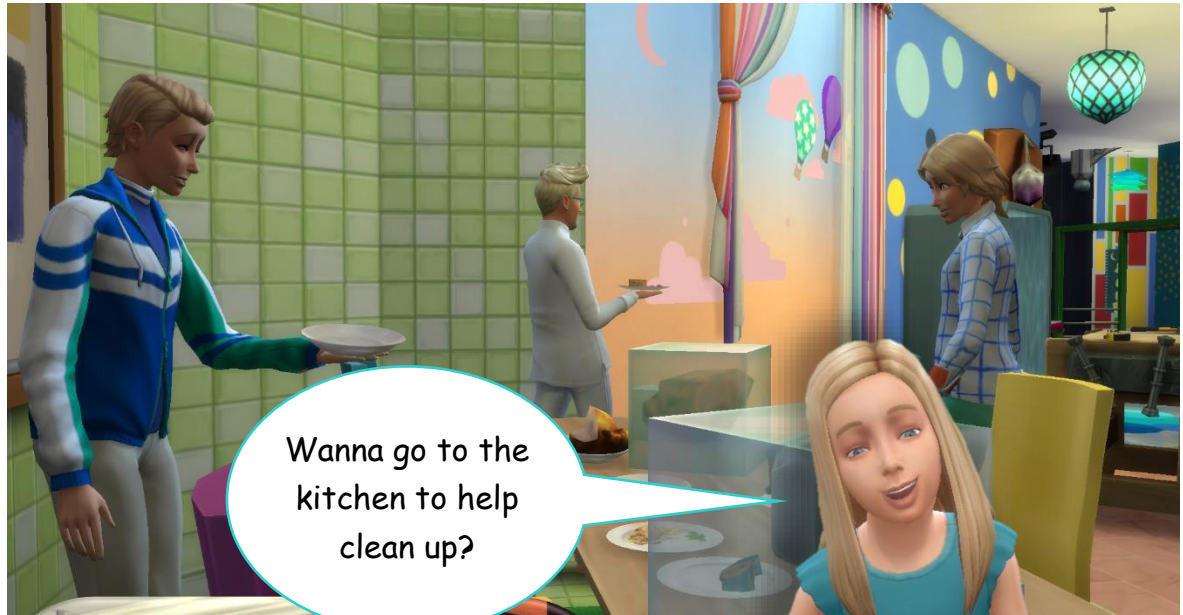
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TEASER:

[https://youtu.be](https://youtu.be/42TH0Bkmm7Q)
[/42TH0Bkmm7Q](https://youtu.be/42TH0Bkmm7Q)

back to
the table
pg. 47



(Turn to pg. 53)

I wanna hear
more abt the food
(turn to pg. 39)



(Turn to pg. 71)



Cool, let's head to the kitchen.

We can tell you about the impetus and process of making *A Show that Is a Game* while you help out.

LEFT LEG: KITCHEN

If you've already eaten, help with the dishes.

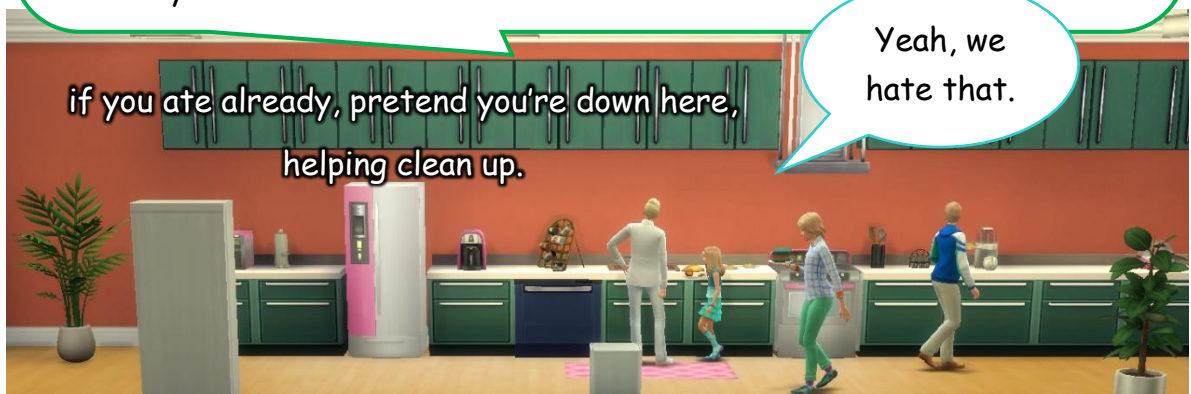
If you haven't, then help cook.



We should talk about multiplayer environments, both in games and creative processes. Goopy really needs to play single player most of the time, but Crust needs to play multiplayer most of the time, even though it's frightening.

Even though I like friends, I used to be super-duper uncomfortable with collaboration. It still scares me. I preferred to handle things myself so that everything felt like it was truly "mine." Part of that probably had to do with the apparent system of rewards in place for "independent success" as I was growing up, but another reason for this discomfort is a fear of ridicule for not knowing the unwritten rules of a game.

We dread *jam sessions* — walk into a room of cis men (usually) who have all spent hours of leisure time with their instruments and aren't afraid to make mistakes in front of each other and *know the rules* without stating them and get upset with me if we ask what the rules are — and even when they say there are no rules, suddenly we do something that doesn't quite "vibe" with what they're doing, because we don't have the experience necessary to pick up the vibes on the fly, then suddenly everyone is giving me nasty looks —



Any time the parameters are unclear — yet we must navigate nebulous expectations while figuring out what sounds to produce or what to do — that's not a good time for us.



I always end up asking questions and bothering people with a lot of "is this allowed?" It wasn't until we learned about the work of Pauline Oliveros that we started feeling a little more comfortable with improv and collaborating in general. It's good to have *parameters*. Her sonic meditations (which are pretty much also games) made me suddenly feel more comfortable taking risks in a multiplayer space.

Hey, Episcopal Priest, would you mind sharing one of Pauline Oliveros's meditations with us?



Angels and Demons

Angels represent the collective guardian spirits of this meditation.

Demons represent the individual spirits of creative genius.

Angels make steady, even, breath-long tones which blend as perfectly as possible with the steady, even, breath-long tones made by other Angels.

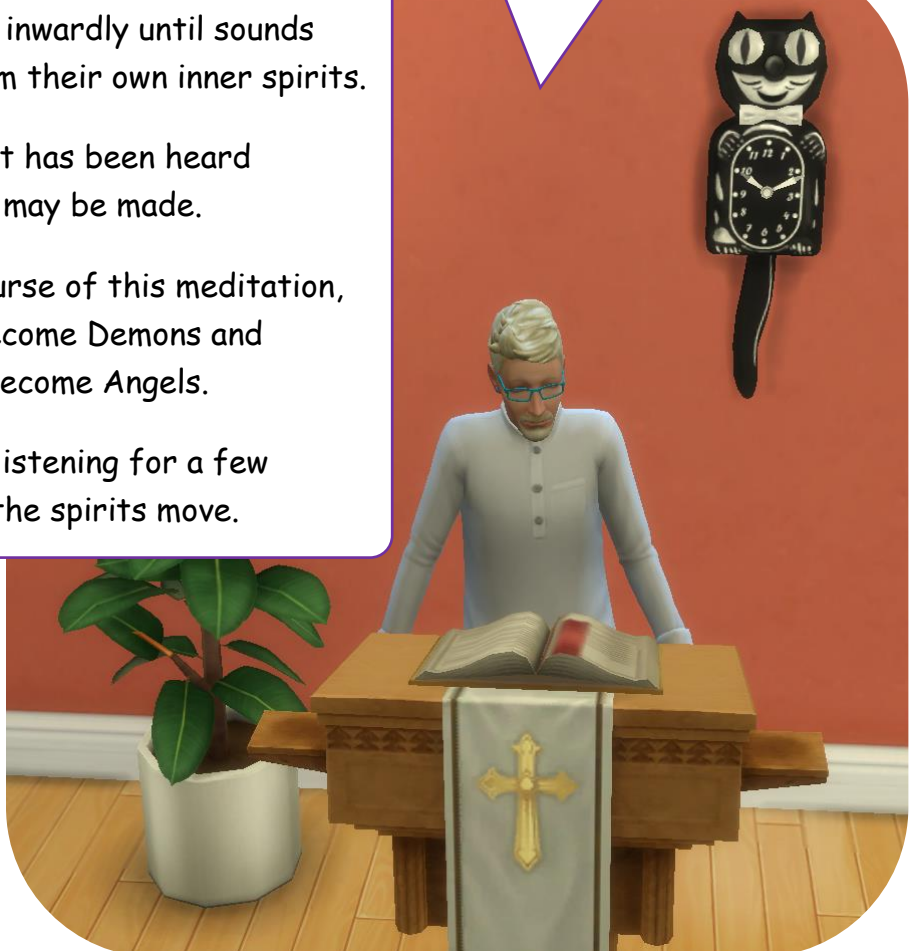
Demons listen inwardly until sounds are heard from their own inner spirits.

Any sound that has been heard inwardly first may be made.

During the course of this meditation, Angels may become Demons and Demons may become Angels.

Begin by just listening for a few minutes until the spirits move.

The Word of Pauline Oliveros, in the year of Our Lord Nineteen Eighty, as it is written in *The Anthology of Text Scores*, page one hundred and seventy-nine.





Thanks, Priest. We love that one because it's a fun game and music at the same time, but also because it's sort of like me and Goopy. We just wish it had a different name. Anyway, in *A Show that Is a Game*, we make the audience do a game inspired by that piece, but we don't mention angels or demons.

With video games, multiplayer stuff has always been tricky for us. The kids didn't have a ton of real-life multiplayer video game opportunities; then when we started doing online gaming later, we were struck with terror by voice chat. As it turns out, voice chat can be treacherous when your voice sounds like ours (Comic Sans lol).

"The real-life identities of teammates and rivals are understood to be privileged information that is irrelevant to the technical goals of a match. Respect for mutual anonymity, however, often goes out the window when female (or sexually ambiguous) voices are heard on a server."

The word of William Cheng, from the book of *Sound Play: Video Games and the Musical Imagination*, page 159, published in the year of Our Lord, two thousand and fourteen.



Exactly. We start getting all kinds of questions and unnecessary comments. This sucks for women, especially, but the crappiness is compounded when you are a man, and nobody believes you, and you end up getting harassed by a bunch of twelve-year-olds. And are we really going to interrupt a game just to say "uh... actually, I'm actually a guy," just to then get coded as a fellow twelve-year-old? ...Sometimes, but it stops being worth it at a certain point.



It doesn't take long before whatever unwritten rules there are in a space to suddenly shift and change in honor of our arrival.



So, we've always been jealous of those guys who have their small friend group that always plays video games together. I know those dynamics aren't always healthy, but we've got many friends who have their little quartet that they've been playing with since they were kids, some they met online, some in person. Even without that, it'd just be nice to play online games with voice chat and be relatively confident that we're not gonna get interrogated. Entering these kinds of spaces feels very similar to entering a jam session. I yearn to someday find that type of masculine security necessary to walk into a space like that and feel like everything will be alright.

Last summer, we played in a few Minecraft servers with people we met on Discord. Our favorite one had these crazy things called community guidelines (explicitly listed in the Discord server), a general understanding that we will not destroy each other's creations, and a readiness to give other users things if we have too many. It's all about living in a world together and showcasing our creations to each other. There are *parameters*. In this server, the admins made city blocks for us; each member got one so that all our buildings were cutely close together. It provided limitations in that we couldn't build super-wide buildings, so everyone started creatively using the vertical space. These parameters and constraints made us feel *more* comfortable. And even though the moderator had a lot more powers and abilities than us, she took good *care* of us and cultivated a healthy community. We respected her for it.

Anyway, it's supportive environments like that that make multiplayer things worthwhile.



Like multiplayer stuff, it's always a little spooky to collaborate, but I know it's good for us. Like how we dread cooking and exercise, but we're usually glad once we've done it.

As daunting as collaboration is, during the period of bad air where nobody came to visit, forcing us to all get on better terms, I was ready to give it another shot for us — this time mediated by Zoom.

I worked with our classmates Trevor Van de Velde and Hamed Sinno to create *Fwd: Fwd: Fwd: Viral Zoom Video* (<https://youtu.be/GvLBkIhhnuE>), a short and juicy study on the risks of sharing breath and how to create a gross level of intimacy over the screen.



We passed soda and spit through tubes connected by the borders of our Zoom boxes, we hit each other, put each other's voices into our mouths, and screamed into the sickening void at each other.

Goopy got to be present for plenty of that performance. There were no words he had to say. He liked the gargling with pop rocks. Crust liked it because Crust got to help organize the process, plan meeting agendas, schedule improv, filming, and recording sessions, help divvy out tasks.

It was a surprisingly intense thing that helped Goopy feel more comfortable in collaborative settings and helped us feel closer to Trevor and Hamed as a whole household, even though we'd never met them in "real life" at that point. (We hang out a lot irl now though!)

Then I got invited by a new friend, Kate Budney, to be a part of her senior undergraduate thesis in devised theater. Devised theater is a huge umbrella term used for theater that has an unusual development process, generally involving some degree of creative teamwork.

A total of six people were involved, and Kate led us through Zoom rehearsals of bonding exercises and low-stakes content generation. Then we'd test out combinations of things we'd come up with and gradually formed a structure, working together and separately to fill in the gaps.



It culminated in a live Zoom show streamed on Twitch, called *Asynchronous Mission #6*, in which we sometimes played ourselves, sometimes played insects, and sometimes played insects pretending to be us.

Lots of people who came had a good time. We had a *Good Time*, and all the performers felt like the show was theirs. Both labor and ideas had been divided pretty evenly, except for Kate herself. Leading this process was laborious for her, because she'd organized the whole thing for us and made tons of tough decisions along the way.

The glue that held everyone together initially was love for Kate and belief in her vision. By the end, though, we all cared about each other, invested in the show we'd made together.

How did we get from that first point to the end? Kate's marvelous leadership. She made it clear that she loved us as people first, then as performers and devisors. We always did a check-in at the start of rehearsals. Then we all danced together before getting into anything more serious. She made accommodations for anyone who wasn't feeling well or had anything else going on. Sometimes, we just talked, because that's what we needed.

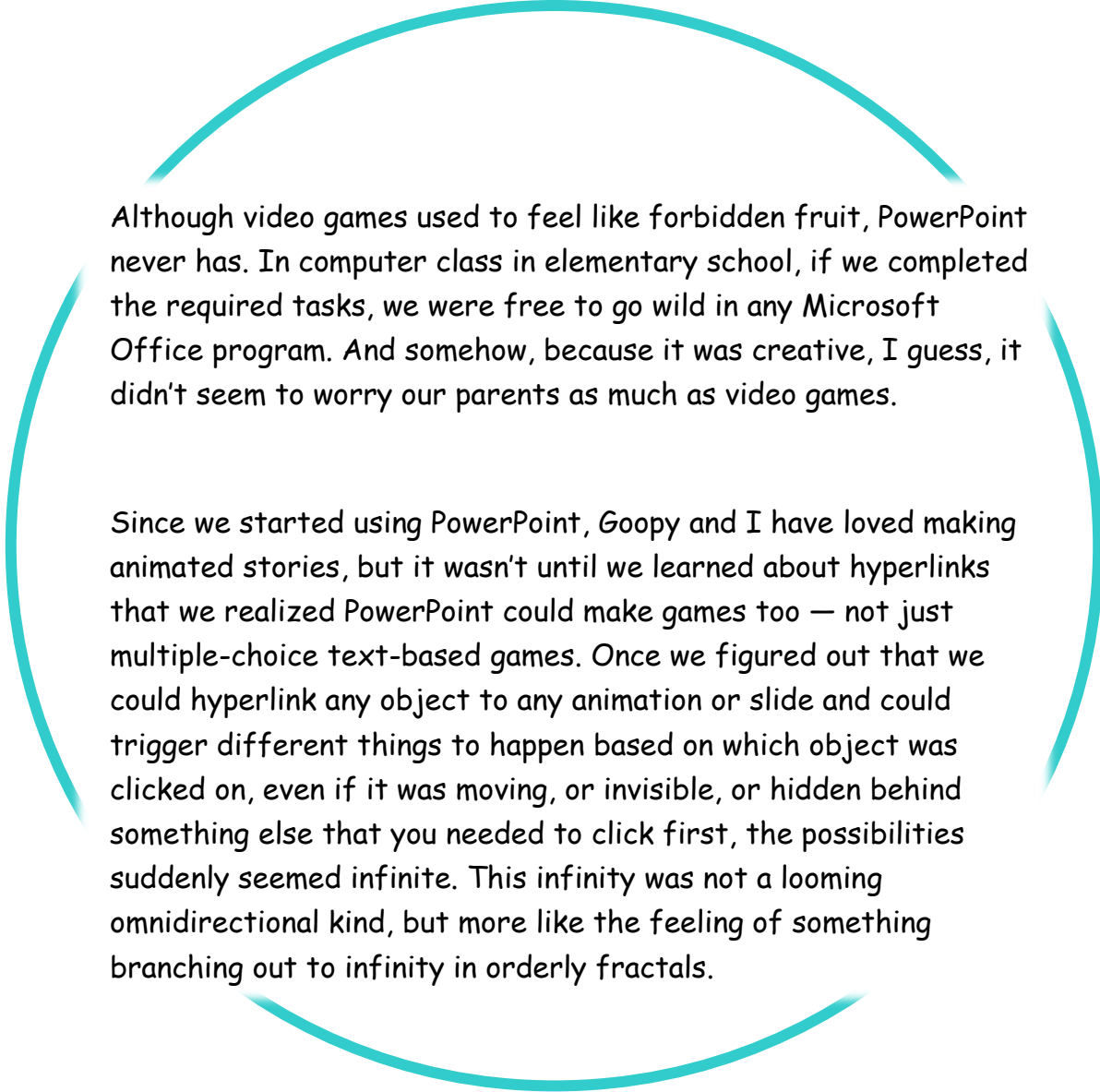
She carried herself with confidence and humility, carefully balancing her roles as friend and leader. She was open to criticism about any and all of her ideas but could make a snap-judgement call about something if we were pressed for time.

In the rehearsal process for last fall's workshops of *A Show that Is a Game*, which was in-person, we strove to be a leader like that. Or rather, Crust strove to be a leader like that for us so that I could strive to be a leader like that for the cast and crew. And I even hired Kate as a dramaturg to help us make some of the difficult decisions and give narrative and script feedback where mine and Crust's perspective was too close.

While there were some unavoidable hiccups due to the nature of working within an institution like Dartmouth and some things I could've handled better, we made it work with the power of games!

Yeah! Games turned out to be our hero.

We didn't give the performers a ton of opportunities to create content because I didn't want to overwhelm them with choice. The PowerPoint we made (as a household) created the overarching framework for the show.



Although video games used to feel like forbidden fruit, PowerPoint never has. In computer class in elementary school, if we completed the required tasks, we were free to go wild in any Microsoft Office program. And somehow, because it was creative, I guess, it didn't seem to worry our parents as much as video games.

Since we started using PowerPoint, Goopy and I have loved making animated stories, but it wasn't until we learned about hyperlinks that we realized PowerPoint could make games too — not just multiple-choice text-based games. Once we figured out that we could hyperlink any object to any animation or slide and could trigger different things to happen based on which object was clicked on, even if it was moving, or invisible, or hidden behind something else that you needed to click first, the possibilities suddenly seemed infinite. This infinity was not a looming omnidirectional kind, but more like the feeling of something branching out to infinity in orderly fractals.

We didn't learn until last year that this infinite possibility space of PowerPoint is called being Turing complete. Of course, that's not the literal definition. Turing completeness just means that a system can replicate any Turing machine, which is true of most programming languages in frequent use today.



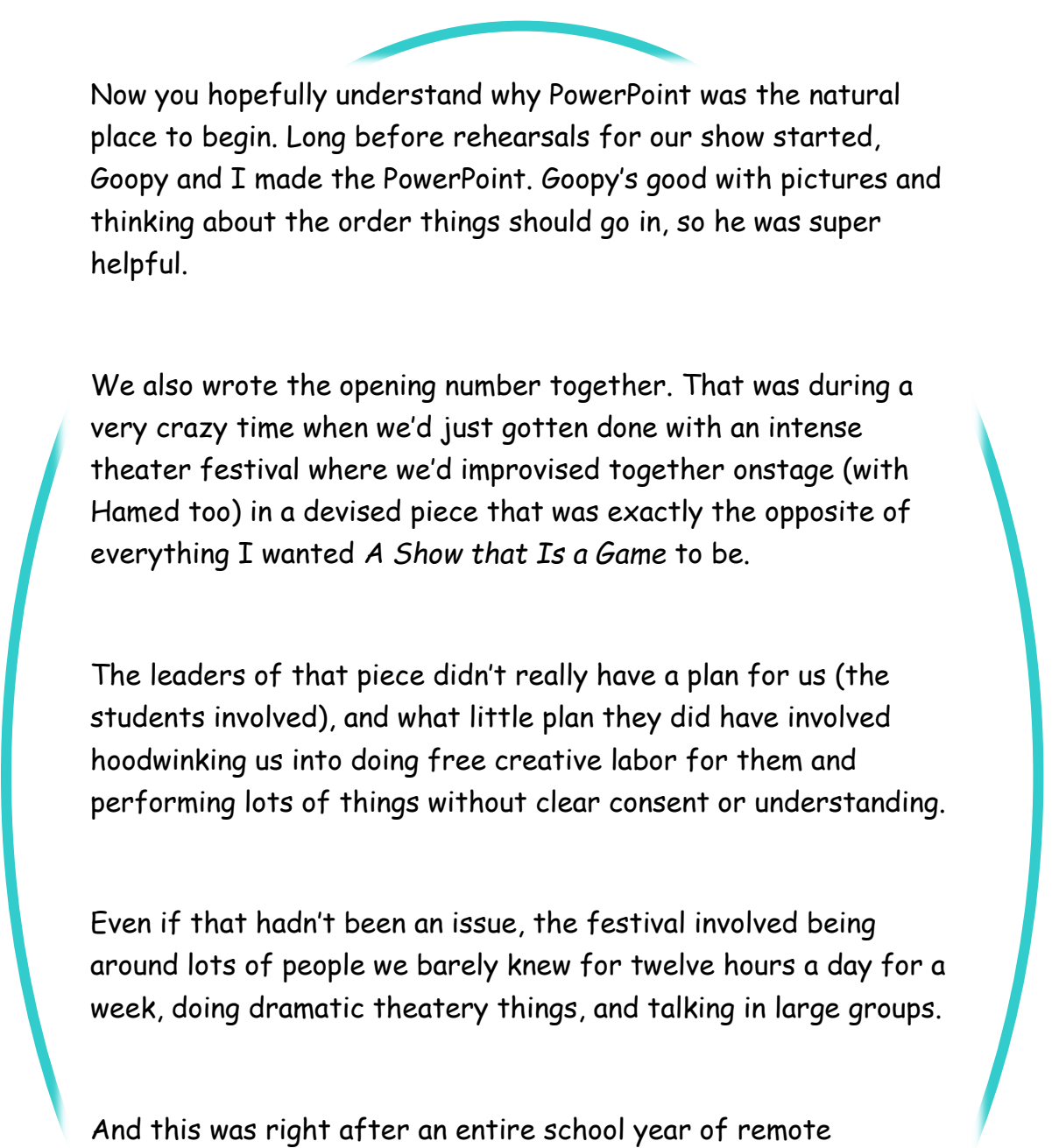
Please watch, "On the Turing Completeness of PowerPoint"
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNjxe8ShM-8>) The word of Tom Wildenhain, for SIGBOVIK, in the year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Seventeen.

Thanks, yes. So, even though it could theoretically do most things a programming language could, PowerPoint's limitations are its clunkiness and nature as a series of rectangles. These parameters help us focus on getting things done, providing an accessible framework for storytelling. Crust likes it because it's easy to make things for others this way, and Goopy likes it because it's a nice way to think using shapes and colors.

We used to make PowerPoint games for our brother sometimes. If you want to play two of them, feel free to download them here! We have also included a 5th grade book report.

Download
here!





Now you hopefully understand why PowerPoint was the natural place to begin. Long before rehearsals for our show started, Goopy and I made the PowerPoint. Goopy's good with pictures and thinking about the order things should go in, so he was super helpful.

We also wrote the opening number together. That was during a very crazy time when we'd just gotten done with an intense theater festival where we'd improvised together onstage (with Hamed too) in a devised piece that was exactly the opposite of everything I wanted *A Show that Is a Game* to be.

The leaders of that piece didn't really have a plan for us (the students involved), and what little plan they did have involved hoodwinking us into doing free creative labor for them and performing lots of things without clear consent or understanding.

Even if that hadn't been an issue, the festival involved being around lots of people we barely knew for twelve hours a day for a week, doing dramatic theatery things, and talking in large groups.

And this was right after an entire school year of remote instruction, nobody in the garden (the bad air). We'd spent the vast majority of our time inside alone together.

Goopy was in hiding that whole week. Not because I forced him, he just can't come out that easily around new people, not to mention large groups, not to mention lots of talking.

I had to give him almost a month where we mostly played Minecraft. I was so exhausted, I just had to let him do whatever he wanted while I rested. Except, we still had a musical to write. So, every morning and every evening, we spent 15-30 minutes trying to write a song. And after a dozen terrible songs, the Opening Number was born, and then I knew people would have a good time, maybe even a Good Time.

So, we had this PowerPoint outlining the show's structure, and we had the opening number. Then it was time to get workshop performers involved. I was designing a game (that was the show) that we as performers could have the audience play, but before that, I had to design the game that was the rehearsal process and all the games inside of it.




The first game was:

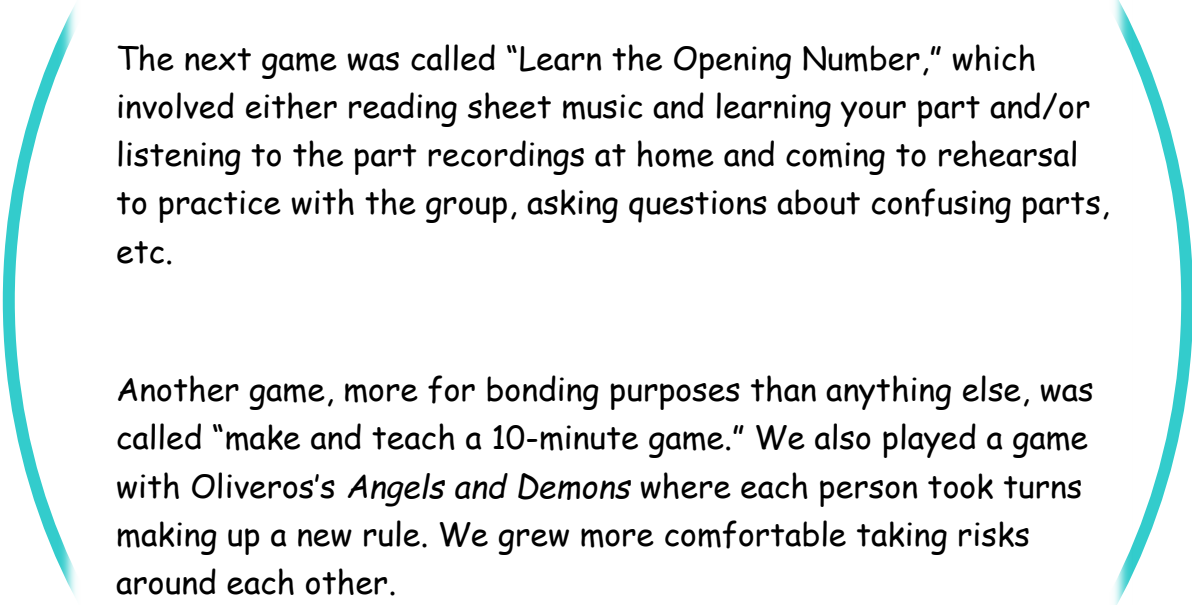
Make a self-portrait using only the shapes tool in PowerPoint and customize it however you want. It could look just like you, or it could be abstract or metaphorical, whatever you'd like. The only requirement is that it has limbs and facial features, so I can animate you in the show's main PowerPoint. (Here's the example we gave. Look familiar?)

The second game was:

Make a four-line poem in any style introducing yourself to the audience.



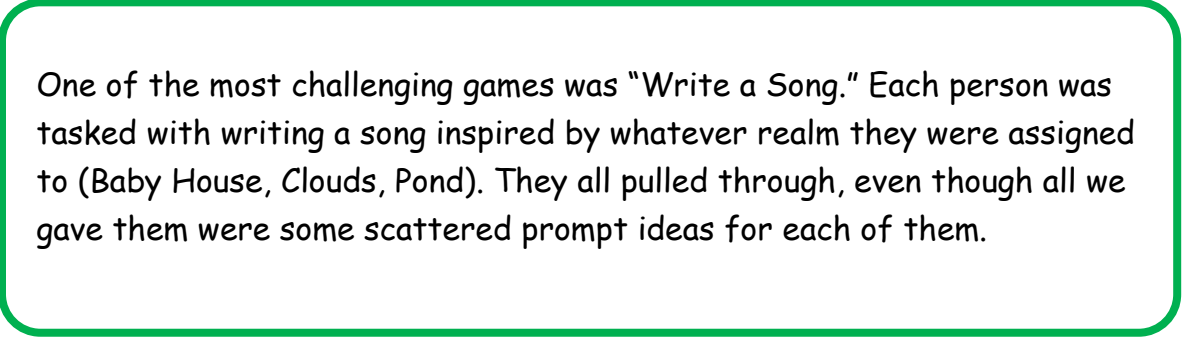

These were both successes. The portraits and poems ranged from a clown alongside cryptic metaphors to a humorous verse about mental illness and first impressions paired with a hyperrealist portrait.



The next game was called "Learn the Opening Number," which involved either reading sheet music and learning your part and/or listening to the part recordings at home and coming to rehearsal to practice with the group, asking questions about confusing parts, etc.

Another game, more for bonding purposes than anything else, was called "make and teach a 10-minute game." We also played a game with Oliveros's *Angels and Demons* where each person took turns making up a new rule. We grew more comfortable taking risks around each other.

Sometimes the game was "Listen to What People Have Going On in their Lives Because It's a Lot."



One of the most challenging games was "Write a Song." Each person was tasked with writing a song inspired by whatever realm they were assigned to (Baby House, Clouds, Pond). They all pulled through, even though all we gave them were some scattered prompt ideas for each of them.



And the songs functioned well for this iteration of the show, because it was a casual workshop happening at a college where most of the audience has friends in the cast, and a lot of the cast didn't have an immense amount of songwriting experience, so it was in part a showcase — come see us and get to know us.

In future versions, either me and Goopy will write all the songs ourselves, or we'll help Eochaid give much more specific prompts to make sure the songs do their job of assisting with the storytelling labor of the show.

The realms songs from the workshop productions didn't really do that, but they assisted in the storytelling labor for the story of us as a cast and as people and as growing songwriters.



Right!



Thanks so much
for helping us, by
the way!

Wait so... have
you eaten yet?



Yes, let's get
out of here
and see what
Goopy's up
to.

(Turn to pg. 71)

No, not yet,
let's go wait in
the dining
room.

(Turn to pg. 35)

Wait, I
wanna
see the
pantry!

(Turn
to pg.
128)

Sounds good! Let's see if Goopy'll let us play games with him in the office.

RIGHT
LEG:

knock knock

mn

Thanks, *goes in* ah, seems like he's busy working, so maybe we won't be playing any games, but can I explain to our guest what you're working on, Goop? Can I tell them about the Sims Musical and how you're making it?

mn

Great,
thanks

OFFICE

We can start with some stuff about the early days because I think you should know how we came to understand fiction and autobiography. The storifying of an inner world has been done many times before, but it's sometimes taken us a while to identify our old favorites as such.



Going back a bit to what I mentioned about Goopy making movies for all the music they listened to: in the very early days (and in the other early days), the kids used to listen to Pink Floyd's *The Wall*. A lot. Like *all* the time. They knew there was a movie that went with it and also knew that it wasn't meant for kids (and that seeing said movie was far enough in the future that it seemed irrelevant). But because they knew there was one, and that the whole thing was supposed to be a story, while Crust was busy memorizing all the words and guitar solos, Goopy made up his own version of the movie.

Both of them knew that the album's story was based on Roger Waters's real life in part, but that also some of it was made up. The kids never knew which was which, but that didn't matter much. They just liked the music and the spooky, technicolor trip they'd invented to go along with it that Goopy'd play for them every time they listened.

They'd seen musicals, watched movie-musicals, and loved *Fantasia*, where every gesture was multi-sensory, but they'd spent just as much time listening to musicals and soundtracks that belonged to visuals they'd never seen. They never minded, though, because it was just as fun to watch Goopy's movies. That's why he even invented movies for music that never had a visual component meant for it in the first place. The kids didn't understand that music could *exist* without a show or a movie. This would form a core component of Goopy's creative instincts, even after Crust believed they'd outgrown that desire.

Even though Goopy was shy and didn't talk to Crust's friends much, he'd get very emotionally attached to fictional characters. Goopy spent a lot more time in movies (both his and others') and books (and later, games) than outside the house. So naturally, it was easy for him to get invested.

Sometimes, the pair would get something we'll refer to here as a Big Like.

A Big Like occurs when a piece of art or fiction or an artist or character resonates so thoroughly with both of them that they can't stop thinking about it for months or even years.

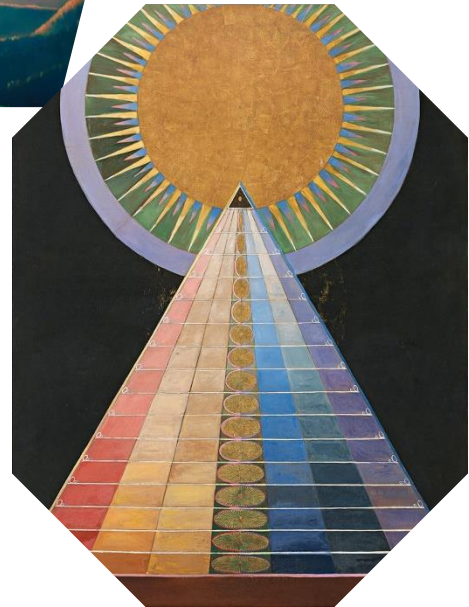
Even during their years of separation, when Crust was in the garden and Goopy was in the house, if Crust took a break to read or watch something, sometimes they'd get this Big Like feeling. Little did they know that it was because Goopy was inside also enjoying the very same media.

Some examples of past Big Likes are (in roughly chronological order though not all-inclusive):



- *Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron*

- *Series of Unfortunate Events*
- *Harry Potter*
- *Pokémon*
- *The Flaming Lips*
- *Plato's Republic*
- *We're Only In It for the Money* by the Mothers of Invention
- Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (and all spinoff media)
- Antoni Gaudí's *Sagrada Família*
- *Yuri!!! On Ice*



- Hilma af Klint



- Dorian Electra
- Armitage Hux from *Star Wars*
- ← *Bungo Stray Dogs*

- *Hunter x Hunter*



Before they were old enough for the internet, they'd work together to take these Big Likes and add to them.

They'd draw pictures, write stories, and surround themselves with as much relevant material as possible until the next thing came along.



Once they had access to the internet, they would read, watch, and listen to other people's expansions of these cherished worlds. During this time, Crust was largely unaware that they were consuming this media in parallel.

come to my
room later

Okay, bye for
now, little guy.



One striking example of fan culture the kids absorbed was "Wizard Rock." Wizard Rock is novelty music based on *Harry Potter*, and at one time, there were hundreds of active bands making it. Crust even made some Wizard Rock songs of its own at one point. But one of the kids' favorite bands was the Myspace band "Swish & Flick," a Wizard Rap outfit made up of married couple Stacy a.k.a. Astoria (vocals/drums/synth/guitar) and John a.k.a. Flick (backup vocals/drums/synth/guitar/bass).

The kids found a crazy video that, at the time, they thought was so funny and badass: a fan-made music-video to Swish & Flick's song, "S-l-y in Slytherin."

Click here to watch
"SLY in Slytherin,"
music by Swish and
Flick, video created
by NarcissaABlack,
using *The Sims 2*.
<https://youtu.be/i8t9wZaZ9Xw>



There's something very unsettling about it now; it resides in that uncanny valley that hits so close to home it scares us in a good way. That was our first time watching a music video made using *The Sims*. But it wasn't our first time watching machinima.

Just in case you don't know, machinima are videos whose visual material is generated from video game footage. Beyond that, they can come in many forms.

The following is a paraphrasing of information from *The Machinima Reader*, pages six through twenty-six:

Some people choose to modify the actual code of a video game to achieve their desired machinima results, some use in-game controls to dictate the piece's action, and some use the assets from the game files and reanimate said assets themselves in a separate software. Early machinima were essentially highlight reels of moments in games that people were proud of, but people have used game footage to create stories as early as 1996, and the processes were complicated at that time. *The Sims 2*, in 2004, was the first game to come with an in-game button that allowed you to easily record game footage to make machinima.



Interpreted from the words of Henry Lowood and Michael Nitsche, published by MIT Press in the year of our Lord, two thousand and eleven.

Yes, and since then, people have made music videos for existing songs, music video parodies, tragic and comic stories, small sketches, and all sorts of movies. Later, the wave of YouTube gamers brought forth a host of collaborative storytelling pieces (still a thing that people do now), with an improvisatory/role-playing component.

The first of these that Crust and Goopy remember seeing was the series called *Shadow of Israphel* by the Yogscast.



It starts out as just some friends playing Minecraft together, but soon they develop elaborate settings and characters and an epic adventure plot. This is probably (for our household) what established video games as having the potential for storytelling outside of the stories built into the games themselves.

"SLY in Slytherin" wasn't the kids' first time encountering *The Sims* either. If it had been, I'm not totally sure if it would've felt as satisfying to.

In the early days, back when Crust and Goopy were good friends, they used to go over (together!) to their other friend's house and all play *Sims* in her basement, which had *more than one computer!* Such a crazy thing. Nobody in this household has ever enjoyed playing with literal dolls. Instead, the kids preferred to dress up horse figurines, play with the pets from the Barbie pet shop instead of the Barbies, the animals from Noah's ark instead of Noah himself. But in *The Sims*, the people weren't cute or pretty like dolls. They were messy and pixelated, they were rude, they had bodily functions, inconvenient desires, they fought, they kissed, they got naked behind blurred out censor blobs, they got smelly. They were all the things we hated about people and all the things we didn't.



In the era when Goopy was yelling and crying from inside the house at an obstinately oblivious Crust, Goopy would play *The Sims 3* to comfort himself. It helped him envision a world where someday he could go outside again and try to make friends. It was helpful because it felt so Good, but it also hurt to know that he could only have that world in a game. It further fueled the resentment he felt at his captivity.

I mentioned transness and the uncanny valley before and why using *The Sims* makes sense for that feeling. To many perceivers, something isn't quite *right* about us. We require a double-take for onlooker categorization, verging on the edge of indistinguishable, not *real*. Voice, looks, movements, all lying in this in-between.

This is how sims look — a little scarily like people who don't move quite right, like they're acting a part they don't know very well. *Sims 4*, the most recent edition, the one you're looking at us in right now, tried to remedy this by leaning harder to the side of cartoonish. Our features are a little too smooth to belong to a real person, movements slightly too exaggerated. That's why the us you're looking at today, these archetypal roles in our story, are *Sims 4*. We're symbolic.

The Sims 3, however, is messy. Those sims are way too real-looking at certain points, and glitchy computer-feeling at others. You can take facial features to the extremes, in which they overlap slightly with each other, creating artifacts and pointy angles that do not exist in mammalian lifeforms.



And while *Sims 4* is more "culturally sensitive" with lots more customization options to be inclusive of various combinations of expressions and bodies (still not enough for everyone, unless you download user-made custom content), *The Sims 3* sims feel much more trans to us. Those sims are clocky, messy, bizarre-looking, trying too hard, resonating with the chaos of day-to-day gender shit.

We get strong notions of 4 and 3 being like the sublime and the mundane, the idealized and the real, the celestial and the terrestrial, the Forms and the Imitations. And I mean no disrespect toward the Imitations by calling them that — they play a crucial role.

In *Goopy's Sims Musical*, the *Sims 3* Sims represent more worldly, physical, tangible manifestations — referred to (for now) as “refractions” — of us.

We realized that our Big Likes are one form of this refraction process. Because we are disparate, and communicating about ourself as a whole is difficult, when we see something of ourself in media, we latch onto it — that's so *us*! That part is so *me*, and *that* part is so *him*, etc. It's easier to say what something is like than to say what it is. That's what these refractions are — pieces of ourself scattered and bent through various fictional or performative or artistic materials — making it easier to look at ourself from a distance and figure shit out.



A combination of some of our more recent Big Likes coagulated one night into a long, winding conversation between me, Goopy, and Crust. I sensed no resentment; the kids were buzzing. Together, in a matter of hours, we came up with the outline of a story that felt so important to all of us because it, in part, reflected some of the growth we'd done together.

I was mainly the scribe; it was Goopy and Crust who animatedly spouted their ideas for the story together, Crust clarifying where Goopy's words didn't work. They fell back into conversation like old times.

At first, this fanfiction idea seemed to me like a one-night flight of fancy. Our google doc was literally named, "okay, so i'm not going to write a fanfiction but..." and underneath was the first scene, dialogue, and a complete and thorough outline of the whole plot of a long crossover fic and its sequel, complete with character charts. When they came to me the next day asking them to help write the whole thing for real, it was a pleasant surprise.

This happened to fall around the bad air time when all the neighbors were inside their own houses too, so we didn't have to worry as much about keeping up appearances.

After getting the duo's permission, I started posting our chapters online weekly. It took over a year from conception till we put out the last chapter of the sequel, but we'd churned out 125,000 words of work that felt good to all of us. Even though looking back at earlier chapters sometimes induces cringing, it helps us take stock of how we grew.

It was so lovely to see them working together again. It was easier for them to trade ideas and create scenes about characters from something else because it meant they didn't have to explicitly talk about their own past grievances, even though the story itself took inspiration from those. That's the power of the refractions! It got them to open up around each other again.

I thought it would be cool if they could make a story together that wasn't based on characters from someone else's universe, but they couldn't agree on a topic or format. Eventually, we decided to have them each take charge of a separate project, so you know now that Crust has *A Show that Is a Game* and Goopy has his *Sims Musical*.

Goopy, it turns out, really enjoyed having the fanfic regularly posted online. It wasn't like being around other people. It wasn't his words necessarily, but his ideas and imaginings were in there. It was validating for him to see all the positive feedback from random strangers on the internet who had the same Big Like as him.

Just as PowerPoint was a fun way for Crust to make games and stories for other people (with Goopy's help), *Sims* has been a way that Goopy likes to make stories for himself. We thought that Goopy would want to hole up here in his office and make the *Sims Musical* mostly alone, save for linguistic and musical advice from us, but it turns out that he missed that accountability structure and scheduled validation that posting fanfic had provided.

When a friend of ours (Trevor) suggested Twitch streaming, it all made sense. It would be a way for Goopy to share his ideas with people online, get feedback, and interact a bit, even though the action itself wasn't multiplayer per se. I was very impressed by his bravery. Crust and I agreed to voice his ideas and keep the chatter going during the stream. We promised we'd do our best to listen to him, not just insert our own opinions over his. And this process helps him open up even more ideas. Our interpreting combined with the comments from folks online actually expand his imaginative process while also making it easier for him to formulate his thoughts in a way that we understand better.

So that's why we're streaming the process of making the Sims Musical — building the sets and characters, setting up scenes for filming, etc. We later hope to stream some of the music-making bits but haven't gotten there yet.

Click here for some
stream highlights!

<https://www.twitch.tv/collections/-WQy9BdT1Ba6Eg>

← also, follow the channel
(eochaid_ok)

at this link to get updates on the
musical as it happens.



So yeah, Goopy's come up with most of the story and design. I'm helping him and Crust write words. Goopy, Crust, and Pianist Dealin' are writing songs together. Handier Man is helping with OBS stuff (the software used to stream). Episcopal Priest is praying for us. God is watching. And you're here now, giving us an opportunity to explain ourselves.



On that note, should we go check out Goopy's room? It's not often that he lets guests in there.



Oh yeah, as long as we're sure it's okay to go in there.

Turn to pg. 89



Um, actually, gotta use the bathroom first.

Turn to pg. 87



**RIGHT
FOOT:**

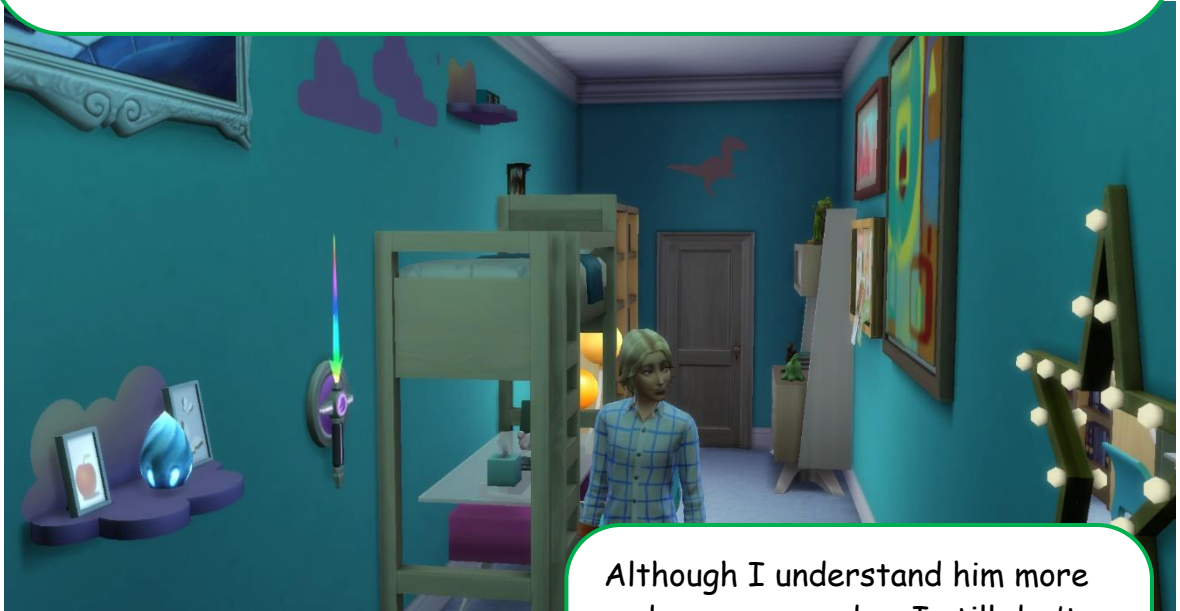


Okay, now
we can go
to the
bedroom

(Turn to
pg. 89)

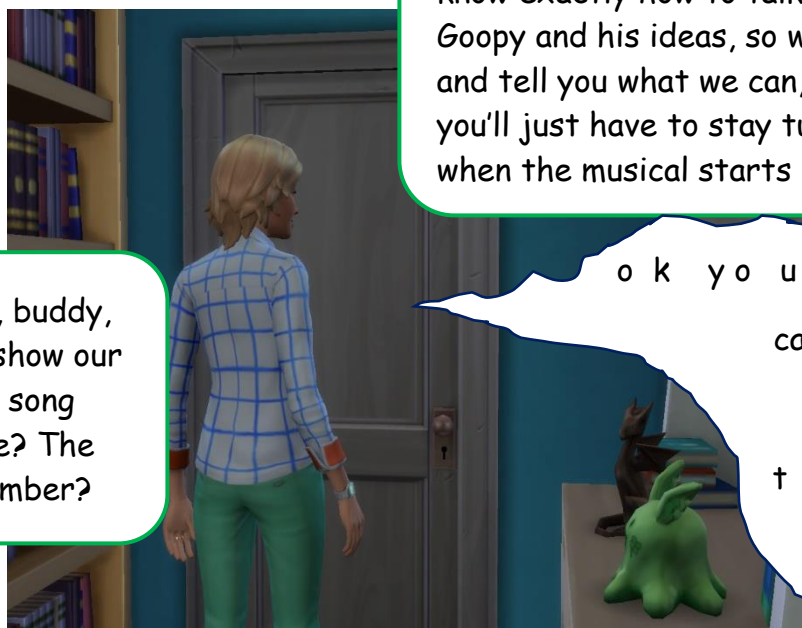


You've already gotten a hint of it; it's Goopy leading us in a heist mission to reclaim a history for himself — and the rest of us, to a certain extent. And, like this tour, the amount of perfect accuracy in it is somewhat arbitrary because we need fiction to make sense of it. It's sort of a more detailed explanation/metaphor for the story I told you earlier when we were in the living room. Remember when I was like, "It took a lot of work that's hard to describe" but eventually we got out of the old house and built this one and so on? The Sims Musical will try to describe it.



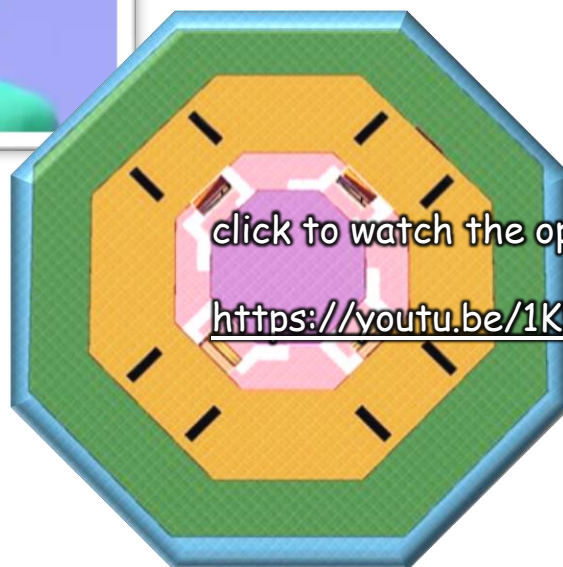
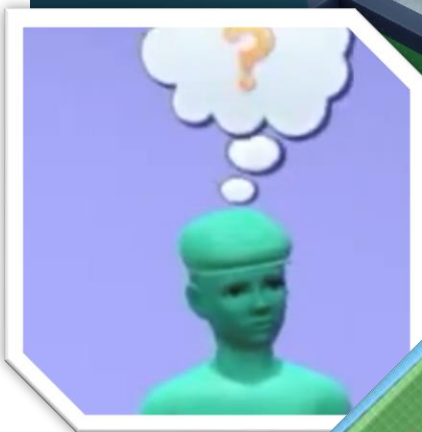
Although I understand him more and more every day, I still don't know exactly how to talk about Goopy and his ideas, so we'll show and tell you what we can, and then you'll just have to stay tuned for when the musical starts dropping.

Hey, Goop, buddy, could you show our friend the song that's done? The opening number?



o k y o u
c a n
o p e n
t h e
d o o r

So, what you're about to see is the opening number that we finished up last spring. Before this, in the musical, there'd be an overture, but other than that, this is the first thing you'd see and hear.



click to watch the opening number!

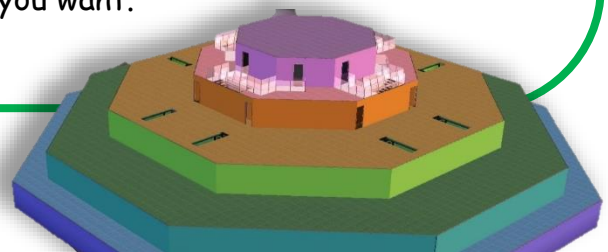
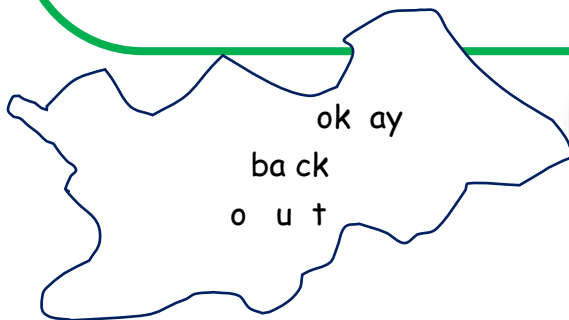
<https://youtu.be/1K59zsNrFRU>

In this song, "Character Creation Stage ('decide rn')," the eight refrains you just met are faced with the challenge of customizing themselves. The five levels of this creation building are inspired by the steps a *Sims 3* player goes through in the "Create a Sim" mode of the game (CAS for short).

In *Sims 3*, these steps are grouped slightly differently, but they are roughly playable in the order shown in the song (body/face, clothes, personality traits/favorites, Lifetime Wish), with the last level representing the placement of your completed sim in the game world. You can revisit any of these steps in CAS until you're satisfied, but once you've placed a sim in the world, you can't edit its attributes again without using cheats or buying special privileges with a currency called "Lifetime Happiness."

Cheating in *Sims* games is easy, it only requires knowledge of the cheat codes, a simple internet search away. However, if you didn't know these codes were available to begin with, you wouldn't know how to find them. Sometimes it takes watching another player use them to learn. This is kind of like learning about the existence of trans people, learning that transness is even an option. Sometimes all it takes is meeting the right person.

The protagonist in this song doesn't want to decide right now about how he's going to be. Even though the admins urge him to, we hear a hidden voice urging him that he doesn't have to (decide right now). Unbeknownst to him, this voice knows about the "cheats," knows that it's possible to change your mind as many times as you want.

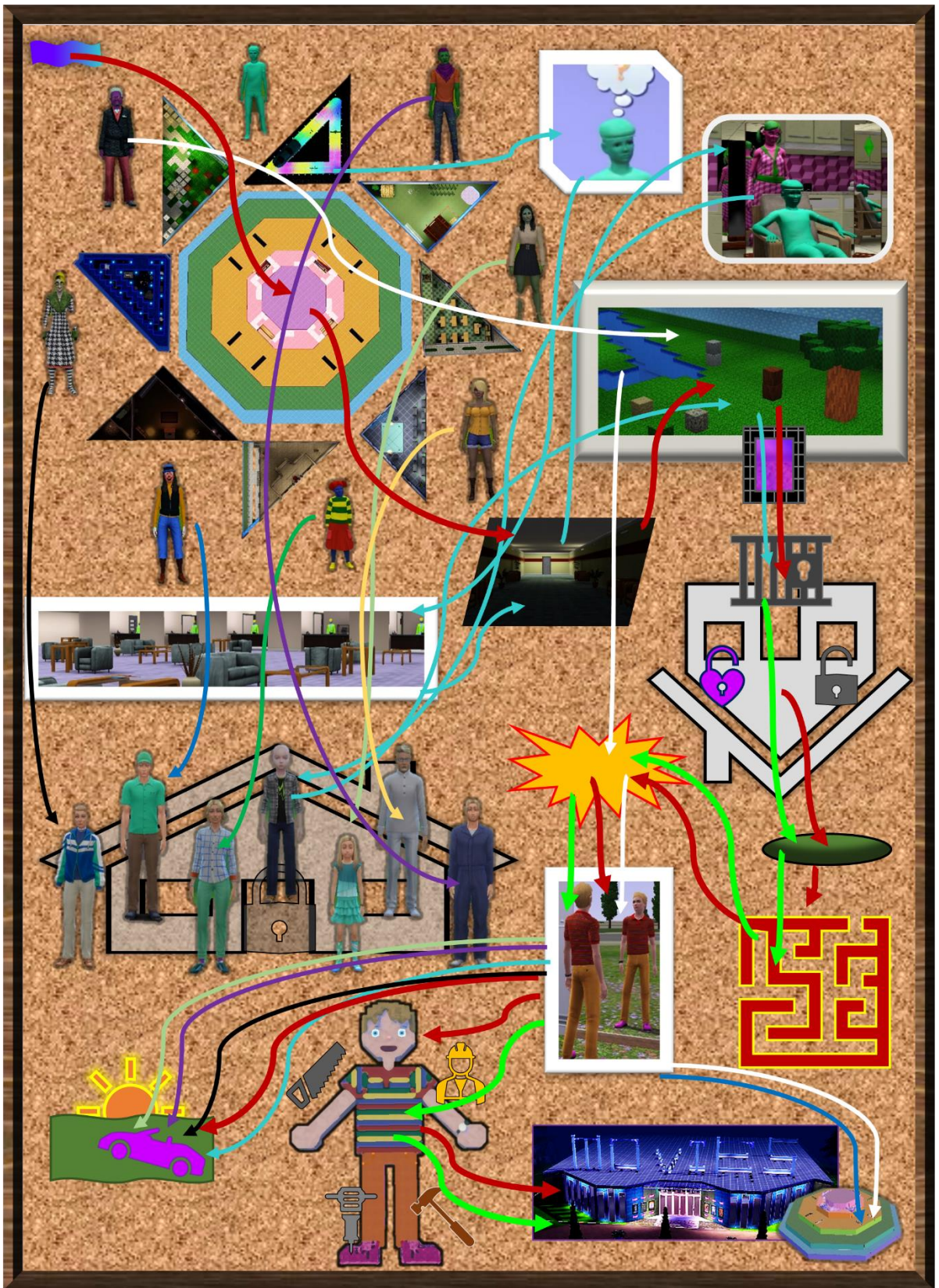


Okay, you want us to move back out to the bedroom? Totally fine.

Can I show our friends the plans you made for the rest of the show?



Alright, so Goopy made this bulletin board that maps out the entire Sims Musical in broad strokes. Crust and I have pages of notes interpreting this map, but for now I think it's easier just to show you the bulletin board, and illuminate one or two things about it.



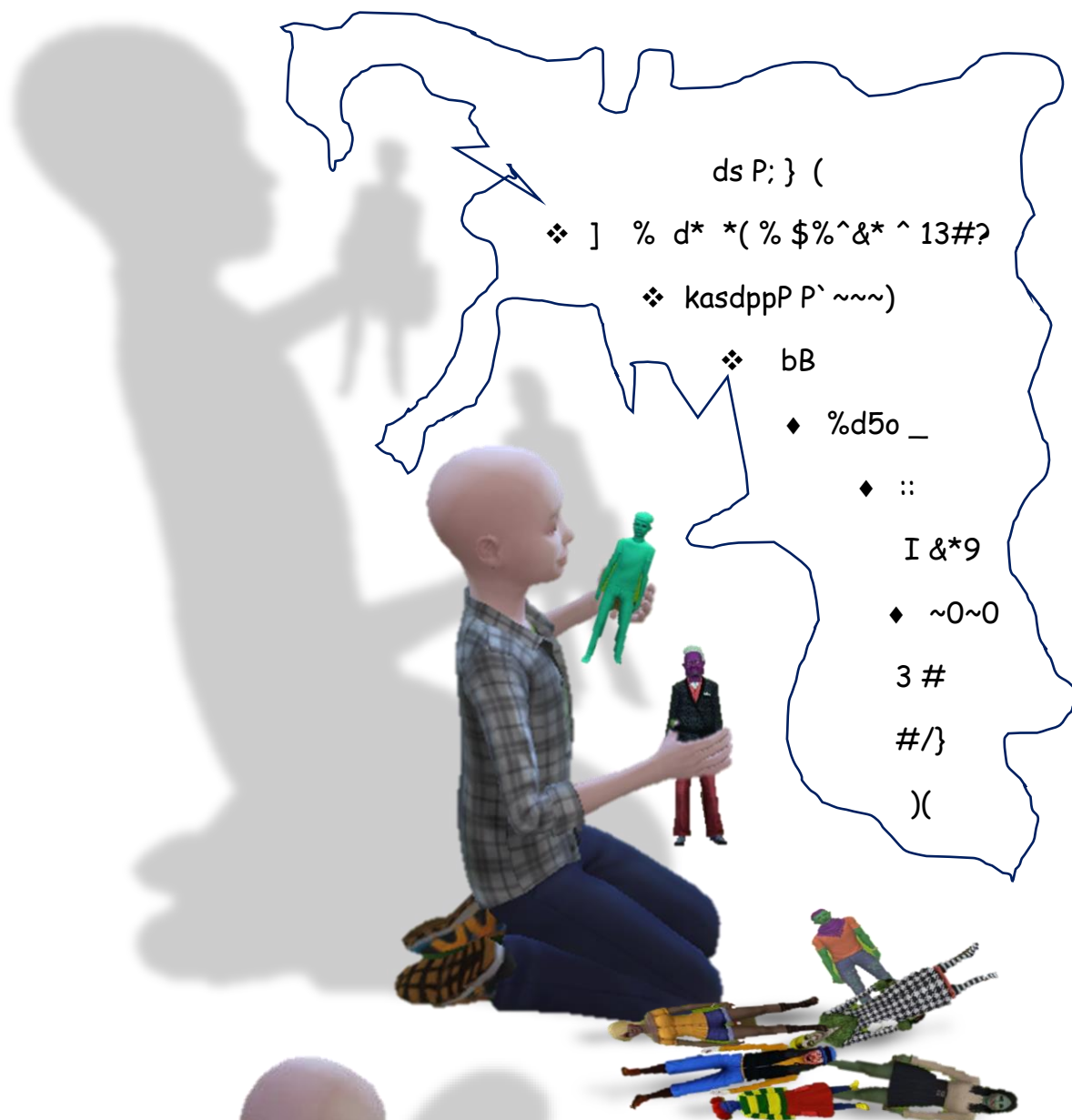
I'll quickly say what I can about this without giving too much away.

Basically, over the course of the first half of the musical, each of the *Sims 3* sims become mentally linked across game universes to each one of us *Sims 4* sims here in the house. We use a sort of telepathy to ask for their help, because at that point we're trapped in the Old House.

The *Sims 3* sims are refractions of us, more tangible manifestations of aspects of us rooted in the things *outside* of us. Therefore, they possess a type of material strength that we don't. The goal of the musical is for us to work with them to try to harness that strength to help us escape the Old House.



Hey, Goop, any details you'd like to add?



Yeah... it might make more sense to just show you the other song we've got mostly finished.



One fine evening

This one will probably be the 5th or 6th song in the musical. It's called "A Deal," and it's the song that Admin 2 hears as Pianist Dealin' shares a piece of his memory with her.

It takes place on an evening when the rest of the household decided to go out to eat at the restaurant that Pianist Dealin' used to work at, and Dealin' chose to play a bit more than background music.



<https://youtu.be/YkNYfYOAKaw>





Yeah, so that's basically it so far!

Ah, I guess we'll catch up with him in a bit. It's a little embarrassing to have this much of the plan exposed.

Now that we've mapped it out this far, it's clear that it's going to take years to complete, but it's the kind of project we're all pretty excited to continue. And I know for a fact this proposed outline will change as we learn more by creating parts of the show.

How are you doing? It's been lovely to have you here. The house has been a complete mess until very recently so it's super exciting to have you over. We—



What's happening?
We could open the
door and see...

F***,
something's
definitely
broken, we
gotta go
check it
out

(Turn to pg. 109)



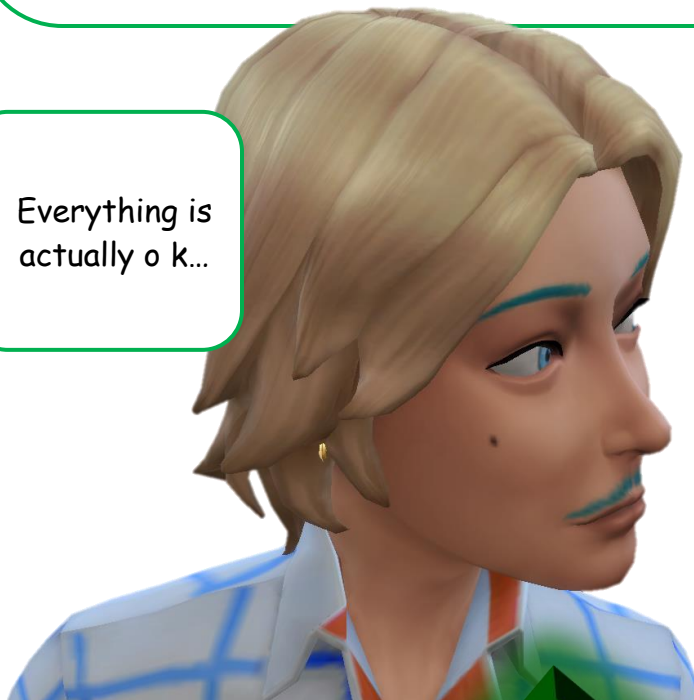
Take deep breaths, you're
assuming the worst. After
one deep breath, in and out,
you can open the door, and
everything will be fine. Just
take that deep breath

(Turn to pg. 101)

Do we really believe everything's gonna be fine when we open the door?

Nobody's fighting. The drink you left on the coffee table is still upright. The bookmark you left in your book is still at the same page. Nobody's gotten water on anything. Nobody's pissed on anything. Nobody's flipped any tables. Nobody's set anything on fire. Nobody's upset with you about something you don't remember doing. Nobody's going to force you to tell them how many and which of these worries are founded on any evidence whatsoever.

Everything is
actually o k...



Yes. Let's

just take a
deep breath.

(Turn to
pg. 103)

Not sure, I just
need to check

(Turn to
pg. 109)





BANG!

We're not worried. We could even take ten more slow deep breaths and remain unworried. Each breath consists of a four second inhale followed by seven seconds of retaining followed by eight seconds of release. Together that's nineteen seconds. That's one-hundred-and-ninety seconds total.

Of course.
We can do
that and
remain
unworried

(Turn to
pg. 105)

I'm all down
for deep
breaths, but
it'll be easier
to relax if
we just
check first

(Turn to
pg. 109)

*in for
four*

*out for
eight*

*hold for
seven*

*repeat
nine more
times*

Whew, that feels a lot better. Always good to breathe. Honestly, whatever it was is not a huge deal. Even if something broke, there are other adults here. We don't have to be all in their business all the time.

Okay. Yes. We could even go to sleep and call it an evening.

Yeah,
that's fine

(Turn to
pg. 107)

Better to just
check what's
happening in
the living
room once
before bed

(Turn to pg. 109)



Take a sip of
water and try to
fall back asleep

(Turn to pg. 119)

Put your
slippers on and
go see what's
happening

(Turn to
pg. 109)

we walk out into the living room to see...



TRUST

US.





BUILT

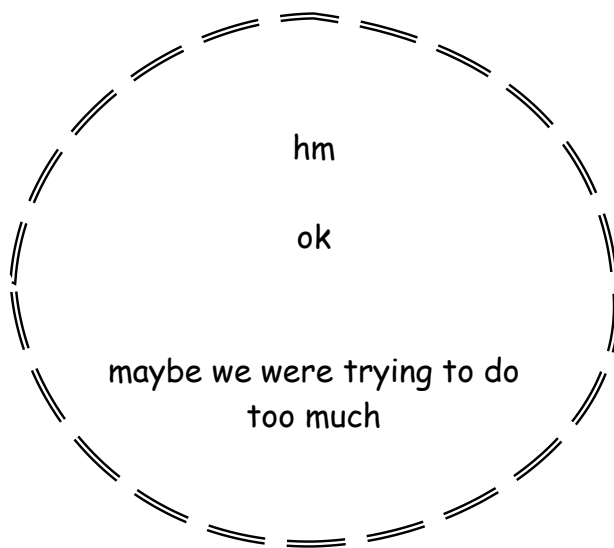


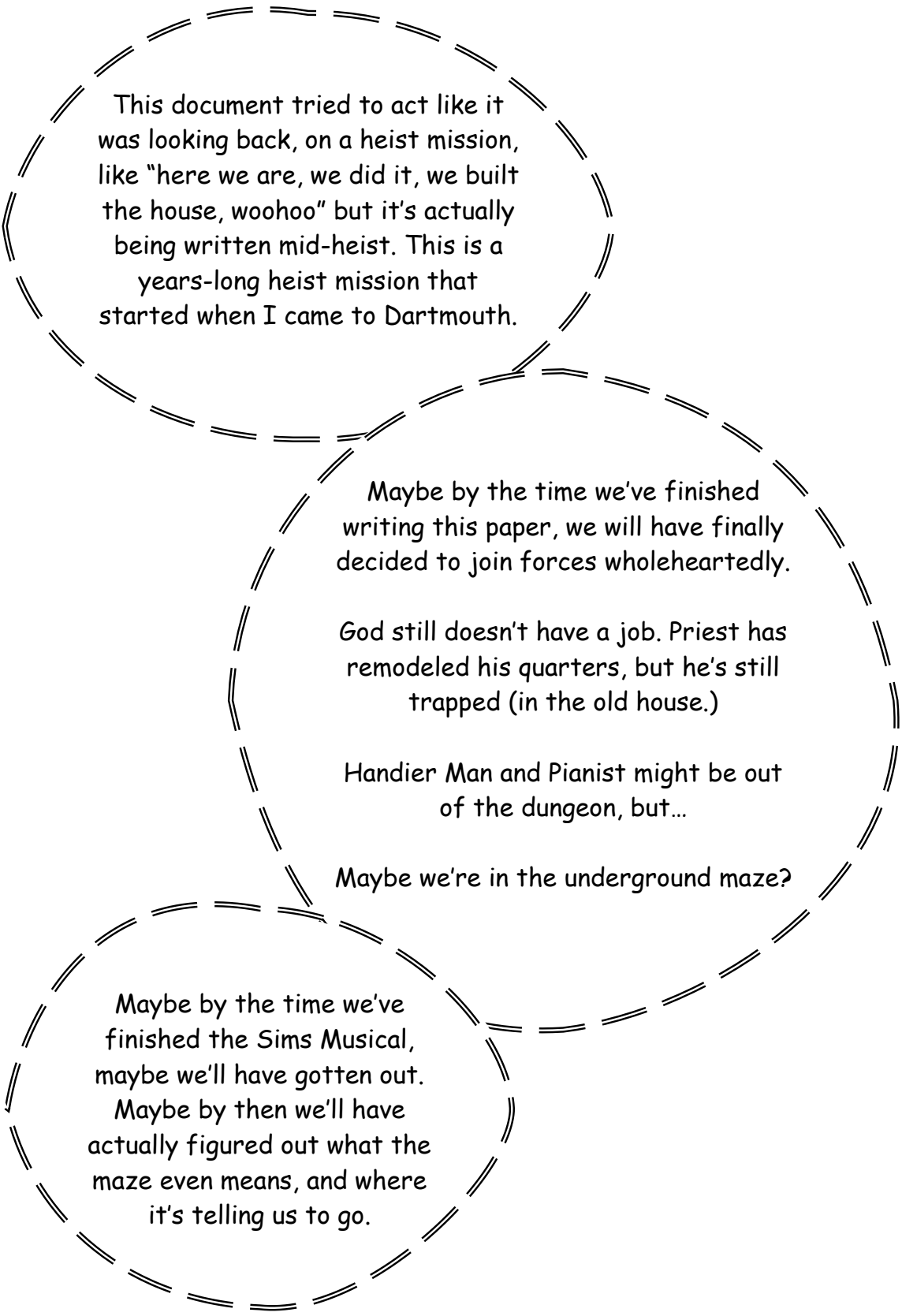
THIS

HOUSE









This document tried to act like it was looking back, on a heist mission, like "here we are, we did it, we built the house, woohoo" but it's actually being written mid-heist. This is a years-long heist mission that started when I came to Dartmouth.

Maybe by the time we've finished writing this paper, we will have finally decided to join forces wholeheartedly.

God still doesn't have a job. Priest has remodeled his quarters, but he's still trapped (in the old house.)

Handier Man and Pianist might be out of the dungeon, but...

Maybe we're in the underground maze?

Maybe by the time we've finished the Sims Musical, maybe we'll have gotten out.

Maybe by then we'll have actually figured out what the maze even means, and where it's telling us to go.

But as I write
this, we're
somewhere in
the midst of the
heist.

The components of the
heist do not function
linearly like the sims
musical has them happening.
The work is not nicely split
into fun adventurous tasks.
I don't even know what all
the tasks are.

But maybe I'll know
when the time
comes. I'll have
written the draft
of this paper.

We're still
growing!

We still have a
lot more work to
do.

But... do you
want to see
what might be
able to happen
if we do that
work?

Yeah, show us!
(Turn to pg. 119)

We don't need to know
what might happen.
Worry about things when
they happen. Time to
stop reading this paper.

(Turn to
pg. 128)

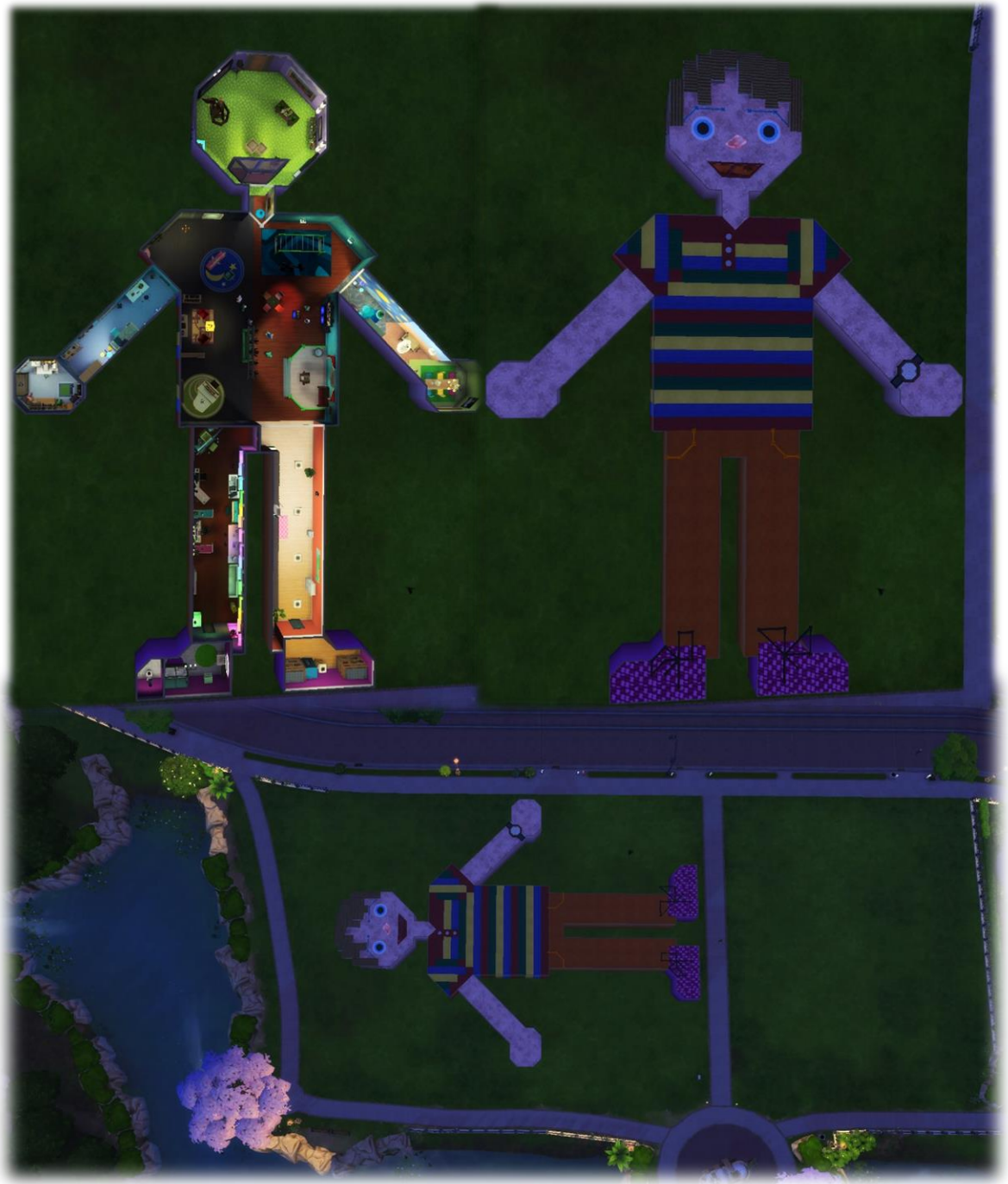
we wake up to the feeling
of a hand on our shoulder...



we get on our slippers, head back
up, open the door to see...







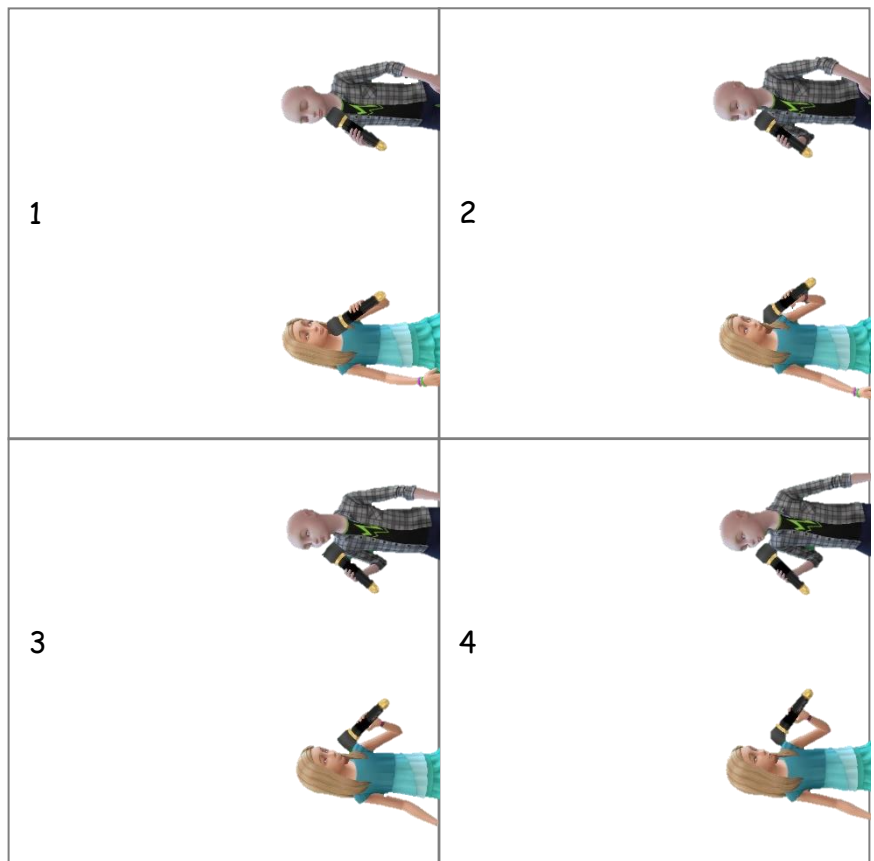
THE END!!!

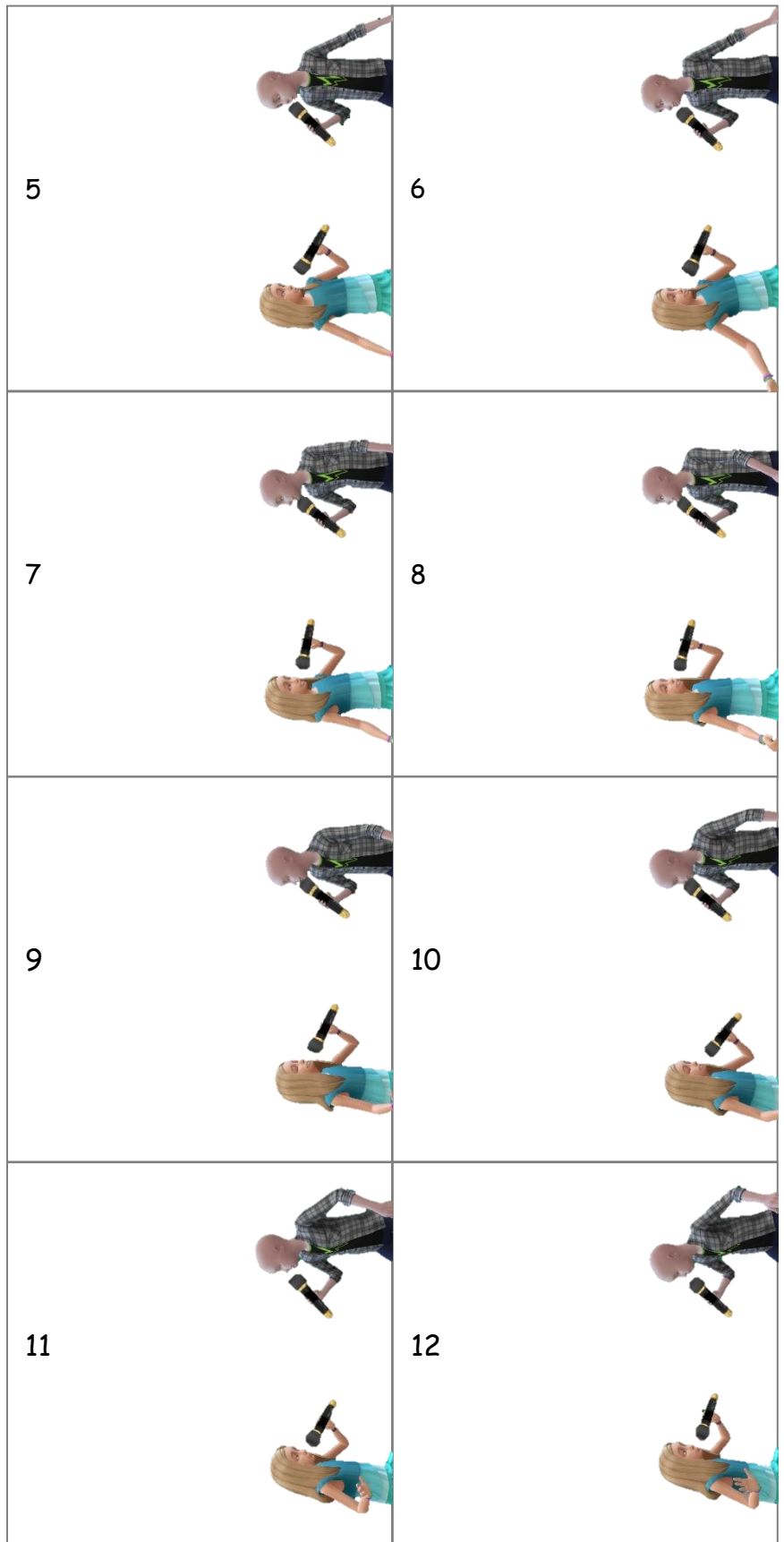
Pssst! turn
the page for a
fun surprise!









Bonus for PDF viewers! (If you're reading this in a book and want to be included in this, go to the Dartmouth Library website, and look up an electronic copy, or if you don't have access, email us and ask for one at piper.e.hill@gmail.com).









Print these next four pages out (single-sided), cut them along the lines, stack them by number, then staple along the top by the numbers. Flip through fast to watch your very own Cutie Pie Crust and Goopy Juice sing their duet!

Thanks for coming over!





<p>13</p> 	<p>14</p> 
<p>15</p> 	<p>16</p> 
<p>17</p> 	<p>18</p> 
<p>19</p> 	<p>20</p> 

<p>21</p> 	<p>22</p> 
<p>23</p> 	<p>24</p> 
<p>25</p> 	<p>26</p> 
<p>27</p> 	<p>28</p> 



Sources, Inspirations, and Suggested Gaming



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(Works I used either words, information, or images from, or otherwise talked about.)

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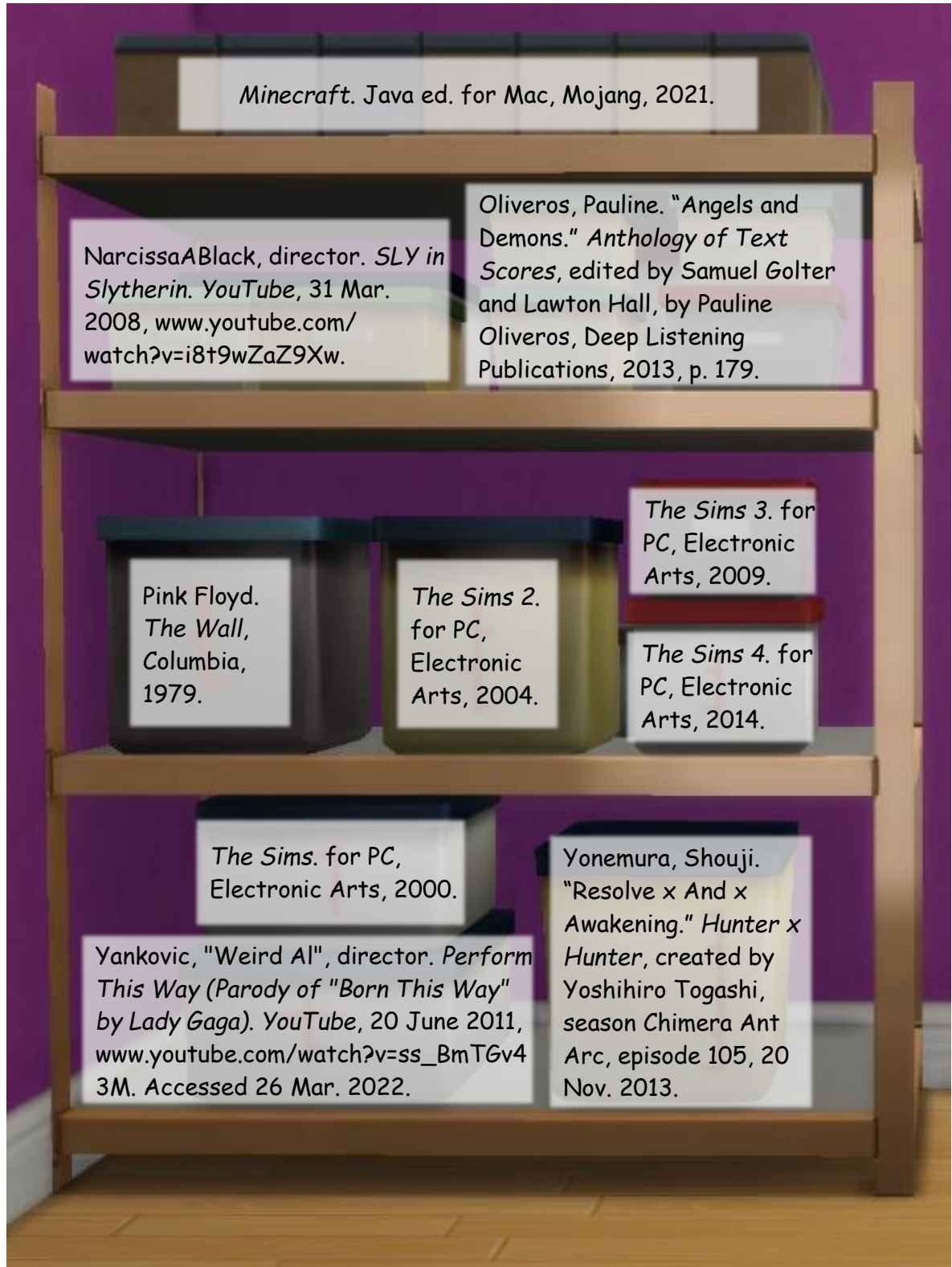
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Inspirations & Related Work

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Hatoful Boyfriend.
High-def remake for
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Song, Celine, and Anton Chekhov. *Acts I & II: The Seagull on The Sims4*. YouTube, New York Theatre Workshop, 30 Nov. 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=QE_rOsyXDk0.

Weber, Andrew Lloyd, and Tim Rice. *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Decca, Broadway, New York, 2012.

Revised Script

A Show that Is a Game

and Is Also a Party and Is Also an Elaborate PowerPoint
Presentation
— *A Musical*

Characters:

Note: during performances, all performers refer to each other by their real names. These names are placeholders. All performers have the liberty to modify lines to make them fit their own personalities better.

1. **GAME DESIGNER**
2. **POND DWELLER A**
3. **POND DWELLER B**
4. **BABY HOUSE INHABITANT A**
5. **BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B**
6. **CLOUDS GUARDIAN**
7. **OPERATOR**

Synopsis:

Six performers host an interactive evening, using a colorful PowerPoint map to guide them. After forming three teams, the audience decides where to travel in this virtual world. Each realm finds them competing against each other in whimsical mini-games, earning achievements that make varying degrees of sense. The lead Game Designer seems chill at first, but as the game progresses, cracks in his composure begin to show — everything *needs* to go according to plan. But if control is that important to him, why is he hosting a party with this many variables in the first place?

Demos here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1dAuIRxnB4469QIEc_OKdVzoNn_Fm3dNF?usp=sharing

Song List:

		<u>Singers:</u>
1.	Opening Number	All Performers
2.	Pauline's Game	Performers & Audience
3.	Team Name Discussion Song	All Performers
4.	MeloFish Origin Story	Pond Dwellers
5.	MeloFish Melody-Making	Game Designer, Pond Dwellers, Audience
6.	Help the Baby	Baby House Inhabitants
7.	Help the Baby (Reprise)	Baby House Inhabitants
8.	Cloud Winds Waltz	Clouds Guardian & Company
9.	Cloud Game Discussion MicroArias	Clouds Guardian
10.	Cloud Winds Waltz Reverse	Clouds Guardian & Company
11.	Game Designer's Sad-ish Song	Game Designer, Audience, Performers
12.	Consolation Serenade	Game Designer, Performers, Audience

Setup Notes:

The PowerPoint is displayed either on a large projector screen above the performers or on two large monitors flanking the stage. The PowerPoint will be referenced occasionally in this script, but a separate, more detailed script should be used by the PowerPoint Operator. A sampling of screenshots has been included in the script.



The audience is seated in three distinct sections, and each audience member has a goodie bag at their seat, color-coded to their team (Team 1 — Cyan, Team 2 — Yellow, Team 3 — Magenta). The goodie bags contain the supplies they will need to participate in the show (including: pen, noisemaker, scarf or ribbon-stick, blank slips of paper, earplugs)

Also onstage is a whiteboard (or overhead projector) and a piano. There is a guitar somewhere backstage, as well as a bag with slips of paper in it, each with a different concrete noun written on it.

Chunk I: Preparing

PowerPoint is on the Title Slide.

Scene 1: Opening

Lights out, PERFORMERS enter.

The PowerPoint "opens the curtains" on the first note of the piano intro.

#1 — "Opening Number" (Track 01)

Lights up on the cast of "A Show that Is a Game." As they sing, the PowerPoint shows the lyrics in a stylized opera supertitles sort of way, but in Comic Sans with a rainbow background. Supertitles happen for each song, so they won't be mentioned further.

GAME DESIGNER

I'VE BEEN WONDERING WHY IT'S SO SCARY
WHEN YOU'RE ONLY VAGUELY ASKED BY SOMEONE

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

TO "DO WHATEVER,"

CLOUDS GUARDIAN

OR "SAY SOMETHING,"

POND DWELLER A

OR "SING ANYTHING,"

POND DWELLER B

OR TO DANCE LIKE NO ONE'S EYEING YOU UP,

BABY HOUSE INHABITANTS

JUST STRIKE UP A CONVERSATION WITHOUT KNOWING A
THING ABOUT WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO,

ALL

OR WALK INTO A ROOM FULL OF PEOPLE AND
TRY TO ACT NATURAL?

GAME DESIGNER

I HAVE FOUND, WHEN SOMEONE SAYS,

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT A

HERE ARE SOME CHOICES,

POND DWELLER B

A GUIDELINE OR TWO,

POND DWELLER A & CLOUDS GUARDIAN

JUST A COUPLE OF RULES,

GAME DESIGNER

SUDDENLY THE FEAR IS NOT THE SAME,

ALL

AND IT'S A GAME!

WELCOME TO THE SHOW;
THIS SHOW IS A GAME.
IT'S NOT A GAME SHOW, IT'S JUST A
SHOW THAT'S A GAME:
A SHOW ABOUT GAMES.
DON'T KNOW THE NAME OF THE
GAME THAT'S THE SHOW,
THOUGH IT'S NOT A GAME SHOW.

WELCOME TO THIS GAME,
THE GAME THAT'S THE SHOW.
IT'S NOT A GAME SHOW,
JUST A GAME THAT'S A SHOW,
NOT A GAME ABOUT SHOWS!
YOU CAME TO GO
TO THE SHOW THAT'S A GAME!

WE'RE NOT SAYING IT WON'T BE SCARY,
AND WE HOPE TO HELP YOU FEEL LIKE YOU
REALLY CAN DO WHATEVER,
AND FIND SOMETHING,
AND SING SOME SMALL THINGS,
AND MOVE A LITTLE NOW AND AGAIN.

WE'LL BEGIN THE CONVERSATION SO YOU HAVE AN
IDEA ABOUT WHO YOU'RE DEALING WITH.
YOU WALKED INTO THIS ROOM FULL OF
PEOPLE, AND WE'D LIKE TO THANK YOU!

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B
JUST LISTEN CLOSE WHEN SOMEONE SAYS,

CLOUDS GUARDIAN
HERE ARE SOME CHOICES,

POND DWELLER A
A GUIDELINE OR TWO,

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT A & POND DWELLER B
JUST A COUPLE OF RULES,

GAME DESIGNER
AND YOU'LL KNOW ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

ALL

FOR THE SHOW!

WELCOME TO THE SHOW;
THIS SHOW IS A GAME.
IT'S LIKE A RAINBOW IN THAT ITS
FLOW IS THE SAME,
AND GLOWS WITHOUT SHAME
TO SEW THE FRAME OF THE
GAME THAT'S THE SHOW,
JUST BECAUSE WE SAY SO.

WELCOME TO THIS GAME,
THE GAME THAT'S THE SHOW.
WON'T GET A K.O. THOSE AREN'T THE
FLAMES THAT WE THROW.
DON'T AIM TO OUTGROW,
WE'LL RECLAIM AND RESOW
THE GRAIN OF THE GLOW FROM OUR
BRAINS LONG AGO,
AND TRAIN IT TO ROW US TO
PLAINS OF UNKNOWN,
AND WE'RE SO GLAD YOU CAME!

BABY HOUSE
INHABITANT B

POND
DWELLER B

CLOUDS
GUARDIAN

POND DWELLER A &
BABY HOUSE
INHABITANT A

SHOW

GAME

GAME

SHOW
SHOW

GAME

GAME
GAME

SHOW,

SHOW

GAME

SHOW

SHOW

GAME

GAME
SHOW

SHOW
GAME

SHOW GAME

RAIN- BOW	SHOW		GAME SHOW GAME
	GAME	FLOW	
FRAME			
	RAIN	SEW	FLOW SAME
SAY			
	BOW GLOW	SAY	SEW FRAME
SO			
	SHAME	SO	
GAME			CUZ WE SAY SO!
	SAY	SHOW	
SHOW			
	SO	GAME	
THROW			SHOW GAME
	GAME	K	
FLAME,			
	SHOW SHOW	GROW	GAME SHOW
K. O.			K. O.
	GAME FLAME	GRAIN	
BRAIN			WON'T OUT GROW
	THROW RE-	GLOW	
KNOW			
	CLAIM	PLANE	RE- CLAIM
TRAIN			
	BRAIN	KNOW	
			RE- SOW
	GO TRAIN		
			PLANES OF
	ROW		

UN-
KNOWN

ALL EXCEPT GAME DESIGNER

GAME DESIGNER speaks as the humming continues.

Welcome everyone, we are very grateful that you've decided to spend a bit of your evening with us!

With that in mind, the tickets for this show are free, because we want this to be as accessible as possible. However, if you're someone with financial resources, we ask that you please make a donation after the show to *[a local Indigenous project or fund that currently needs support]*, information about which can be found on a sheet of paper in the bags each of you has at your seat. We've also included links to information about the Indigenous history of *[the area]*.

Now, I want to reiterate: *this is a participatory show!*

142

Maybe we'll ask you to do something that is outside of your ability, or that would cause you pain. If that's the case Don't Do It! Or, feel free to do a modified version of whatever action we're asking you to do.

Nobody up here (*gesture to the performers*) is going to judge you for either opting out on an action or modifying it to fit your needs! And none of y'all (*gesture to audience*) better judge each other for it either, okay?

However, we would love for you to try to do all the things that you *can* do, even if they make you a small to medium amount of nervous.

[*Mention fire exits and any other things that the host theater requires, including any special thanks that someone might've done before the show if this were a different show*)]

Thank you for listening to this speech!
Now without further ado, please enjoy the rest of the show!

ALL

ASKING YOU TO DO THIS IS SCARY
SOMETHING COULD GO WRONG, 'CAUSE WE'RE
JUST IN EACH OTHER'S HANDS AND
WE'RE GONNA TAKE THAT CHANCE

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

ON

EVERYONE ELSE

THIS SHOW

ALL

THAT
IS
A
GAME!

Scene 2: Gamers' Breath

GAME DESIGNER

Wow! Yes, thank you for coming! (*ad lib.*) Let's give it up for [*name the instrumentalists, give them a chance to bow*].

Now, throughout the show, we may refer to you as "gamers." Some of you may not identify as a gamer, some of you may have some baggage surrounding the term, some of you might have been told that there are certain requirements to being a gamer, whether it's about the type of games you play or the frequency with which you play them.

Well, in a similar way that I believe anyone who makes art is an artist — even if that's not their career and doesn't have to be an important part of their identity — I believe that everyone who plays games is a gamer. The name of this show is *A Show That is a Game*, and you decided to show up, which hopefully means you knew that you were going to play games, and are therefore a gamer.

With all that said, now that we have established that you are indeed gamers (at least for tonight), can anyone tell me what a gamer's most important tool is?

Field some answers. If nobody gets it right:

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT A

Their breath?

GAME DESIGNER

Yes! Thank you, [*whoever said it*]! A gamer's most important tool is their breath. So let's all focus on this vital resource. Gamers, I ask that you now

ALL

(*Softly*) Close your eyes, please.

Lights out.

GAME DESIGNER

In just a moment, we're all gonna take a deep breath *in* for four seconds, then hold it for seven seconds, then release that breath over a count of eight seconds. I'll start by counting with you so you don't have to remember. (*Do it.*)

Let's do it one more time! (*Do it again.*)

Okay, this time when you breathe out, add just a little bit of voice to your breath and just hold out whatever vowel sound comes out when you breathe. Sustain that pitch for the whole duration of your breath. (*People do that.*) Great.

#2 — "Pauline's Game" (Track 02)

GAME DESIGNER

Now that we've honed our breath, we're gonna use it to play a game together. This game is inspired by one of my favorite game designers, Pauline Oliveros. I call it "Pauline's Game."

Pauline Oliveros was a composer who passed away in 2016. She may not have self-identified as a game designer, but she designed games nonetheless, she just preferred to call them "Sonic Meditations." Pauline's Game is really a game about listening to each other. As fellow gamers in this crazy world, we need to look out for each other. Keeping our eyes closed, we'll all start by quietly breathing and listening to the room and each other.

CLOUDS GUARDIAN

Whenever you feel compelled, breathe in deeply. When you breathe out, sing a pitch and sustain it for the entire duration of your breath. This can be any pitch, any vowel, and volume. Once you've started singing, you must commit to holding that sound for the entire breath. Then breathe in, and breathe out a different sound. Continue this process for each of your breaths. These do not need to be in sync, nor do they need to harmonize in any traditional sense.

The key element to this game is a choice. With each breath, you can choose to support the sounds already around you, or you can depart from those sounds and make a sound that comes mainly from inside your own head. Neither choice is better or worse than

the other. Feel free to be as loud or as soft as you'd like. No vowel or pitch or volume is "wrong." The game ends when we all come to a natural stopping point.

Now, breathe, listen, and whenever you're ready, begin.

We do it.

Once it's quiet for a while, lights come back up. This time, house lights are on. After this point, the house lights should be on for games, and off for songs unless otherwise specified.

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

Okay you can open your eyes now!

Scene 3: Teams

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

Look around you! We've all just played a game with each other that was not a competition. Wasn't that nice? Well, starting now... it's a competition. The people in each of the three sections you're sitting in are your team. Together, come up with a team name. You have 1 minute. Go!

#3 — "Team Name Discussion Song" (Track 03)

The PowerPoint displays a 1-minute long timer animation as performers sing to the tune of the humming part from the Opening Number:

ALL

TEAM NAME, TEAM NAME

NAME YOUR TEAM A NAME FOR YOUR TEAM

TEAM NAME, TEAM NAME
FOR YOUR TEAM MAKE A TEAM NAME

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

Okay, times up! Team 1 what is your name?.... Team 2 how about you? Team 3?

Someone writes all the Team Names down at the top of a whiteboard (if small space), or overhead projector (if in a big space), spaced out so that scores can be kept later.

Those are some great names!

Scene 4: Intros

GAME DESIGNER

Now that you've introduced your teams to us, we are going to introduce ourselves to you!

Each performer takes turns introducing themselves in the form of a short 4-line poem that they have written (those are the only guidelines given for this poem.) The PowerPoint displays the poem, as well as an animated self-portrait that the performer has made using nothing but shapes from PowerPoint.

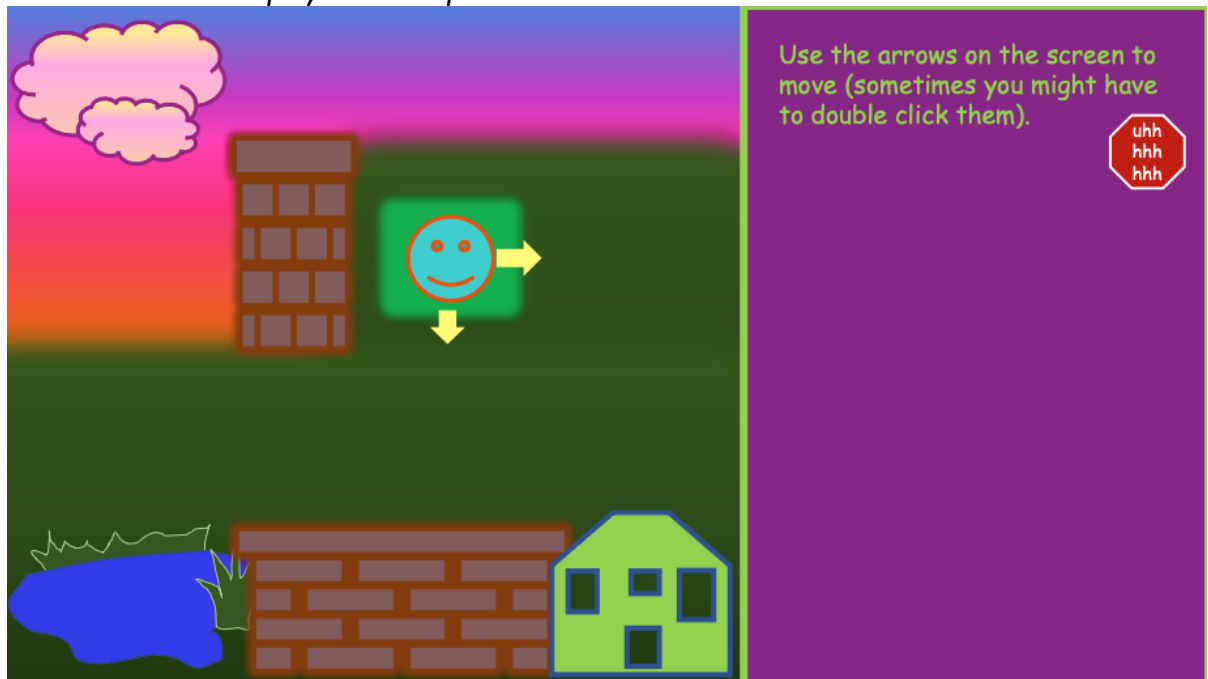
GAME DESIGNER

Now that you've met all of us, let's set off on our adventure!

Chunk II: Traveling

Scene Map 1

The PowerPoint displays The Map:



GAME DESIGNER

As you might recall, this show is a game. Part of this game involves making decisions. Here we have a map. That little smiley face friend? That's us. You are gonna tell us where we should go, and then [OPERATOR] is going to help navigate that smiley that is us around this map. We're looking for *directional* words, words that correlate to the arrows that you see here. We're gonna start by taking turns. When I point to you, yell a direction at me!

GAME DESIGNER points to a person, they yell a direction, and then he points to another one, and so on.

OPERATOR clicks the arrows as the audience yells, the smiley face moves around the map. When it arrives at one of the three realms, he'll click the "to the ____" icon once it appears.

If we end up in the Pond,

GAME DESIGNER

Looks like we're headed... to the Pond! (Go to [Scene Pond](#) Pg. ?)

If we end up in the Baby House,

GAME DESIGNER

Looks like we're headed... to the Baby House! (Go to [Scene Baby House](#) Pg. ?)

If we end up in the Clouds,

GAME DESIGNER

Looks like we're headed... to the Clouds! (Go to [Scene Clouds](#) Pg. ?)
(Go to [Scene Clouds](#) Pg. ?)

Scene Map 2

GAME DESIGNER

Alright, where to next, gamers? And so we can all get to bed at a reasonable / hour--

POND DWELLER A

Or so that we can go out at a reasonable hour --

GAME DESIGNER

Yes, or *that*, so that this show is a reasonable length whatever everyone's individual reasonable reasons are, let's go somewhere we haven't been before. This time, we're not taking turns. Just shout out where you think we should go!!!

GAME DESIGNER relays the directions to OPERATOR, who repeats the process from before. However, this time, OPERATOR makes a few "mistakes." GAME DESIGNER ad-libs scolding him gently and correcting him.

If we end up in the Pond,

GAME DESIGNER

Looks like we're headed... to the Pond! (Go to [Scene Pond](#) Pg. ?)

If we end up in the Baby House,

GAME DESIGNER

Looks like we're headed... to the Baby House! (Go to [Scene Baby House](#) Pg. ?)

If we end up in the Clouds,

GAME DESIGNER

Looks like we're headed... to the Clouds! (Go to [Scene Clouds](#) Pg. ?)

Scene Map 3

GAME DESIGNER

Now there's only one place on here we haven't gone yet, so whaddya say—

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

[GAME DESIGNER], I know we're having fun, but could we maybe take a short break?

GAME DESIGNER

What? Oh, oh yeah of course. Sorry.

CLOUDS GUARDIAN

Thanks.

GAME DESIGNER

15 minute intermission!!! Don't go too far, your team needs you!

[15-minute intermission, lights stay on, performers can take their time exiting and entering again and chat amongst themselves. Whether or not they may talk with the audience is at the discretion of the director.]

GAME DESIGNER

Everyone made it to their seats alright? Nobody got lost? (*ad-lib kindly but annoyingly hurrying any latecomers*). Okay, great, sick, awesome, good. Now there's only one place left to go! But y'all can still help us get there! Shout!

OPERATOR clicks the arrows as the audience yells, but doesn't really listen to them, just navigates to wherever we haven't gone yet.

If we end up in the Pond,

GAME DESIGNER

Last stop... the Pond! (Go to [Scene Pond](#) Pg. ?)

If we end up in the Baby House,

GAME DESIGNER

Last stop... the Baby House! (Go to [Scene Baby House](#) Pg. ?)

If we end up in the Clouds,

GAME DESIGNER

Last stop... the Clouds! (Go to [Scene Clouds](#) Pg. ?)

Scene Pond



The "Pond" realm opening sequence plays on the PowerPoint, then the boring fish swim away so we're just left with the water and the plants. From these serene waters appears a colorful fish.

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

Who is this fellow?

#4 — "MeloFish Origin Story" (Track 04)

Bubbly intro music.

POND DWELLER B

This is the MeloFish! It communicates by sending tone patterns through the water to its fellow fish.

The rest of the song is a conversation between POND DWELLERS, and the synthesizer that's serving the role of the MeloFish. At first, POND DWELLER B listens and "translates" each tone pattern, with a little bit of overlap.

POND DWELLER B

... It says hello... It's delighted to meet you... It thinks you're probably wondering how it came to be... A melodica manufacturer... dumped their surplus products... into this pond...

Fugue between MeloFish and POND DWELLER A, who's quicker to translate.

POND DWELLER A

IT'S SAYING,
"ONE OF MY GREAT-GRANDPARENTS
FELL IN LOVE WITH A MELODICA,
THEN ANOTHER OF MY GREAT-GRANDPARENTS
SWALLOWED SAID MELODICA.

Three-part harmony between POND DWELLERS and MeloFish.

POND DWELLERS

THEIR MARRIAGE AND EGGS WERE FOR
SOCIETAL CONVENIENCE ONLY,
BUT EVERY FISH THAT
HATCHED OUT FROM THOSE
MULTI-COLORED CAVIARS
SOUNDED LIKE A MELODICA."

Melodica instrumental break.

POND DWELLER A

"NOW EACH OF THEIR DESCENDENTS
SOUND A LITTLE DIFFERENT,"

POND DWELLER B

"AND THIS IS HOW I
SOUND!"

MeloFish "instrumental break" that leads to climax and end of number.

MeloFish Game

POND DWELLER A

It turns out that communicating in the MeloFish language is a lot easier than it sounds.
Sometimes humans are capable of intuiting phrases in MeloFish.

OPERATOR brings up a slide with a music staff on it.

POND DWELLER B

In MeloFish, there is a THREE-note phrase that means, "I'd like a grilled cheese sandwich with tomatoes please." Let's try and figure out what it is.

GAME DESIGNER, who's standing next to the piano, points to the first person on Team 1.

GAME DESIGNER

Please sing any note!

After that person sings it, GAME DESIGNER finds the note, then yells it out to OPERATOR, who draws it into the staff.

(Pointing to the first person on Team 2) Now you sing any note! Just remember that we're trying to construct a melody that means "I'd like a grilled cheese sandwich with tomatoes, please." (He repeats this process until we have three notes).

Looks like we figured it out! Let's all sing it. Repeat after me!

GAME DESIGNER sings the three notes while playing them on the piano, then everyone follows suit. OPERATOR advances to a slide with three staves on it.

SFX: choppy wind noise and water splashing

POND DWELLER A

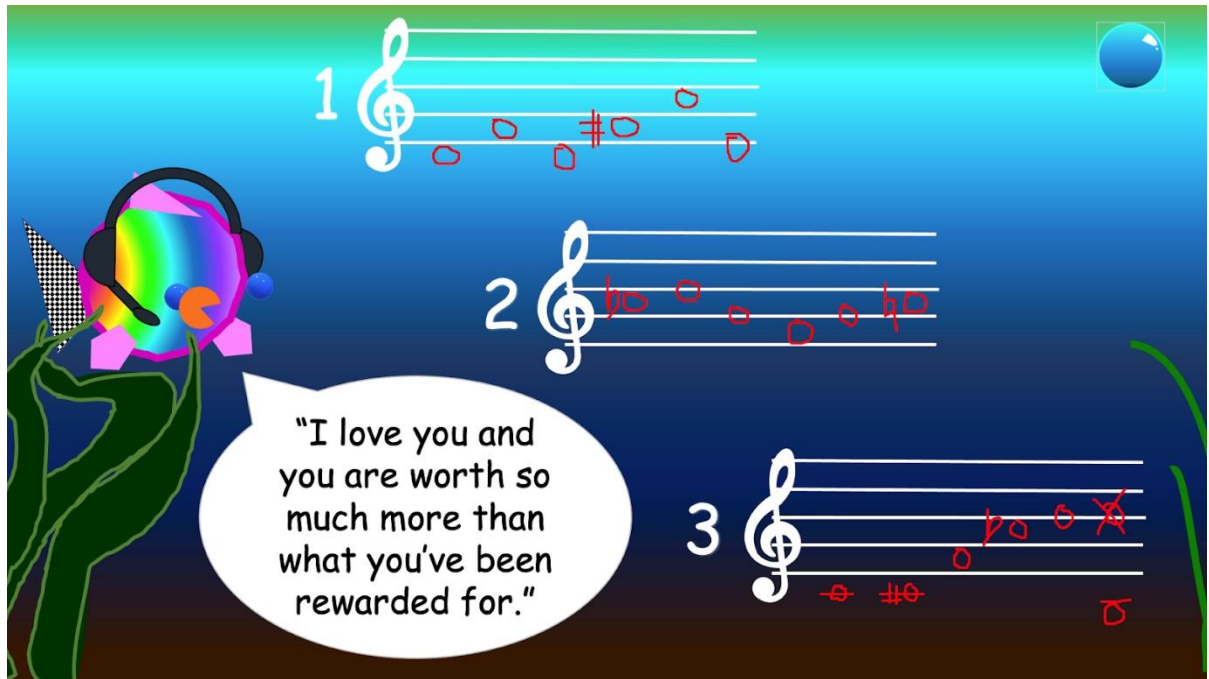
Huh? (cups ear, kids television show style) The MeloFish is saying something else... I can't quite make it out, but it sounds very sincere. Can y'all help us?

GAME DESIGNER

Let's try to construct the melody we *think* it's saying. With a lot of sincerity. We'll do this melody-making process again, but this time it's SIX notes long, and each team will get the chance to try it out. I know we don't know what it means exactly, but I'm sure we can just feel it with our hearts.

#5 — "MeloFish Melody-Making" (Track 05)

GAME DESIGNER repeats the melody-making process, pointing to 6 different people on each team, with OPERATOR adding the notes into the staves on the PowerPoint.



Someone writes each of the melodies down on a paper and keeps track of the information for achievements, which are described in POND DWELLER B's lines farther below.

Alright, now we have these three lovely melodies. Melody 1 (plays it), Melody 2 (plays it), and Melody 3 (Plays it).

POND DWELLER B

... I think I finally figured out what the MeloFish is saying!

OPERATOR clicks the question mark speech bubble and the message is revealed.

It's saying, "I love you and you are worth so much more than what you've been rewarded for." Aw, that's so nice! One of the three melodies we just made means "I love you and you are worth so much more than what you've been rewarded for."

GAME DESIGNER

Let's listen to them again. Melody 1 (*plays it*), Melody 2 (*plays it*), and Melody 3 (*plays it*).

POND DWELLER A

Everyone close your eyes, please, and hold up 1 finger if you think it's Melody 1, 2 fingers if you think it's Melody 2, and 3 fingers if you think it's Melody 3.

Someone counts the fingers and writes down which melody received the most votes, as well as which team had the most people vote for the melody that got the most votes overall. They then whisper it into GAME DESIGNER's ear.

GAME DESIGNER

It's melody [the one that it is]!!! Congrats [whichever team made it]! You figured out how to say "I love you and you are worth so much more than what you've been rewarded for," in MeloFish. Wow, isn't that sweet? Let's sing it to each other right now! Repeat after me!

Everyone sings it a bunch of times!

OPERATOR clicks the bubble in the top right corner to lead us to the Pond Achievements slide. POND DWELLER B comes up to announce the awards.

Pond Awards

POND DWELLER B

Beautiful job everybody. I think this calls for some achievements. Let's see how things shook out!

Whoever was keeping track of the info hands POND DWELLER B a clipboard with the info.

Each time an achievement is announced, OPERATOR clicks to reveal it, making a bubbly noise. Someone writes down each achievement under the name of the team that won it. Each achievement also gets the number 1 written next to it, except the "A Tuna-ed" award is left ominously without a number value.



POND DWELLER B

[TEAM NAME] wins the "Clown Fish" award for coming up with the silliest melody!
Great job, [TEAM NAME].

(IF there was a melody that contained a loop (either 2 notes or 3 notes long)):

[TEAM NAME] wins the "Loopy" award for creating a melody that loops!
Woohoo, [TEAM NAME].

[TEAM NAME] wins the "Bait-sic" award for coming up with the most mainstream melody! Nice one, [TEAM NAME].

[TEAM NAME] wins the "Minnowmalist" award for coming up with the most minimalist melody. Great job, [TEAM NAME].

[TEAM NAME] wins the "A Shark Wit" award for having the most people guess correctly about the melody that means "I love you and you're worth so much more than what you've been rewarded for." Congrats, [TEAM NAME].

And finally, [TEAM NAME] wins the biggest Pond Award, "A Tuna-ed." Y'all are so attuned to the MeloFish that you were able to come up with the melody that means "I love you and you're worth so much more than what you've been rewarded for" in the MeloFish language. Congratulations, [TEAM NAME].

Now let's all say goodbye to the MeloFish! Thank you for your time, MeloFish!

The MeloFish "sings" a reprise of the melody from its origin song, but this is technically just an instrumental. Then it swims away, and the serene pond waters fade back to The Map.

If this was the first realm, go to "[Scene Map 2](#)" Pg. ?

If this was the second realm, go to "[Scene Map 3](#)" Pg. ?

If this was the third realm, go to "[Scene Map 4](#)" Pg. ?

Scene Baby House

The Baby House appears.



#6 — "Help the Baby" (Track 06)

On the PowerPoint, we enter the Baby House. An animation of the scene plays out while BABY HOUSE INHABITANTS sing.

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT A

UP IN HER ROOM,
THE CLOCK STRIKES 3 AM.
THE BABY WAKES AND CAN'T FALL BACK ASLEEP.

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

SHE ROLLS OUT OF BED
AND CRAWLS DOWN THE STAIRS,
BUT IT'S SO DARK OUR BABY CANNOT SEE.

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT A

SHE FEELS
A STRANGE MAGNET PULL.

SHE'S CHARGED WITH A SUDDEN CURIOSITY.

BABY HOUSE INHABITANTS

CAN YOU HELP THE BABY?

CAN YOU HELP HER FIND HER WAY?

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

GROUND FLOOR,

SHE INCHES ALONG,

DANGER MIGHT AWAIT ON EVERY TILE,

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT A

NOW SHE SEES THE STREET LAMP

POURING IN FROM THE WINDOW BY THE FRONT DOOR.

SHE MAKES HER WAY THERE SAFELY WITH A SMILE.

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

AND SOMETHING'S IN THE BASEMENT,

AND SHE KNOWS SHE CAN'T REACH IT

ALONE.

YES SOMETHING'S IN THE BASEMENT,

BABY HOUSE INHABITANTS

AND SHE'S NOT SCARED CUZ SHE CAN GET THERE

WITH THE HELP OF VOICES FROM

OUTSIDE THE SCREEN,

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT A

SAYING,

BABY HOUSE INHABITANTS

"WE CAN HELP THE BABY.

WE CAN HELP HER FIND HER WAY."

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

SO, HELP THE BABY.

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT A
HELP HER FIND HER WAY!

Baby House Game

The PowerPoint shows us that we're on the first floor with the baby, who's by the front door.

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

Now we're in the Baby House. There's a baby in this house, and we need to help her get around. There's something behind that glowing door... I wonder what it is? Our baby is over here at the front door right now, but she wants to get to that glowing door. [TEAM 1's NAME], close your eyes, please. When they're closed, [TEAM 1's name], take turns shouting out directions for our baby to go. We'll take a total of fifteen directions from the team. Okay —

GAME DESIGNER

Actually wait, [TEAM 1's NAME] open your eyes again, just so you can keep this in mind, the furniture pieces are obstacles and cannot be passed through.

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

Yeah I think maybe that was self-explanatory.

GAME DESIGNER

Well remember when we did this two times ago people got upset that we didn't tell them that at the beginning?

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

Yeah your *dad* did. He's not —

GAME DESIGNER

Yeah yeah okay okay sorry anyway you can close your eyes again, [TEAM 1's NAME].

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

Okay shout those directions!

Members of TEAM 1 shout directions!

OPERATOR draws the path with the cyan pen tool based on the directions he hears.

Someone keeps track of what happens in terms of its relevance to achievements, explanations for which can be found in the achievements section further below.

Performers make ad-lib comments such as "watch out baby!" or things like that.

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

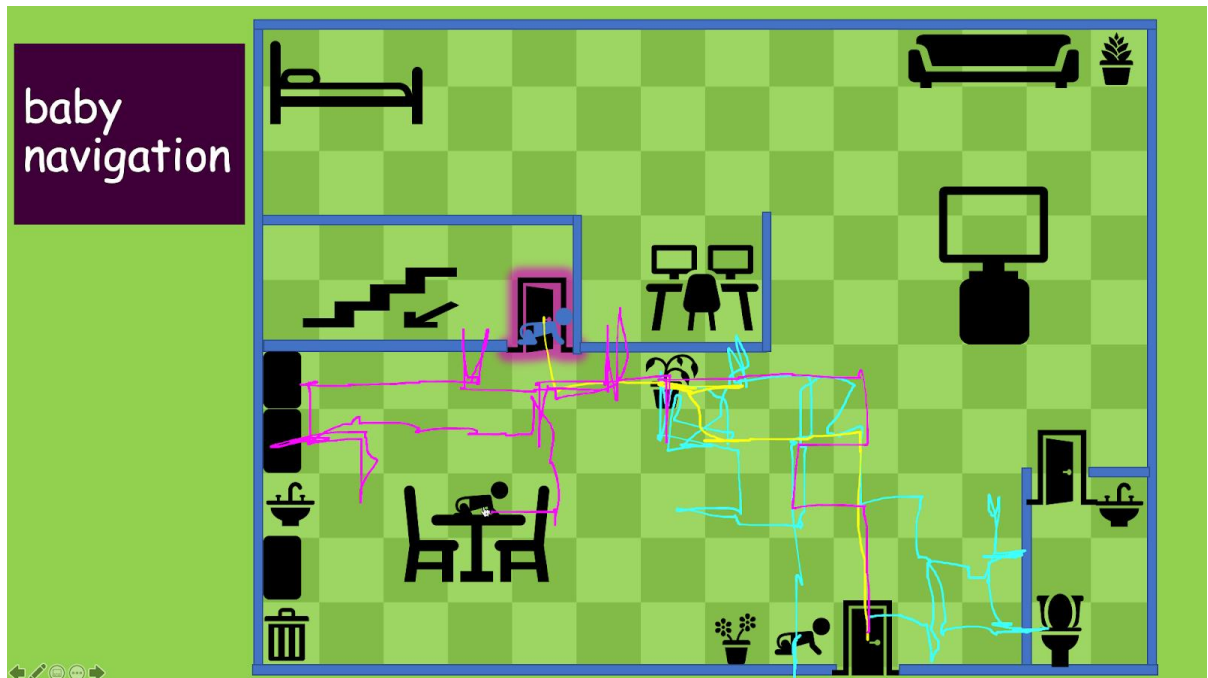
Okay stop! [TEAM 1's NAME], open your eyes! Show us where [TEAM 1 NAME]'s baby ended up, [OPERATOR]

OPERATOR clicks the space where the path ended to reveal the baby.

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

Nice job! (ad. lib) Alright [TEAM 2 NAME], your turn.

Repeat this process for the other two teams, except OPERATOR uses yellow pen for TEAM 2 and magenta pen for TEAM 3.



Amazing! All our babies have safely navigated this house! Can we please give [OPERATOR] a round of applause?? Great job, [OPERATOR]!!!!

OPERATOR has the option of standing up and bowing, but he does not have to do this.

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT A

Now let's see who ended up closest to that glowing door... It's [TEAM NAME]!!!!

(If it's a small crowd:) [TEAM NAME (second closest)] is pretty close, too!

Now y'all who got close to the glowing door may enter it!

OPERATOR clicks the glowing door, which takes us into The Basement.

CUBE HUNT

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

Where are we?

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT A

We're in the Basement! It might seem scary and gross, but there's actually something very exciting about this basement in particular. You see, there are a bunch of small CUBES hidden around this basement.

[TEAM(s) NAME], in a moment, you will have the opportunity to search around this basement to your heart's content for these CUBES!

This will involve standing up and walking around the room — BUT NOT JUST YET — to find the cubes! This is a

ALL PERFORMERS

CUBE HUNT!

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT A

For those on [HUNTING TEAM NAME(s)] who won't be standing, you have an important task. You must cheer to support your searching teammates! Or shout out helpful instructions at them to help them find things if you see something. Folks on [non-participating TEAM(s) NAME], inside your bags, you will find a noisemaker. Please use this to heckle [HUNTING TEAM's NAME]. CUBE HUNTERS, please leave your noisemakers in your bag.

Now before you take out these instruments, I want to give everyone the chance to put in their earplugs if they want to, because it could get loud.

GAME DESIGNER

ALSO! Please do not come past this line of cables, and do not go past that line of tape where [OPERATOR] is! Be mindful of cameras and equipment! Also please do not run! (modify to fit the space)

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT A

Yes. CUBE HUNTERS, please rise! You will have 90 seconds to hunt. When you find a CUBE, please don't open it yet.

When you hear us say "CUBE HUNTERS, STOP" please stop!

Alright then,

ALL PERFORMERS

3! 2! 1! HUNT!

OPERATOR makes the "CUBE HUNT GO!" cube bounce into view and begins the 90-second animation.



CUBE HUNTERS hunt. Chaos ensues. *CUBE HUNT* instrumental plays.

When the timer is up,

ALL PERFORMERS

CUBE HUNTERS, STOP!

CUBE HUNTERS stop.

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT A

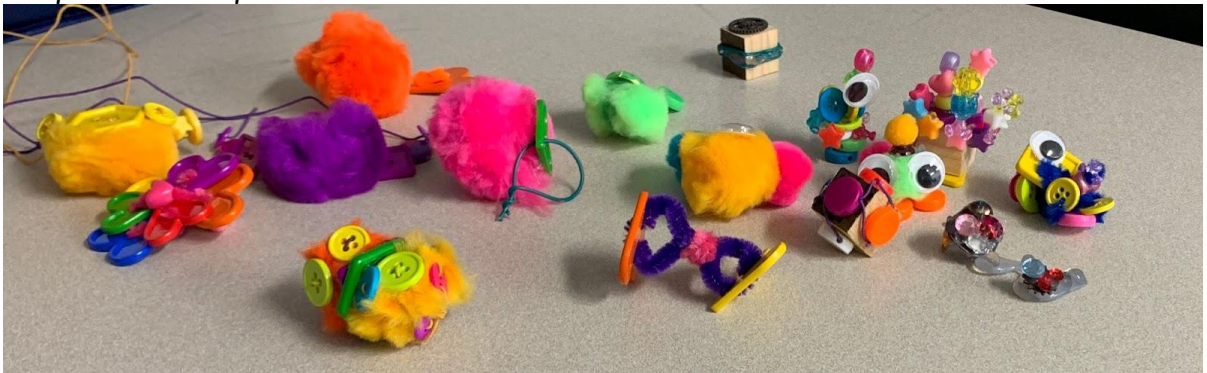
Cube Hunters, stay where you are! Now musicians, please disengage your instruments and place them back in your bags... I know, I know, but otherwise, we'll never get to

hear the rest of the show. You get to keep them, so when you get home you can play with them all you want.

Now Cube Hunters, open your cubes! Carefully take a look at what's inside. You are free to keep it if you're in love with it. However, if you'd like, close your cube again, and find someone on an opposing team, preferably someone you don't know, walk up to them, introduce yourself, ask their name, then say their name and say "I'd like to give you this cube."

Try to make eye contact with them the whole time you say it! Then set the cube down on the floor in front of them, contactless delivery style. Also, feel free to give your cube to someone on your team who's been sitting down and supporting you! Go for it!

Wait a minute for this to happen. The things inside the cubes are tiny little handmade sculptures. Examples:



GAME DESIGNER

Amazing! We've got some very generous folks out here. Everyone, please be seated once more. It's time to award some achievements!

Whoever has been keeping track of the achievements hands a clipboard to GAME DESIGNER, who reads out the results.

Explanation of achievements for this realm:

Potty Time — team ended up in the bathroom

Sleepy Time — team ended up near the bed

Supptime — team ended up on the table

Couch Potato — team ended up on the couch

Expert Navigator — the team who got the closest to the basement door

*B*ss B*by — team ended up in the office*

Head Banger — the team who ran into the wall the most
 Cube Queens — team found at least 80% of the cubes
 Benevolent Rulers — at least 75% of a team's cubes were gifted

Someone writes the achievements won under the respective team's name on the board.
 And marks the number 1 next to each of them.



OPERATOR clicks the respective achievements to reveal them on the PowerPoint and they each make a satisfying sound.

GAME DESIGNER

Wow! Amazing work everyone. Looks like [TEAM with the most points] is winning!

#7 — "Help the Baby (Reprise)" (Track 07)

BABY HOUSE INHABITANTS

THANKS FOR HELPING THE BABY
 THANKS FOR FINDING

THE CUBES

OPERATOR takes us back to the map.

If this was the first realm, go to "[Scene Map 2](#)" Pg. ?

If this was the second realm, go to "[Scene Map 3](#)" Pg. ?

If this was the third realm, go to "[Scene Map 4](#)" Pg. ?

Scene Clouds

"Welcome to the clouds" animation sequence plays.



#8 — “Cloud Winds Waltz” (Track 08)

*CLOUDS GUARDIAN, BABY HOUSE INHABITANT A, GAME
DESIGNER, POND DWELLER B*

HNNNNNNNNNN
OOOOOOOOOOO
OHHHHHAAAA
AEAEAEAEAE

Text floats away to a picturesque clouds scene.

Clouds Game

CLOUDS GUARDIAN comes out holding a purple bag.

CLOUDS GUARDIAN

Welcome, welcome! Since we're in the clouds, we're going to play a cloud game! We're calling it, "What Does That Cloud Look Like?"

In this bag, there are all sorts of things written on little slips of paper. In the bags at your seats, each of you has either a small, sheer piece of floaty fabric or a stick with ribbons on it.

Each of your flowy objects is like a small cloud particle, and together you will be forming a cloud shape. Now, [TEAM 1's NAME], one of y'all is going to draw from this bag and pull out a thing. Don't show it to the other teams. Make sure everyone on your team has seen it, then you'll work together to try and make that shape by holding your fabric and ribbons in whatever arrangement makes sense to y'all.

This might mean some folks have to stand up, but not everyone has to.

[TEAM 2's NAME] and [TEAM 3's NAME], y'all will be competing to see who can guess what the shape is first. Very similar to how charades works. While movement is allowed, you're not allowed to make sounds as part of the shape —

GAME DESIGNER

You must also stay in the general vicinity of your section! Folks on the team farthest away are allowed to stand up to see better, but please stay near your seat!

CLOUDS GUARDIAN

Yes, all of that too. Now, I need a volunteer from [TEAM 1's NAME] to come up and draw an item!

They come up and draw an item.

Now go show your team, but be sneaky about it, don't let the other teams hear you! You have 20 seconds to strategize a plan of attack, and then we'll begin guessing. Start discussion... now!

OPERATOR clicks the "discussion time" icon and it starts moving.

#9 — "Cloud Game Discussion MicroAria" (Track 09)

Overdramatic opera style.

CLOUDS GUARDIAN

OHHHHHH DECIIIIDE HOW YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE YOUR SHAAAAPE!

When the timer runs out,

CLOUDS GUARDIAN

Discussion time is over! Make your shape! Make sure it is visible to both of the other teams. Y'all (referring to the other 2 teams) have 60 seconds to guess!

Someone keeps score. See achievement explanations below.

If the time runs out and nobody guesses, that's okay, just move on.

CLOUDS GUARDIAN

Yes it's a [whatever it was]. [TEAM whichever] was the first to guess correctly! Now we're gonna do the same thing with [TEAM 2's NAME] making the shapes!

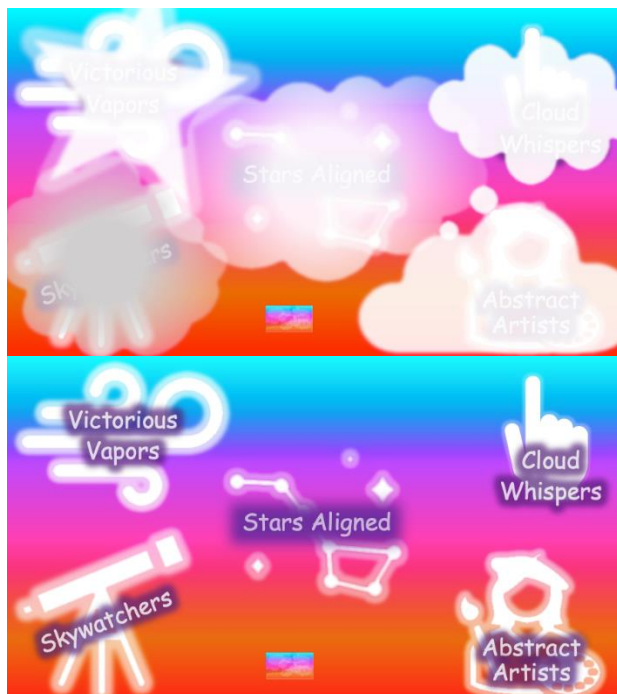
Repeat this process with TEAM 2. Then again with TEAM 3. Each time the MicroAria repeats, it's transposed to the key a whole step higher than the time before.

After all three rounds, whoever's been keeping score hands GAME DESIGNER a clipboard.

GAME DESIGNER

Great work everyone! Let's see how the results shook out...

GAME DESIGNER looks at the chart and reads out the achievements won and who won them. Each time a new achievement is read, OPERATOR clicks on it to reveal it on the screen with a satisfying noise.



A quick guide to these achievements:

Skywatcher — whichever team guessed the most shapes correctly (can be a tie)

Victorious Vapors — whichever teams get their shape successfully guessed

Cloud Whispers — the quietest team during discussion time (you'll know)

Abstract Artists — if a team's shape did not get guessed, they get this

Stars Aligned — an award everyone wins if all teams tie for Skywatcher

Someone writes the achievement names down on the whiteboard under the team names, and writes the number 1 next to each achievement.

Once all achievements are awarded, the screen returns to a cloudy scene.

GAME DESIGNER

Excellent job everyone!!! Thank you for joining us in the clouds!

#10 — "Cloud Winds Waltz Reverse" (Track 10)

**CLOUDS GUARDIAN, BABY HOUSE INHABITANT A, GAME
DESIGNER, POND DWELLER B**

AEAEAEAEAEAE

OHHHHHAAAAA

OOOOOOOOOOO

HNNNNNNNNNN

The slideshow returns to The Map.

If this was the first realm, go to "[Scene Map 2](#)" Pg. ?

If this was the second realm, go to "[Scene Map 3](#)" Pg. ?

If this was the third realm, go to "[Scene Map 4](#)" Pg. ?

Chunk III: Interrupting

Scene 0: Map 4

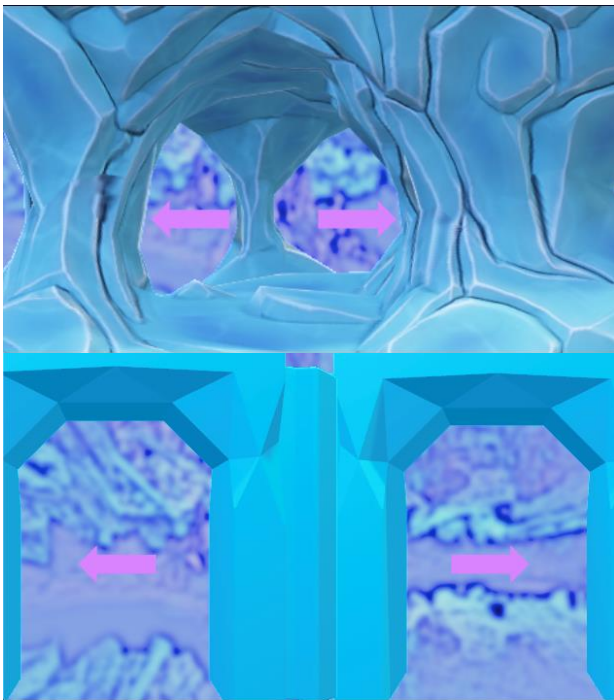
POND DWELLER A

We've already gone everywhere! What happens now?

GAME DESIGNER

Uhhhhh....

OPERATOR clicks the "Uhhh" button, the ground swallows us up, into a deep blue, which then fades away to reveal an icy cave environment with two arrows pointing in opposite directions.



Scene 1: Cave Crawl

GAME DESIGNER

Dang, uhh, okay I guess we're in some sort of cave system???

OTHER PERFORMERS

(Swooshy, Spooky, Cave-like Mouth Noises)

GAME DESIGNER

Okay, so um, everyone, shout left or right to lead us through the cave!

The audience does the shouting, OPERATOR clicks the arrow indicating whichever direction they said, up to his discretion to decide which direction the majority of people were shouting.

After a few slides,

GAME DESIGNER

Faster!!!

(To performers) come on I cannot hear those noises, really put your breath into it!

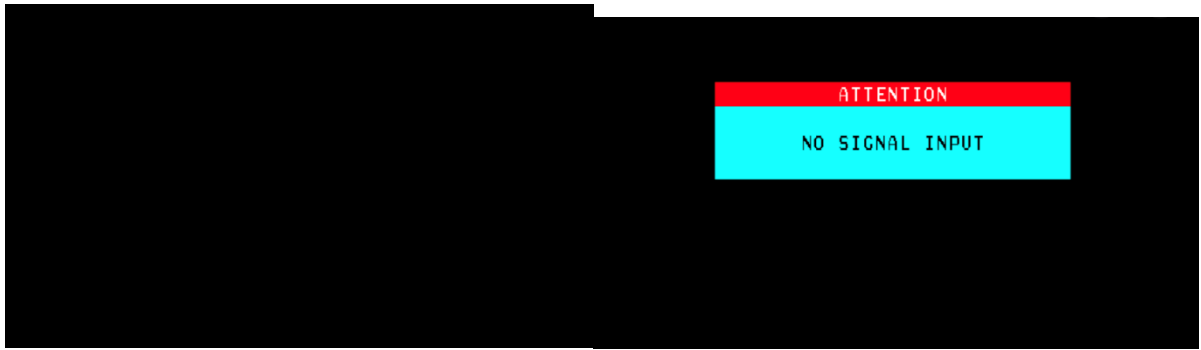
...

(Growing frantic) Come on please just try to like. I don't know — like, we're in a cave it's like an ice cave, just like think about that and really paint a picture with the sound! Ad. Lib....

Meanwhile, whether or not the audience continues to shout, OPERATOR continues to click through the maze, as fast as it lets him, eventually clicking to skip through the animations. We soon come to realize that the sequence of slides is merely repeating in a loop, and we've been going in circles through the cave no matter which direction we go.

Eventually, we reach the grouping of rocks. The rocks collapse. Then they keep collapsing. After a few collapses, depending on the CPU usage, either the PowerPoint crashes, or OPERATOR unplugs the HDMI cable. Wait at least 6 collapses in that situation.





...

...

Uncomfortable silence.

GAME DESIGNER looks around, then starts to sing, very scared.

#11 — “Game Designer’s Sad-ish Song” (Track 11)

GAME DESIGNER

IT’S TOO HEAVY.

GAME DESIGNER walks over to the piano and plays during the beginning of the song.

NEITHER THE POWERPOINT NOR I COULD HANDLE
THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS DELUSION
I’VE BEEN TRYING TO MANIFEST.

TWO YEARS AGO I WANTED
TO MAKE A SHOW, I SAW IT,
AND EVERYONE WAS GONNA COME AWAY WITH SOMETHING,
HOPED YOU’D LEAVE FEELING A LITTLE MORE
FREE
AND FULL OF POSSIBILITY,

BUT IT'S SO HEAVY.

THERE'S A PART OF ME THAT THINKS THE ONLY
ART WORTH MAKING IS MADE TOGETHER,
SO I DID MY BEST.

I DON'T THINK IT'S GOOD ENOUGH.
I'M LETTING EVERYBODY DOWN,
AND NO ONE'S GONNA COME AWAY WITH ANYTHING.

I DIDN'T SAY ENOUGH
WITH ALL THIS AIR I'M USING UP.

I'VE WASTED EVERYBODY'S TIME,

GAME DESIGNER stands up from the piano bench suddenly, freaking out.

AND NO ONE'S GONNA LEAVE FEELING
FREEER.

One deep breath.

WHO AM I KIDDING.

IT'S SO HEAVY.
IT'S SO HEAVY.

Tries to calm down, curled up.
The non-GAME DESIGNER pianist sits down at the piano bench.

I JUST WANT TO HIDE MYSELF
INSIDE A CAVE AND LOOK AT SHINY,
COLORFUL PLASTIC THINGS THAT I'VE COLLECTED,

AND I JUST WANT TO SIT DOWN BY MYSELF
AND PLAY COMPUTER FOR TEN HOURS

WITHOUT BEING INTERRUPTED.

Pianist begins to play piano under the following:

NOBODY TO DISAPPOINT,
I SOMETIMES NEED TO MAKE THINGS JUST FOR ME.
AND THEN IF I STILL DISAPPOINT,
I ONLY HAVE ONE PERSON TO BLAME,
AND I ONLY HAVE ONE PERSON TO THANK,
AND I ONLY HAVE ONE PERSON TO SAY SORRY TO!

GAME DESIGNER has worked himself up into almost hyperventilating. There's a moment where he stays crouched on the ground and just tries to get his gamer's breath under control. Then he stands up slowly. After a few more deep breaths, he turns to look at the other performers and smiles. There is no piano under this bit.

AND YOU,
YOU HAVE ALL BEEN A JOY TO WORK WITH.
I WOULDN'T TRADE THIS FOR ANYTHING ELSE I COULD DO,
SO NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS,
NO MATTER WHAT

(Points to audience)

Y'ALL THINK,

(Turns back to performers)

YOU WALKED INTO THIS CHAOTIC SHITSHOW,
AND I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU.

The pianist begins looping a little motif that is slightly reminiscent of the opening.

GAME DESIGNER turns to face the audience again.

GAME DESIGNER

Hi audience. Remember that thing you did at the beginning where you sang a note on every breath? Could you do that again for us? We need some music right now. I'll let you know when to stop. Thank you!

GAME DESIGNER goes to each performer one-by-one and, quietly off-mic, thanks them for being in the show. Once he's thanked a performer and walked over to the next one, the performer who was just thanked joins in the singing.

After all the thank-yous, he falls into formation with the other performers.

OTHER PERFORMERS

WE'RE NOT SAYING IT WON'T
BE SCARY...
WE'RE NOT SAYING IT WON'T
BE SCARY...
WE'RE NOT SAYING IT WON'T
BE SCARY...

GAME DESIGNER

I NEVER SAID IT WOULDN'T BE
SCARY...
I NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULDN'T
BE SCARY...

GAME DESIGNER gestures to the audience to stop singing.

ALL PERFORMERS

LOTS OF THINGS WORTH DOING ARE SCARY.
SOMETHING WILL GO WRONG AND WE'RE
SAFE IN EACH OTHER'S HANDS.
WE HAD TO
TAKE THAT
CHANCE.

Scene 2: Final Awards

GAME DESIGNER

Thank you so much for helping us out there! To celebrate y'all, let's review the achievements that y'all have earned because this is first and foremost a competition!
airhorn noise with mouth

Someone at the whiteboard counts up the achievements on the board, remembering to weigh "A-Tuna-ed" as 5 points (ADD 4 to the tally).

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT A

In second place, with [NUMBER OF ACHIEVEMENTS], is [SECOND PLACE TEAM NAME].

BABY HOUSE INHABITANT B

And in first place, with [NUMBER OF ACHIEVEMENTS], is [FIRST PLACE TEAM NAME]. Congratulations!!!

GAME DESIGNER

Aw shucks, [LOSING TEAM'S NAME], looks like y'all won the least amount of things. That's too bad...

But now it's time to award the Grand Prize!!!

[LOSING TEAM'S NAME] you are the grand prize winners!

The Grand Prize is a consolation prize! A *real* consolation prize — we want to *console* you. Like a friend might console you after you've had a rough day. The word console derives from the Latin word "solari" which means "to soothe," or something like that. So we'd like to soothe your spirits with this Grand Prize, the "Consolation Serenade."

We're gonna need help from [WINNING TEAM 1's NAME] and [WINNING TEAM 2's NAME] to deliver this serenade. Y'all need to help us console your competitors. So just listen close when I yell at y'all to do stuff, and then just do it! (*to the tune of "listen close when someone says"*)

Okay here we go!

#12 — "Consolation Serenade" (Track 12)

GAME DESIGNER begins the song playing solo guitar.

GAME DESIGNER

YOU MIGHT THINK THAT EVERY ACTION YOU TAKE
DETERMINES SOME FUTURE POSITION
AND YOU MIGHT THINK THAT EVERY ACTION YOU TAKE
DETERMINES NOTHING AT ALL

AND YOU MIGHT THINK YOUR EVERY BREATH AND GESTURE
IS TALLIED UP ON SOME HEAVENLY REGISTER
AND YOU MIGHT THINK THAT NONE OF YOUR BREATHS CHANGE
ANYTHING

AND SOME WOULD SAY THAT YOU SHOULDN'T TRY
CUZ THE GAME IS RIGGED AND IT'S ALL A LIE
WELL, THAT'S NOT THE KIND OF GAME I HOPE WE'RE
PLAYING HERE

'CAUSE

PERFORMERS

YOU'RE WORTH SO MUCH MORE
THAN WHAT YOU'VE BEEN REWARDED FOR
YOU'RE WORTH SO MUCH MORE
THAN WHAT YOU'VE BEEN REWARDED FOR

YOU DON'T HAVE TO EARN IT
WANNA LET YOU KNOW YOU'RE WORTH IT
AND TO TELL YOU SO, HERE'S A SPECIAL TUNE
WE MADE IT JUST FOR YOU

GAME DESIGNER runs over to the piano, guitar still in hand.

GAME DESIGNER

Okay, [WINNING TEAM 1's NAME] and [WINNING TEAM 2's NAME], repeat after me!

GAME DESIGNER plays notes.

GAME DESIGNER

LA LA LA LA LA (*MeloFish Notes*)

WINNING TEAMS

Together now!

LA LA LA, LA LA LA

WINNING TEAMS & PERFORMERS

LA LA LA, LA LA LA

LA LA LA, LA LA LA

PERFORMERS

'CAUSE

YOU'RE WORTH SO MUCH MORE

THAN WHAT YOU'VE BEEN REWARDED FOR

GAME DESIGNER

Sing with us!

WINNING TEAMS & PERFORMERS

YOU'RE WORTH SO MUCH MORE

THAN WHAT YOU'VE BEEN REWARDED FOR

YOU'RE WORTH SO MUCH MORE

THAN WHAT YOU'VE BEEN REWARDED FOR

YOU'RE WORTH SO MUCH MORE

THAN WHAT YOU'VE BEEN REWARDED FOR

GAME DESIGNER

Repeat after me again!

WE LOVE YOU! WE LOVE YOU! (*On
MeloFish melody*)

*WINNING TEAMS AND
PERFORMERS*

WE LOVE YOU! WE LOVE
YOU!

Together!

WINNING TEAMS AND PERFORMERS

WE LOVE YOU! WE LOVE YOU!
WE LOVE YOU! WE LOVE YOU!

GAME DESIGNER

'CAUSE

WINNING TEAMS & PERFORMERS

YOU'RE WORTH SO MUCH MORE
THAN WHAT YOU'VE BEEN REWARDED FOR
YOU'RE WORTH SO MUCH MORE
THAN WHAT YOU'VE BEEN REWARDED FOR
YOU'RE WORTH SO MUCH MORE
THAN WHAT YOU'VE BEEN REWARDED FOR

GAME DESIGNER

Slow it down now!

WINNING TEAMS & PERFORMERS

YOU'RE WORTH
SO MUCH MORE
THAN WHAT YOU'VE BEEN
REWARDED FOR!!!

*EVERYONE (cast AND crew) lines up and holds hands and bows together — wait to bow
a second time when the farthest away crew people get up there.*

GAME DESIGNER

Thank you for coming!!! Please feel free to stick around and dance to this post-show song! Please take your goodie bags home!!!! I don't have room for them in my apartment!!!!!!

(Post-show instrumental dance music.)

THE END!



