

# Gone Home

**Narrative Analysis**

# Gone Home - Intro

A father's struggling career, the troubled marriage of parents, a love story and the struggles of a teen trying to express herself to her parents, *Gone Home* has it all wrapped in a combination of exploratory and traditional narrative. Each story is interesting, but they all are meant to tell the story of the player's sister, Samantha, and why she has run away. What's interesting is that this story is told while the player explores and abandon household. Essentially, the player discovers why Samantha has left before she actually discovers that she has.

# Narrative Structure

The narrative structure is fairly simple, telling four stories, one for each family member, each with differing narrators. What's unique, though, is how these stories can be told concurrently while the journals are played in the background or the main character reads a letter.



# Narrative Components - Setting

The exploratory nature of the setting means that it can be more fully detailed than a book, which always leaves a certain amount of detail to the imagination of the reader, but it loses some of the control over camera that cinematography has. Overall, I thought the ability to interact with almost everything in the game made it feel much more rich.

# Narrative Components - Character

The very start of the game, where you have to find your spare key, immediately pulls you into the player character. This is pretty useful, as it means there is a stronger connection with all the other characters since they are immediate family. All of these other characters feel very well developed through all the minor details hidden about the house, with the exception of the playable character. I feel this may have been a conscious choice, however, as it prevents loss of immersion.

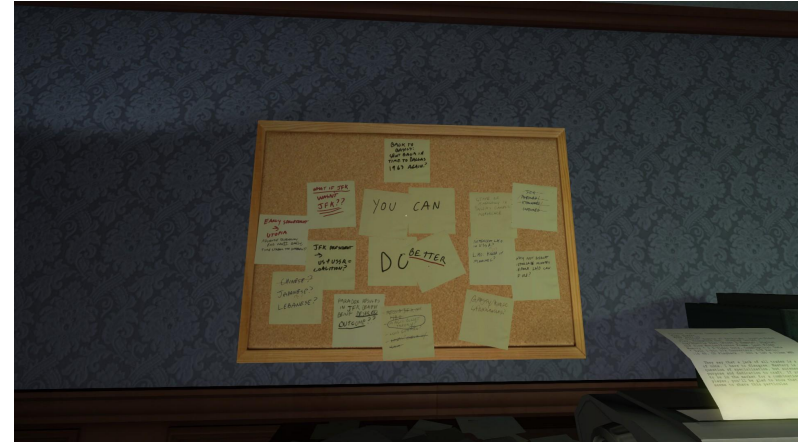


# Narrative Components - Action

The only story which handles action differently than a normal story is the story of the player character coming home and discovering what's happened in the house. In that way it makes the player's story more of an experience: experiencing what it would be like to come home to an empty house and discover your sister has run away.

# Narrative Components - Story

Much like other narratives, it composes multiple related stories into one package. Each family member has their own personal conflicts they have to deal with, which make the interactions among them much more convincing.



# Narrative Components - Time

Time is much different than in a book or movie. Since progression is up to the user, time must progress at a normal rate, whereas in different mediums time is usually sped up through inconsequential portions. This makes the player's story, or experience, much more immersive.



# User Participation

Since the game doesn't really feature choice, user participation is more of a driving mechanic than a directive one. This has the benefit of making the experience more immersive as you can feel like you are actually experiencing the story, but it also restricts you to a relatively relatable story otherwise that immersion will be broken and the benefits will be lost.

# Narrative / Game / Story

While the it definitely has game mechanics, this definitely isn't something you'd play just for fun like you would a board game. It's something that you'd play for the experience and story, but it is definitely more than just a collection of events. So, I'd have to classify it as a narrative.

# Is it good?

I definitely enjoyed the experience. The game mechanics complemented everything else nicely, but more importantly the characters and stories kept me engaged and interested. While I didn't feel that it was something that absolutely couldn't be done as well in another medium, I do feel it was well done.

# Impact

I feel like one of the major accomplishments of the game was making the player sympathize with your sister when her parents refuse to accept her sexuality without making you hate the parents. While I was certainly frustrated with them, since I felt like I was in the mind of their other daughter it was difficult to outright hate them, and after hearing their own stories it became more clear that they were just confused from all the conflict in their own lives. I feel like this is substantial because it makes the conflict so much more real, and so much more painful.



# Exploratory and Traditional Narrative

I enjoyed both the exploratory and traditional narrative, and how they complemented each other through game mechanics. The traditional narrative was essentially told through the sister's journal, and each passage of the journal was a reward for progressing. However, progressing is done through experiencing the exploratory narrative, and the whole time the exploratory narrative is complementing the traditional one. All in all, it is an interesting if not complicated relationship they form, and the real reason I think this utilized the full potential of the medium slightly better than Dear Esther.

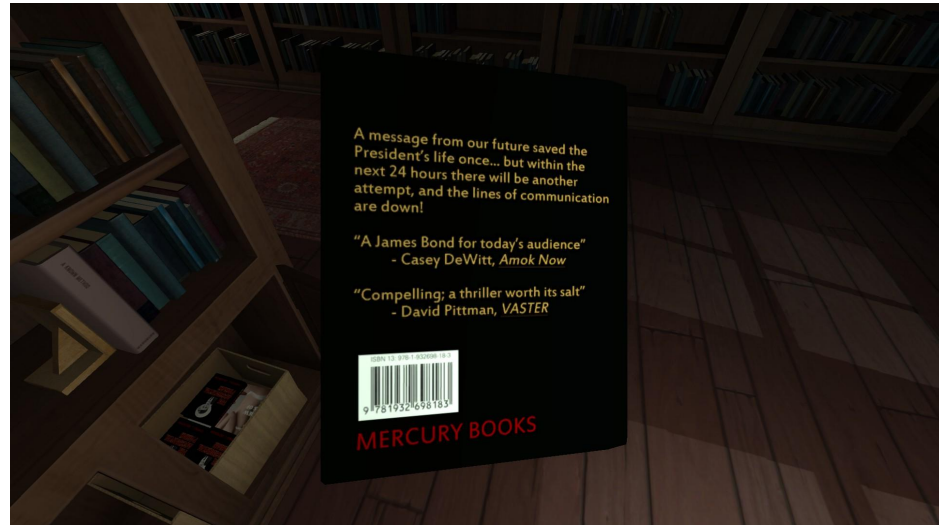
# Game Journal

- The porch was definitely very carefully crafted. I couldn't quite tell what, but something drew me towards the location of the spare key immediately, which really helped to make it feel like this was my home.
- It's a little too dark. I had to check google to see if there were any jump scares in the game because I was too nervous opening every single door.
- Being able to interact with everything is cool, but I'm always disappointed when a drawer is empty.



# Game Journal

- The house definitely feels lived in.
- Man, who came up with the dad's books?



# Game Journal

- I feel like normally I would be furious at these parents for treating their daughter like that when she came out, but for some reason I feel sorry for everyone involved.
- I'm not sure I understood the uncle's story at all. I can't tell if I've missed something or if it's just incomplete.

