

Gone Home?

A different form of narrative

- Utilizes visual environmental clues and audio narratives to further the story
- Not a strict linear progression of the story
- It is up to the player to progress the story (no hand-holding)
- Similar to a novel form in that it truly allows players to look through a character's eyes (that is what we try to do when reading a story)

The setting

- It takes place entirely in one location physically
- The setting is there to set up a foundation for the story, but in this case, the setting is the story
- It is up to us to progress

from the start to the end



The Characters

- 6 main characters
- Extent of character development depends on the player
- Different from say, a novel, where characters are naturally developed and showcased



Action

- This is a completely immersive experience, so any and all action depends on the player
- Able to visualize the actions as we are our own narrators in this story
- Numerous different actions outside of the story



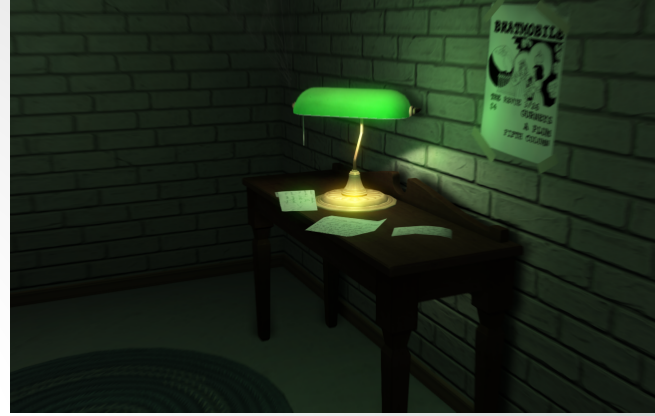
The story

- Player given relative freedom to progress the story
- Various storylines to follow (possible to miss them)
- Requires exploring your environment and the more attention to detail, the better
- Different from the norm, where all the storylines are presented



Player Participation

- Gone Home is for gamers who value story and character development
- Given the freedom of true curiosity and spontaneous story progression
- Only the player can progress the story, by interacting with environment
- Finding clues, connecting the dots, expecting Oscar's ghost to pop up behind you...



Game or Story?

- An interactive story exploration experience, in the form of a game
- It is a game, one which gives you a story to unravel, and another alongside the main plot, for the curious
- A game because we are allowed near-complete freedom in back-tracking and continuing the story
- It is a game, which brings a story to life, visualizing everything a reader tries to imagine in his own mind

An immersive experience

- Both the music and the freedom of exploration and discovery completely immersed me in the game. When reading a novel, it can be hard to see what the character is seeing but not here.
- Its a great experience because progressing the story relies on us interacting with the surrounding and finding clues. We slowly discover more and more about our environment and the various characters in the game.
- The best part is that its not just about the main story and Sam. There are other storylines like the troubled marriage between Terrance and Jan, as well as the relationship between Terrance and Oscar. These storylines require the player to pay attention to the all the details and find all the clues or else they will be missed.
- What's more, the game doesn't guide us, so we have the same sense of confusion and discovery as Katy would have in the game

My thoughts

- It felt like the house seems divided by the different people inhabiting it. This is representative of real homes, where certain places are marked by the people using them most. Most of the upstairs is linked to Sam, including hidden passages. Downstairs, about half is Terrances while the other half to Janice. The basement has a bit of Oscar in there.
- I would have liked to know more about Kaithlin. I suppose since we are supposed to be her, that's unlikely but the first thing she does is go rummaging through the house. Why wasn't she more in touch with her family the last year, to know what they were going through? She seems like a good sister, and student, so the previous point is somewhat a mystery.

The other storylines

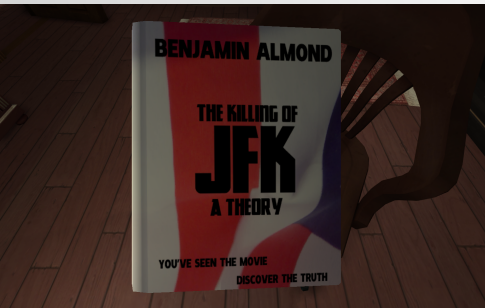


- 1) Jan and Ranger Rick - At first, it seemed like Jan was having an affair but later on, it became apparent from other clues that Jan was only fantasizing about Rick. Moreover, Rick got married to his girlfriend a few days before the game's events. This storyline seemed a bit rushed and tagged on but I believe its value is in emphasizing the troubled marriage between Jan and Terrance.
- 2) Terrance and his books - We find out that Terrance was dropped from his old publishers after two of his books sold poorly, but then he got picked up by a new firm. Before this, his writer's block seemed to be the reason he was more distant from Jan.

The one I didn't really get

Terrance and Oscar

- Oscar died in 1993, and gave everything he had to his sister's son, Terrance, including the house.
- had a letter locked in the safe, to his sister, begging for forgiveness for some transgression. I'm assuming this was in 1963 as that was the code to the safe.
- Also, both of Terrances books were linked to the JFK assassination before Thanksgiving of 1963. There was also markings of the wall in the basement, marking the height of a young Terrance, and the last marking was before thanksgiving of 1963.
- So its reasonable that this transgression had something to do with Terrance? Also, Terrance was planning a 3rd book, where the main character saves himself in 1963...



Conclusion

- This game does a great job of using exploratory elements to make a narrative. The interactivity and natural curiosity of players really make the story.
- However, the intensity of the main plot with Sam itself, can be credited to the voice actor. She did a great job of communicating the right emotions and plays a huge role. In that sense, the audio narrative portion of the game carries the story too.
- The tone of the exploration does pace together well with the tone of the story. For example, the dread of going down into the dark basement is in sync with the storyline of Sam's dread in realizing Lonnie is leaving soon for the Army.

