

VISUAL NOVEL 'DUSTBIN DREAMING'
A BULLY STORY

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the
Bachelor of Engineering (Hons)

Information Communications & Technology

SEPTEMBER 2012

Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS

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CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

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A project dissertation submitted to the

Information Technology Programme

Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS

in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the

BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY (Hons)

(INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY)

Approved by,

(Ms. Ainol Rahmah Shazi Bt Shaarani)

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI PETRONAS

TRONOH, PERAK

September 2012

CERTIFICATION OF ORIGINALITY

This is to certify that I am responsible for the work submitted in this project, that the original work is my own except as specified in the reference and acknowledgements, and that the original work contained herein has not been undertaken or done by unspecified sources or persons.

(CHIN CHUN KEAT)

Abstract

People at the stage of adolescence may reject help and advice from their peers or elders as an effort to grow independent. At this era of technology, most teenagers will have come in contact frequently with electronic media such as smart phones and computers, and some may even see them as their only pillar of support. This project aims to support and advice this type of schooling teenagers, of age thirteen to seventeen, on at least one issue that many of them will meet in their school life, and that is bully. Also, this project hopes to rekindle reading as an attractive hobby. This project aims to create a Visual Novel titled ‘Dustbin Dreaming’ to achieve the above objectives.

A visual novel is a work of interactive fiction which features clever usage of static graphics such as anime-style art, live-action stills, and sometimes video footage. The specialized platform that will be used to construct the game is called the Ren’Py engine. In addition, supporting tools such as Adobe Photoshop will be used to acquire image and sound resources for this project. This project is expected to be completed within 6 months of time by the end of November 2012.

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to express my greatest gratitude and appreciation to project supervisor, Ms. Ainol Rahmah Shazi Bt Shaarani, who found time in a very busy schedule to provide accurate and helpful advices throughout the duration of the project. I am also deeply grateful for her advices and suggestions.

I would also like to acknowledge with much appreciation towards Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS (UTP) especially the committee of Final Year Project of Computer Information Sciences (CIS) department for the chance given to do this project as well as their excellent works on the organization and management of this course.

Last but not least; I would also like to express my acknowledgement to my friends, family, and online game developers for answering my various questions and provide much support throughout the project period.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Communication is an important element in our daily lives. It is the exchange of thoughts, thoughts, messages, or information, as by speech, signals, writing, or behavior between two or more living or inanimate beings. To talk with another person is one of the most fundamental needs of men to fit into the society. However, the adolescent period is a time where people are most confused and rebellious as they grow both physically and mentally. Physical communications that were established earlier with elders and even peers may fail due to barriers such as rejection and misunderstandings, as a general rule of growing up. Most of them will turn to electronic media as the alternate mean of contact, but this may cause them to become even more introvert and antisocial. While the society has been striving to rectify this issue from the outside, the electronic media itself can be used as a powerful tool to deliver to these children the moral message that life can be so much richer.

The purpose of this project is to provide moral support and guidance to adolescents who have become a victim of bully or know of such an occurrence in school, with use of visual novel as the desired medium, which will in turn instill reading habit into people.

Visual novel is a work of interactive fiction which features clever usage of static graphics such as anime-style art, live-action stills, and sometimes video footage. Unlike other game types, visual novels distinguish themselves for featuring the minimal amount of gameplay while focusing much more strongly on storytelling. Some visual novels do not even feature gameplay at all (a sub category called kinetic novel). Player interactions are usually limited to just button clicking as texts, graphics and sounds are moved to keep the story progressing.

Visual novels can have multiple storylines or many endings. Visual novels focuses almost entirely on character interactions, and players are often required to make decision choices throughout the game that will influence both the storylines and endings. These characteristics make visual novels closely comparable to story-driven interactive fiction. The graphics consist of a set of generic backgrounds with character sprites superimposed on them. The story is usually carried out through the first person perspective with the protagonist remaining unseen. And when key moments of the plot arrive, special graphics called event CG which are images drawn specially for that scene rather than being composed from predefined elements, are displayed.

While visual novel has its shortcomings as compared to a real novel (world building is an example, though it is supplemented with graphics instead), it is often much more readable with use of graphics, videos and sounds, and still capable of featuring a deep, serious plot. Also, some visual novels do not necessary limit themselves to just interactive fictions but also incorporate additional elements into them. For example, *Baldr Sky Dive* is a visual novel which includes 2D action elements where players control and fight using a machine to continue the story. These elements are often used as plot devices in the game.

Visual novels also use voice actors to provide voices for characters in the game. It greatly enhances the reading experience as the story comes to life with chats and conversations. Usually the protagonist's voice is not recorded to provide the illusion that the player is the main character, and in terms of practicality, to minimize the memory size of the game. The protagonist would usually have a lot more monologues and conversations, and to voice act every one of them would take up a huge amount of memory space.

Visual novel is a production of Japan. Traditionally, many PC-based visual novels have contained risqué scenes even if the theme or plot of the story is not erotic. However, now the majority of console-based visual novels are free of adult content and there are more and more visual novels made to target the all-ages market. There hasn't been much visual novels produced on gaming consoles, but popular ones such as *Clannad*, a slice of life themed visual novel have be ported (PSP, 3DS, Xbox 360 etc) onto them and even make it into the light novel, manga or anime formats. Although the visual novel market outside East Asia, it is steadily growing in numbers, although the quality of the plots leaves much to be desired.

1.2 Problem Statement

Adolescents in school – especially those who are unique, anti-social, timid, or generally have a personality that is viewed negatively among their own social circle – may face disfavor, physical and mental abuse by their peers, and are unable to determine the right course of action to protect themselves when fitting into the social group.

Book reading is an unpopular – and sometimes considered old-fashioned – hobby, and visual novel is a relatively unknown and new medium in Malaysia.

1.3 Objective

The primary objective of this project is to convey important moral messages – with bully as the main topic of discussion – and provide guidance to the general society – mainly adolescent in school between thirteen to seventeen years old – with use of visual novel as the medium.

The secondary objective of this project is to promote visual novel as an attractive alternative besides physical and e-books, and at the same time promote reading as an entertaining and healthy hobby in Malaysia.

1.4 Scope of Study

- Produce a complete English Language Visual Novel of 1 to 3 hours of length on a PC platform.
- The themes of the Visual Novel are Bully, Crime and Love.
- The target audience for this Visual Novel is schooling adolescents of age thirteen to seventeen years old in Malaysia.
- The Ren'py visual novel engine is the chosen software to build the game.
- The project will span for 6 months and achieve completion around late November 2012.

1.5 Synopsis

Below is the synopsis for the Visual Novel titled, 'Dustbin Dreaming'.

Ceiland, high school student, 15 years old, and a boy who is looked down upon and bullied by almost all students of the same grade. His high school life had been normal and uneventful until one day, he accidentally stumbled onto a bully situation and since found himself the fresh and brand new victim for the year. Fearful of the leader of the bullies, Zhon Yang – the youngest son of the town's gang, with no lack of rumors of deaths and drugs – the entire student body turned on Ceiland and treated him like trash in order to prevent themselves from being targeted. However, unlike previous victims, Ceiland kept a cool mask and actively searched for ways to defuse the situation – without resorting to any violence – behind the bully's back, but so far nothing had seemed to work.

Fortunately, he had two good friends, Shenea and Quron, who are undaunted by the bullies' threatening presence and talked to him frequently, but Ceiland kept his distance as much as possible to avoid getting them involved. Also, there was a café called Midori which he frequented often and got acquainted with the owner Maine. Maine was former military and taught him some self-defense, which Ceiland had learned with great interest, but not once he had used them to protect himself from the bullies. He had a past that would stop him short whenever he thinks violence is a solution, and it's slowly but surely forcing him into a corner.

But he can no longer run away from reality. With his final sanctuary invaded and his friends kidnapped by the very same bullies that tormented him every day, Ceiland

must make a choice: Triumph over his fears once and for all, or be crushed underneath them – forever.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adolescence is the transitional stage of physical and psychological development of a human that begins since puberty to adulthood. Biologically speaking, it is the phase where a child's body began to experience rapid growth and change until it has matured completely, which will mark the termination of physical growth.

Psychologically speaking, it is the phase where a child began to form definitions of moral standards and cognitive understanding of the environment around them, as well as developing and improving ways of interaction with the environment. It is a period where adolescents attempt to think independently from their guides (parents, teachers, etc). As such, they are easily confused and may succumb to cognitive distortion and depression. The five dimensions of cognitive distortion are self-critique, self-blame, helplessness, hopelessness and preoccupation with danger.

The occurrence of delinquent behavior and depressive symptoms is a common phenomenon in adolescence and the two problem behaviors are closely related (Wiesner & Kim, 2006; Limniou, & Whitehead, 2010). Depression leads to cognitive distortion, and this in turn lead to an increase in criminal activities by juveniles as observed from reports of deviant activities involving school children during the recent years in Malaysia (Rohany, 2010). Bullying is the most common form of school violence in Malaysia (L Lee ET AL, 2007) and may consist of behaviors such as humiliation, insulting, teasing, verbal or physical abuse, threats, harassment, mobbing, gossiping and exclusion (Lumsden, 2002).

Cognitive distortion and depression will eventually lead to discipline problems at school. Discipline is a rudimentary ingredient that plays a crucial role in school system, which insists on upholding the moral values of students (Yahaya ET AL, 2003). For the purpose of this project we will focus on the issue of bully. Cognitive distortion and depression can apply to both bullies and bully victims. Their violence or reactions (submissive or excessive) towards violence are usually a direction result of the stated causes. Several important characteristics of bullying have been identified in attempts to rectify the situation, and they are: 1) More boys are bullies themselves and victims of bullying, 2) Boys are more prone to aggression and girls to isolation (Gibbs, 2003), 3) The origins of bullying are found in personality characteristics in combination with physical strength or weaknesses (Olweus, 2003, p. 14), and the passive or submissive type of victims represents the largest percentage of victims (80-85%) (Olweus, 2003, p. 15). It is important that we, the members of human society to help guide and improve the situation among bully through lawful and effective means.

Now, on to the reading habit of adolescents in Malaysia. Reading is the act of seeing to acquire meaning and information from a symbol. This action is usually associated with many forms of literature such as books, magazines, comics and more. While knowledge and experience can be acquired through other means such as listening for a child, reading is the most basic of all learning tool to acquire the certainty of knowledge. Through the right sort of literature, reading helps solidify the foundation of knowledge, skill and experience so that we can better understand and respond to the world around us. It is not an exaggeration to say that reading habit is the first step to true understanding, and the gateway towards civilization.

However, with the rise of electronic media and advancement technology, reading habit among people has been declining rapidly all over the world. As said by (Pandian ET AL, 1997), "...we have to face up to a changed reality with the development of communications technology and for reading to remain meaningful". For example, it is stated that UiTM students is said to be weak at the English language (Dorothy ET AL, 2007). Again from the same source, it is said that every educator will agree to the assumption that a huge majority of university students dislikes reading. Literacy does not translate into a will to improve literacy through reading. Cited by J.C. Igbokwe & N.A. Obidike (2011), our children has been exposed and affected strongly by the many forms of communication gadgets, and thus time that should've been devoted to reading were instead diverted towards manipulating electronic media.

Entertainment has always been the most basic and easily fulfilled source of happiness for man, and the various forms of electronic media such as games, smart phones, computers, televisions are admitted much more interactive and attractive as compared to reading. The provided results of study by J.C. Igbokwe & N.A. Obidike (2011) shows that respondents dedicated a lot of time in online activities, watching television, listening to music on DVD and other musical systems. Moreover, the causes of the decline in reading habit are attributed to the many distractions electronic media apply to our lives, and the lack of proper attention by parents and teachers. Setting aside the latter cause, it is clear that the advancement in electronic media have negatively affected the habit of reading that was supposed to be nurtured into people's lives, and this in turn may cause a decline in the overall intelligence and quality of life for the future generation. Ultimately, external help such as the recent book coupon promotion by the Malaysian government, or guidance by parents and teachers, can only work if the person themselves are willing to change. Reading could be much more enjoyable for a person if it can be integrated into electronic media, hence making the act of reading itself an attractive 'distraction'.

E-book is a book in electronic format. Supposedly e-books will help improve reading habit among people, but currently it has a huge number of deficiencies that makes it fall short as an attractive distraction. Citing from the article Books: Bits vs Atoms (Atwood J, 2012), some of the more glaring cons of e-books are: They always require a reading device, they cannot be loaned to friends, they may refuse to load for any reason the publisher deems necessary, they may have incomplete or broken or obsolete layout, they may have low-resolution bitmapped images that are inferior to print.

Storytelling is the conveying of events through either images, sounds, words, or a mix of them depending on the chosen medium. For example, a person may choose to tell a story by mouth. A game may present a compelling story that attracts players through various visual graphics, sounds and texts. Since childhood, people have always found stories much easier to swallow and understand as compared to hard, dull facts stated in blocky paragraphs on a textbook. Besides that, stories are also an extremely important facilitator for adults to impart moral standards, belief and culture to their child. “Like learning a foreign language, stories create a new image of the world”, said Malkina (1995). Because stories can be defined as experiences of life themselves, storytelling is one of the easiest ways for any men to absorb knowledge and promote understanding of the world.

According to Pederson (1995), “storytelling is the original form of teaching”. There many interpretations of storytelling, and they are communication, text, coding-decoding process, comprehension, etc. Storytelling promotes communication because different individuals because there must be an audience that will listen and respond to the told story. As text, it provides a sense of structure and the development of a story often follows a predictable course. As a coding-decoding process, mutual understanding or comprehension is achieved when the listener is able to acquire perfectly or very close the story that’s being imparted by the teller. Also, storytelling brings comprehension by teaching people to understand and make meaning of verbal and non-verbal information.

Every story has a plot, settings, characters, structure and values that are addressed through the interaction of the former four variables. Storytelling forms the very basis of communication. Consider a simple interaction between two friends talking about their daily life. The simple act of referring to an interesting past or present is an act of storytelling itself with intentions of provoking a desirable reaction from his/her partner. Storytelling is even used as a way to communicate therapeutically with disturbed people. The patient is more likely to be a child or adolescent. The mutual storytelling technique is where the troubled patient tells of a story that may be imaginative, unrealistic, pessimistic etc, and the doctor will in turn reconstructs and feeds the story back to the patient after analysis, so that the patient will recognize their symbolized problems and either overcome them or grow desensitized towards them. Stories can also exhibit powerful effects and provide guidance and induce positive reaction among anti-socials. For example, *anime*, a style of animation characterized by colorful graphics and themes which has in turn inspired the creation of fan fiction, a fan written story which uses the original *anime* as a base (Chandler, 2003).

Storytelling is of course employed since the very early stages of electronic games themselves. Some of the most common storylines used by the role-playing games in the past are very simple and linear, such as a knight slaying a dragon or demon king to save the princess. Due to the constraints of technology at that time, most game plots have no choice but to be simple and linear. However As computer games grow more complicated, there is a new movement to create a stronger element of narrative (Flowers ET AL, 2003). Interactive storytelling is a story-based experience where the player plays to unfold a sequence of events (Thue ET AL, 2007). It's as if the players have become the game's main character themselves, which is the direction interactive storytelling is pushing at. Players have freedom in choosing which events they want to trigger, how they want to build their characters' strength, to even specifying the personality of their characters through interactive choices which may cause the game's story to branch towards a different direction. *The Elder Scrolls: Skyrim* is a perfect example of a game that employs interactive storytelling that provides players with the freedom of action and choice, which in turn affects the progress of the story and ultimately the ending. Even if the main storyline has ended, *Skyrim's* world does not end and the player can continue to explore the massive sandbox world and build their own 'legacy'.

Multimedia instructional environments are well known for its immense potential of improving the way people learn (Mayer, 1999, in press; Sweller, 1999; van Merriënboer, 1997). Verbal materials (such as on-screen text or narration) and pictorial forms (including static materials such as photos or illustrations, and dynamic materials such as video or animation) are exposed to learners in these environments. While education has long since accustomed to verbal type information, there are encouraging evidences that pointed that visual representation may very well enhance the learner's abilities to acquire information (Mayer, 1999, in press; Sweller, 1999).

Animation refers to a *simulated motion picture* depicting movement of drawn (or simulated) objects. Its main features are consists of: (1) picture – a pictorial representation to make up animation; (2) motion – an animation depicting movements; and (3) simulated – an animation consisting of artificially created objects through drawing or some other simulation method. A video is not an animation and should refer to a motion picture depicting movement of real objects. Also, an illustration is a static picture of drawn (or simulated) objects while a photo is a static picture of real objects.

Instructional designers weave multimedia presentations by basing on different theories on how students learn. In this section, we explore two competing views of how students learn from words and pictures.

The Information Delivery Theory of Multimedia Theory states that learning involves adding information to one's memory (see Mayer, 1996, in press). The computer acts as a system that distributes information to learners, the instructional designer will present information in either word, picture or both formats, and the learner's will receive all the presented information. For example, when a context is narrated in words the learner will then store the information in memory. If a picture containing the same amount of information is presented to the learner, there should be no difference in the amount of information gained by the learner.

The Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning states that meaningful learning begins when students mentally construct coherent knowledge representations (see Mayer, 1996, in press). This theory is prepared on the three assumptions suggested by cognitive research: (1) dual-channel assumption – the idea that humans have separate channels for processing visual/pictorial representations and auditory/verbal representations (Baddeley, 1998; Paivio, 1986); (2) limited capacity assumption – the idea that only a few pieces of information can be actively processed at any one time in each channel (Baddeley, 1998; Sweller, 1999); and (3) active processing – the idea that meaningful learning occurs when the learner engages in cognitive processes such as selecting relevant material, organizing it into a coherent representation, and integrating it with existing knowledge (Mayer, in press; Wittrock, 1974).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Timeline & Milestone

The project is scheduled to be completed in 6 months' time at mid-November. The project period was divided into two stages: Final Year Project I and the Final Year Project II, each consisting of 14 weeks.

3.2 Rapid Application Development

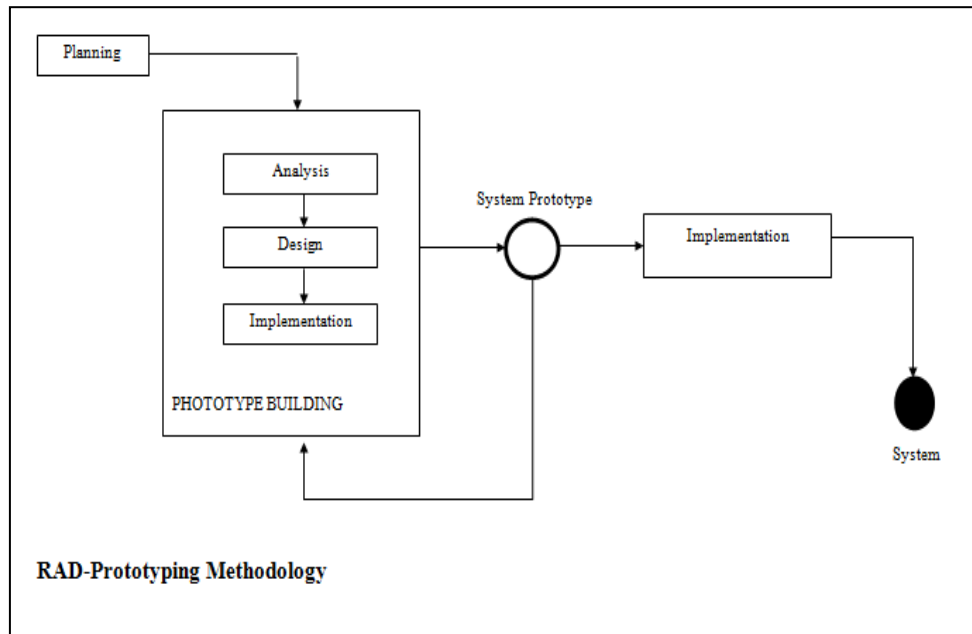


Figure 1: RAD-Prototyping Methodology

Rapid Application Development (RAD) is the software development methodology chosen for this project. In rapid application development, structured techniques and prototyping are especially used to define users' requirements and to design the final system. The development process begins with the construction of preliminary data models using structured techniques. Then, the requirements are verified through prototyping. These stages are repeated iteratively until a satisfactory product is created. Figure 2 above is an image of the RAD-Prototyping Methodology.

3.3 Ren'Py Visual Novel Engine

Ren'Py is an engine that specialized in building visual novels and life simulation games with use of texts, images, sounds and special effects. It is free, open source, and runnable on multiple PC platforms: Windows 2000 and above (x86), Mac OS X 10.4 and above (x86), and Linux (x86, glibc 2.3 and above). Android (2.0 and above, with OpenGL ES 2.0 support) is a supported platform, building for Android smartphones and tablets would require extra software, and certain features that are offered on PC will not be available on smartphone.

Ren'Py uses Python script languages to build its games to provide consistency, so that placement of text and images does not change throughout the game. Also, the Ren'Py script language will work with any chosen text editors or tools, making it extremely simple and quick to start up and construct the desired game. Moreover, this engine includes all of the features which are expected from a visual novel.

Ren'Py also features the Editra Text Editor, which would be used to edit all the of the game scripts.

By default, the constructed game will contain the following features:

- A main menu at the title screen that contains the option to start a new game, save or load a game, and adjust settings.
- Automated saves.
- Rollback feature, which allows users to refer to previous screens directly or through a backlog. May affect dialogue choices as well.
- Predictive image loading. It loads images in the background before a scene is shown.
- Supports control for mouse, keyboard, or gamepad.
- Supports full screen mode or re-scalable windows.
- Supports text skipping.
- Supports auto advancing of text and text display speed.
- Supports screen hiding to display images behind text.
- Supports independent change of music, sound effect, and voice volume.

Below are a few screenshots showing the workings of the software.

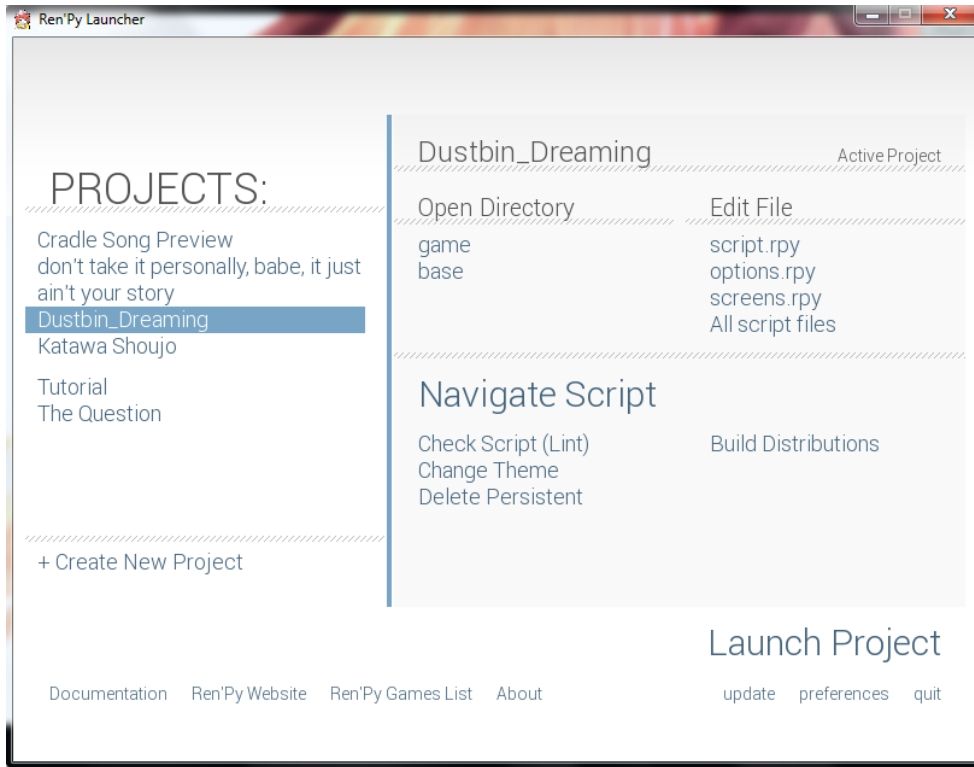


Figure 2: Ren'py Launcher 6.14.1.366 Main Page

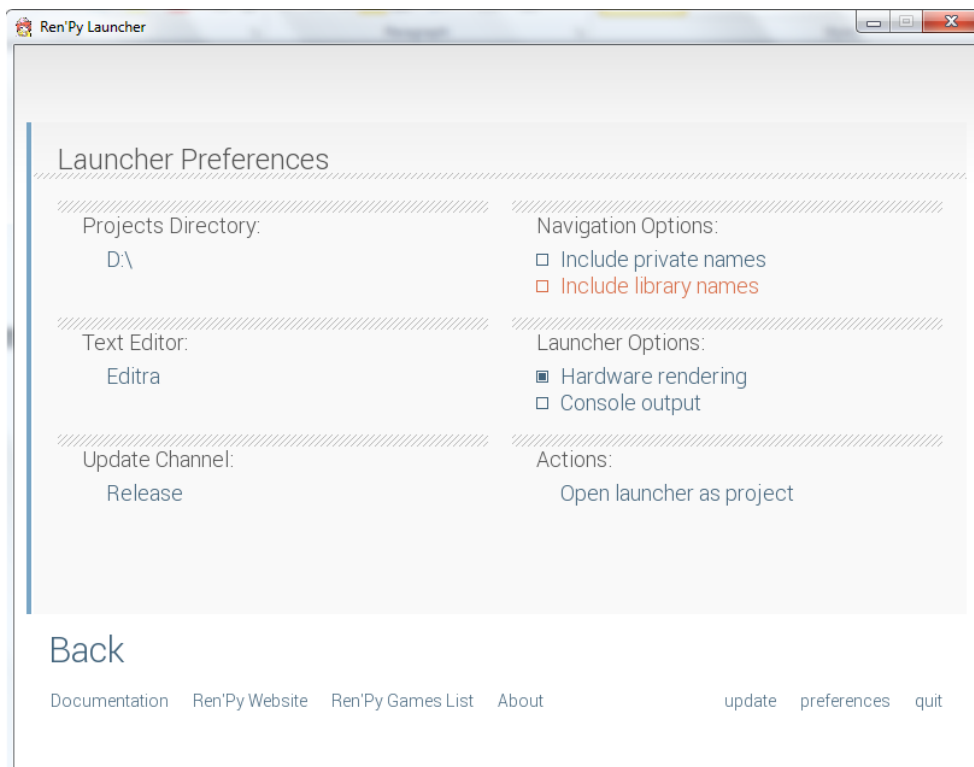


Figure 3: Ren'py Launcher 6.14.1.366 Preferences

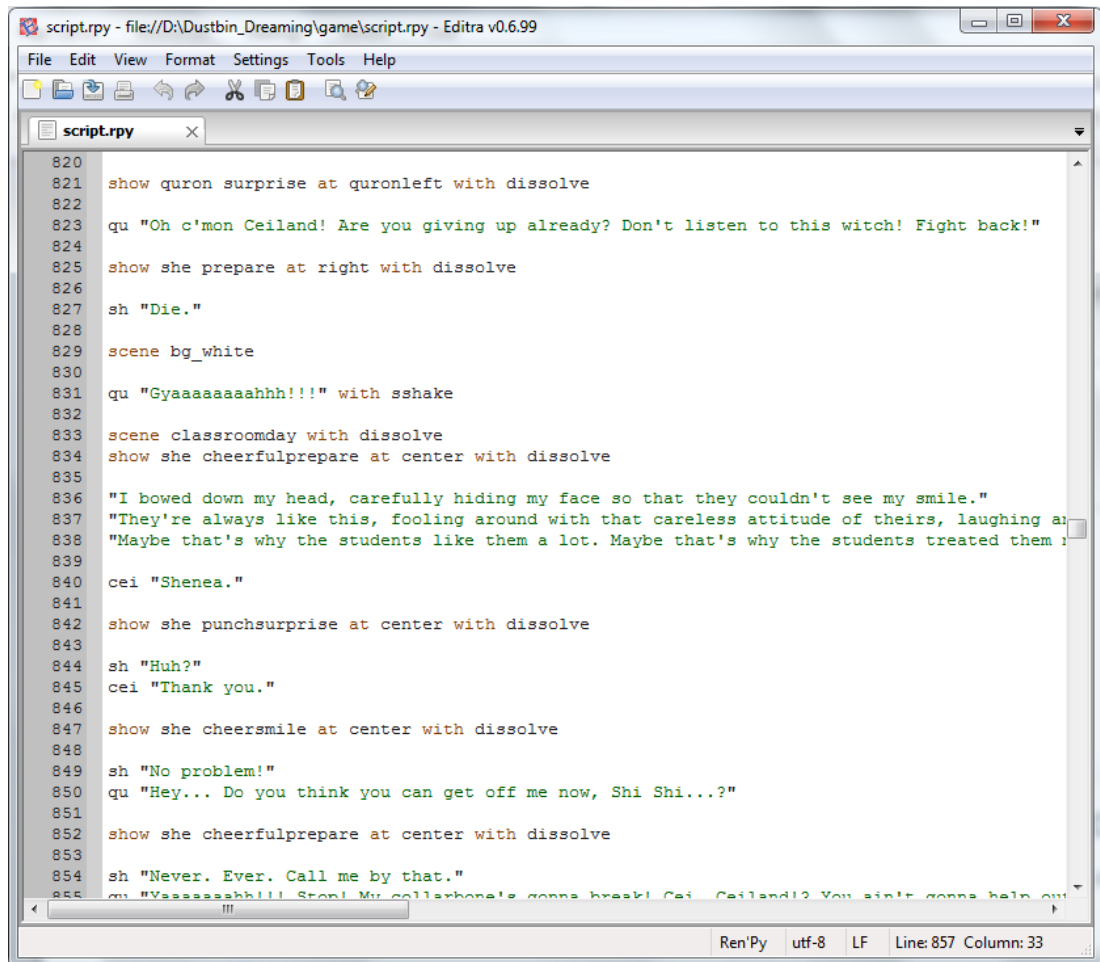


Figure 4: Editra Text Editor v0.6.99

3.4 Adobe Photoshop

Adobe Photoshop is a graphics editing program developed and published by Adobe Systems. Adobe provides support only for Windows and Macintosh platforms, Photoshop CS5 can be run on Linux using Wine. Currently, this program is available in the following languages: Brazilian Portuguese, Chinese Simplified, Chinese Traditional, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish and Ukrainian.

Photoshop features a variety of tools with multiple image-editing functions for users to manage their images. They are cropping and slicing, drawing, painting, measuring and navigation, selection, typing, and retouching. Besides the usual package of tools, Photoshop's functionalities can be extended using Photoshop plugins. Some of the more common types of plugins are:

- Color correction plugins (Alien Skin Software, Nik Software, OnOne Software, Topaz Labs Software, The Plugin Site, etc.)
- Special effects plugins (Alien Skin Software, Auto FX Software, AV Bros., Flaming Pear Software, etc.)
- 3D effects plugins (Andromeda Software, Strata, etc.)

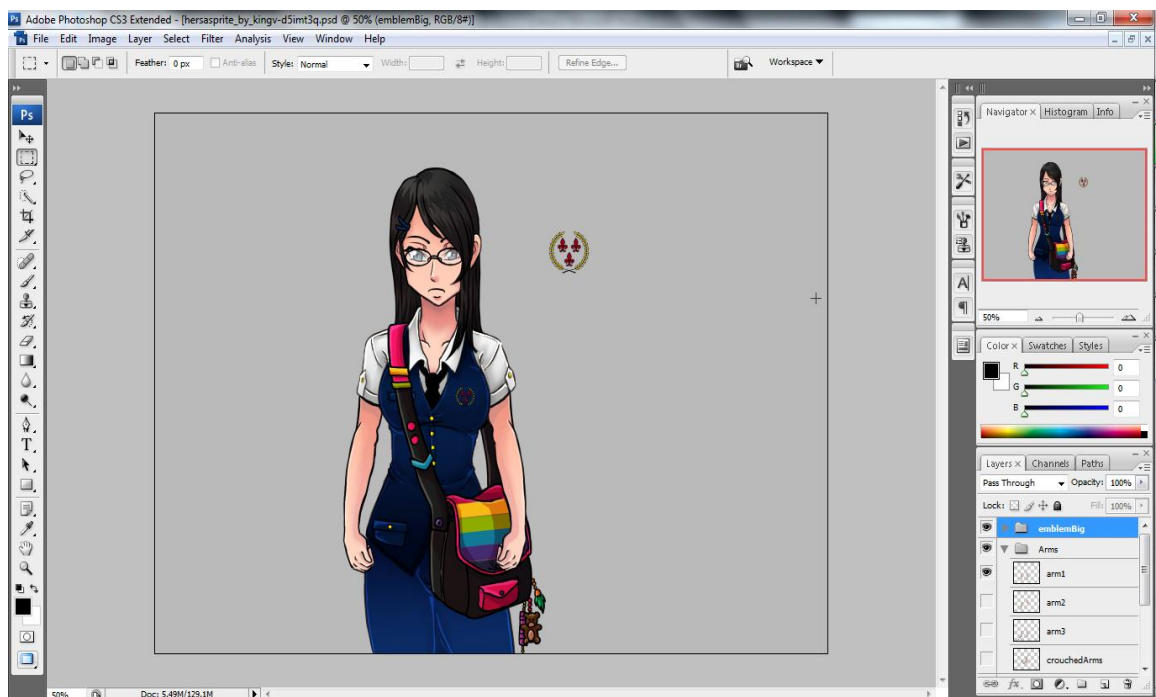


Figure 5: Adobe Photoshop CS3 Extended

CHAPTER 4

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Currently, all three resources (Text, Art, Music) are being gathered at a steady pace. The written script is currently at full completion. All of the character sprites have also been completed, 90% of the background images except Lighthouse have been completed, and the Computer Graphics (CGs) are still under construction – though they are currently commissioned to several artists and is expected to be completed during middle or end of October. Several background music (BGM) and theme music have been completed, whereas the other BGMs will be collected from free and open music resources under Creative Common License.

Text Resources: Script Sample

“Hahh... Hahh...”

This is bad. I hadn't expected the rain to be so huge; this must be one of those super downpours my mum always talks about.

“Uh – woowow, I nearly slipped there...”

I kept a steady pace as I ran along the streets with my bag strapped tightly against my shoulders, but the howling storm seemed almost intent to tear my limbs apart with just water and wind. Of course that is just my wild, depressing imagination, or it could be the warning signs that I'm eating way too little and infrequently as of late, but damn it all. All I'm concerned about now is to get underneath a shelter as quickly as possible. My entire body was burning up with unbelievable pain and fatigue. If I fall – no, if I even stopped to take a breather, I probably will not be able to take even another step.

... But really, is that such a bad thing?

“Ugh, I can't see anything... Just what the hell is this rain; it's been ages since there's one so big...”

I'm so tired. So cold. I hardly had any strength left in my body, and it's a miracle I could still feel my arms. Isn't this enough already?

Code Sample

```
image bg_white = "white.png"
...
define cei = Character('Ceiland', color="#c8c8ff")
...
label start:

$ firstfade = Fade(2.0, 1.0, 2.0)
$raindissolve = Dissolve (2.0)
$ sshake = Shake((0, 0, 0, 0), 1.0, dist=15)
$ slideawayup = CropMove(1.0, "slideawayup")
$ slideawaydown = CropMove(1.0, "slideawaydown")
$ slideawayleft = CropMove(0.5, "slideawayleft")
$ circirisout = ImageDissolve("schoolroad2rain.jpg", 1.2, 8)
$ pixellate = Pixellate(3.0, 5)

scene bg_white
with firstfade

scene bg_white
with firstfade

play music "loneliness.ogg" fadein 2.0

cei "Hey.... I, I don't really mean to...."
```

unknown "Hik.... U.... Uu...."

cei "I'm sorry.... I.... Let me help, please....?"

unknown "Don't touch me!"

cei "Ah...."

"Why exactly did I do it back then? Perhaps I was just too boorish, perhaps a whim got itself tangled up in my mind."

"Six years old was not exactly the age of self-control."

"But still, what I did was utterly inexcusable. Irreversible."

"One look into her eyes and I understood that this fragile friendship that she tried so hard to build was lost forever."

"Never mind the days we spent playing at the park, running about like hyperactive idiots."

"Never mind the days we made a promise that we'll always be together."

"At this moment, this single birth of regret that would last for an eternity, all for that stupid, stupid fit of anger that I could never take back,"

"She and I – we lost everything –"

stop music fadeout 2.0

jump day_1_bully

Art Resources: Sketch Sample



Figure 6: Initial sketch of Shenea, one of Ceiland's friend



Figure 7: Initial sketches of Maine, owner of the Midori cafe

Background Samples



Figure 8: School Library at midnight



Figure 9: School Library at daylight

Character Sprites Sample

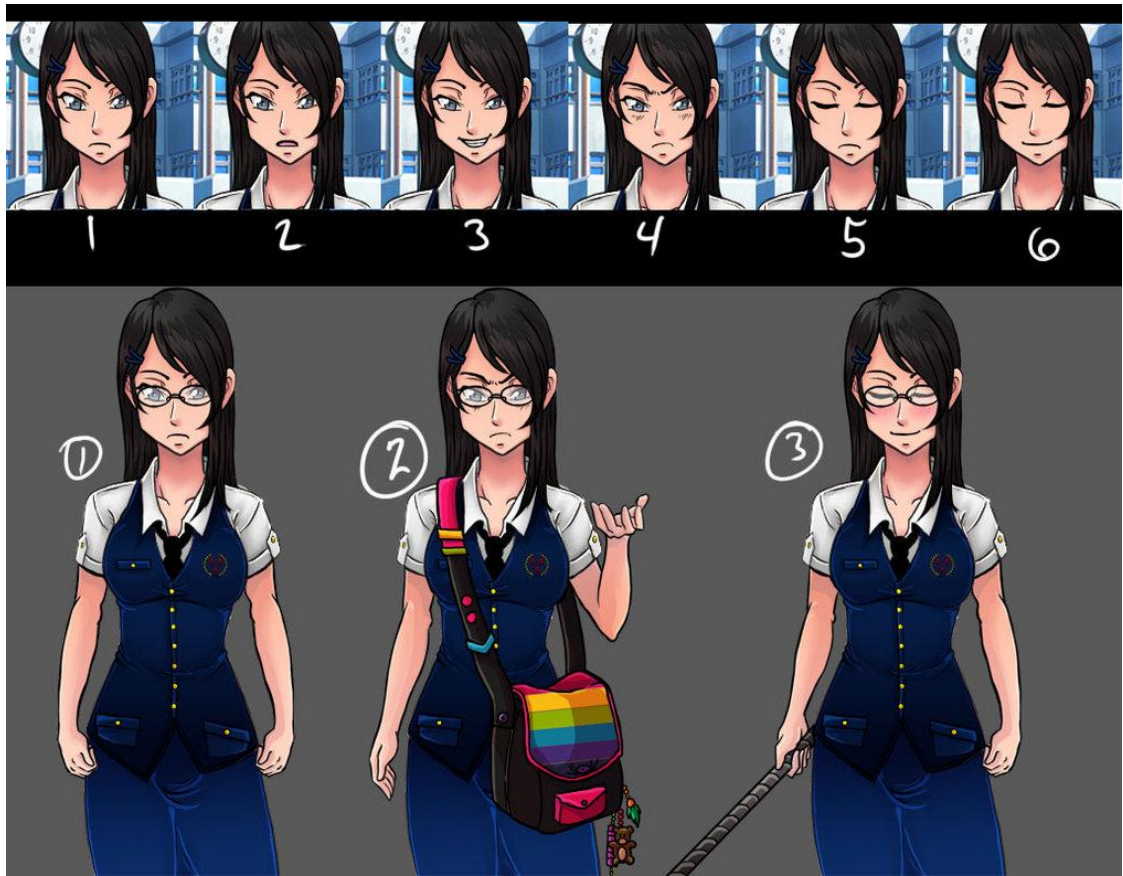


Figure 10: Hersa's various poses and expressions

Save/Load Screen:

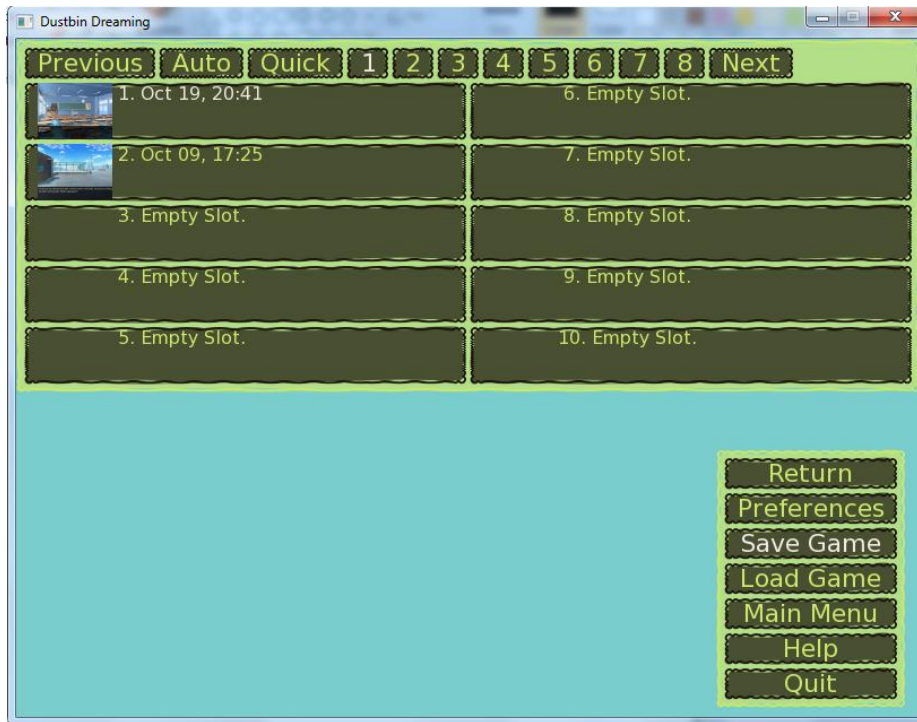


Figure 11: Save/Load Menu Screen

Previous & Auto: The game will auto save itself for every scene it passes, and the player can choose to load from any of these computer generated save files.

Quick: Enables player to quick save or load at a certain point of the game.

1~10 Buttons: Up to 10 pages of slots, each page containing 10 slots.

Return: Goes back to In-Game screen.

Preferences: Goes to the Option screen.

Save Game: The slots are now changed for use of saving.

Load Game: The slots are now changed for use of loading.

Main Menu: Return to Title screen.

Help: Redirects players to a Ren'py help website page which contains useful FAQs and common hotkeys for a Visual Novel.

Quit: Exits the game.

Option Screen:

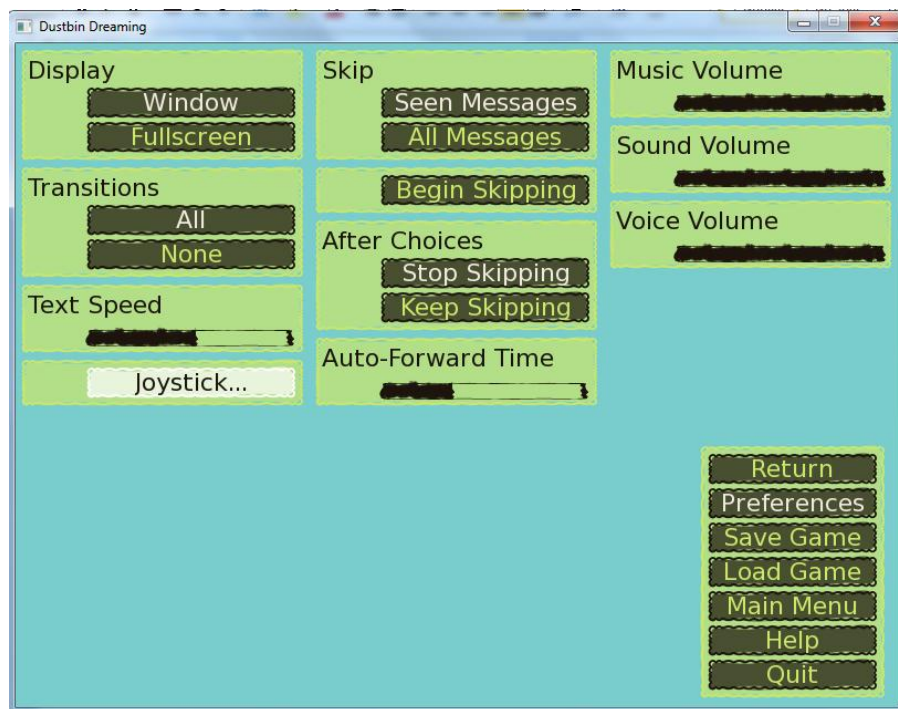


Figure 12: Option Menu Screen

Display: Allows player to choose between Windowed mode (800 x 600 pixels) or Full Screen Mode.

Skip: Allows player to skip either in-game text that has already been read, or all of the in-game text regardless whether it has been read or not.

Transitions: To enable or disable all in-game animation and transitions.

After Choices: Allows players to continue skipping after an in-game choice selection has been made, or stopping the in-game text.

Text Speed: Allows player to select text display speed.

Auto-Forward Time: Allows player to select the automatic text display speed.

Music Volume: Controls volume of background music.

Sound Volume: Controls volume of sound effects.

Voice Volume: Controls volume of voice speaking.

In-Game Screen:



Figure 13: In-Game Screen, featuring Quron and Shenea

Q.Save: The quick save function, allows player to save immediately with a single click. Saves to Auto/Previous page in the Save screen.

Q.Load: The quick load function, allows player to load immediately with a single click. Loads from Auto/Previous page in the Load screen.

Save: Goes to Save screen.

Skip: Skips read or all text.

Auto: Automates text display, allowing players to progress the game without mouse click or keyboard hotkeys.

Prefs: Goes to Option screen.

CG Sample:



Figure 14: A CG in Dustbin Dreaming, featuring Hersa and Ceiland

Music Samples:

There are over 10 songs used in this project. To conserve space, only 7 of them will be shown here.



loneliness.ogg

Figure 15: Loneliness by Di Evantile



desolation.ogg

Figure 16: Desolation by Moondark Project



intense.ogg

Figure 17: Movement Proposition by Kevin MacLeod



quronshenea.ogg

Figure 18: Mandeville by Kevin MacLeod



Scattered Childhood.ogg

Figure 19: Scattered Childhood by Ziassan



Thrown hopes.ogg

Figure 20: Thrown Hopes by Ziassan



Winter end.ogg

Figure 21: Winter End by Ziassan

Sound Effect Samples:

There are over 30 sound effect files used for the purpose of this project. To conserve space, only fifteen of them will be shown here.



bigrain.ogg

Figure 22: Huge Downpour at Soundjay.com



raindrop.ogg

Figure 23: Rain Drop at Soundjay.com



smallrain.ogg

Figure 24: Small Downpour at Soundjay.com



boo.ogg

Figure 25: Booing at freeSFX.co.uk



bonecrack.ogg

Figure 26: Bone Cracking at freeSFX.co.uk



chair.ogg

Figure 27: Chair Sliding at freeSFX.co.uk



classdoor.ogg

Figure 28: Classroom Door Opening at Soundjay.com



cloth.ogg

Figure 29: Clothes Shuffling at freeSFX.co.uk



crowd.ogg

Figure 30: Crowd Murmuring at freeSFX.co.uk



doorburst.ogg

Figure 31: Door Bursting Open at freeSFX.co.uk



doorclose.ogg

Figure 32: Door Closing at Soundjay.com



footstep.ogg

Figure 33: Human Footsteps at Soundjay.com



impactgrunt.ogg

Figure 34: Body Impact by External Force at freeSFX.co.uk



insectchirp.ogg

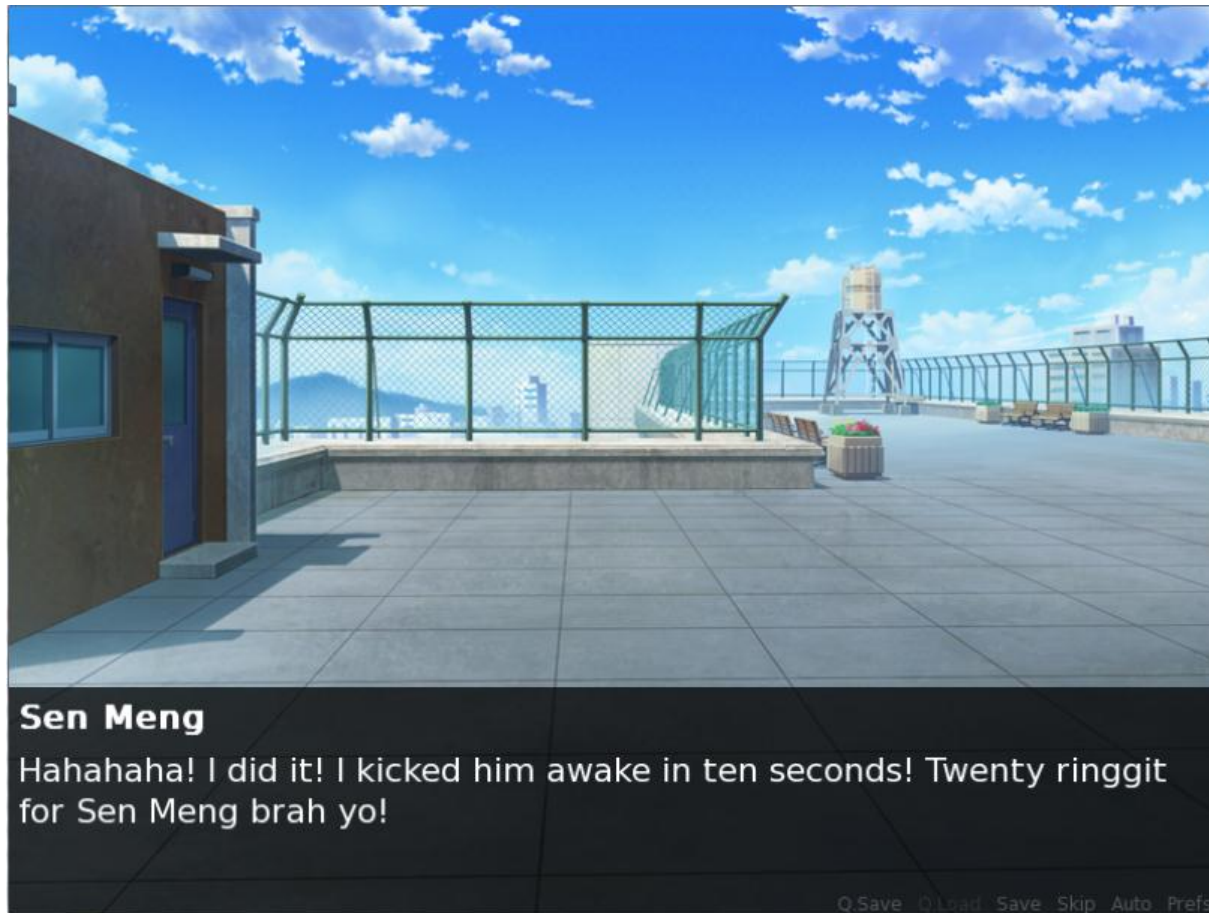
Figure 35: Cricket Chirps at freeSFX.co.uk



lightswitch.ogg

Figure 36: Light Switch Clicking at Soundjay.com

Storyboard



Day One. The protagonist, Ceiland wakes up to a brutal beating from his enemies: Zhon Yang, Yusof and Sen Meng. There is nothing he can do but to endure them as he waits out the punishment and walked away.

Figure 37: Storyboard 1

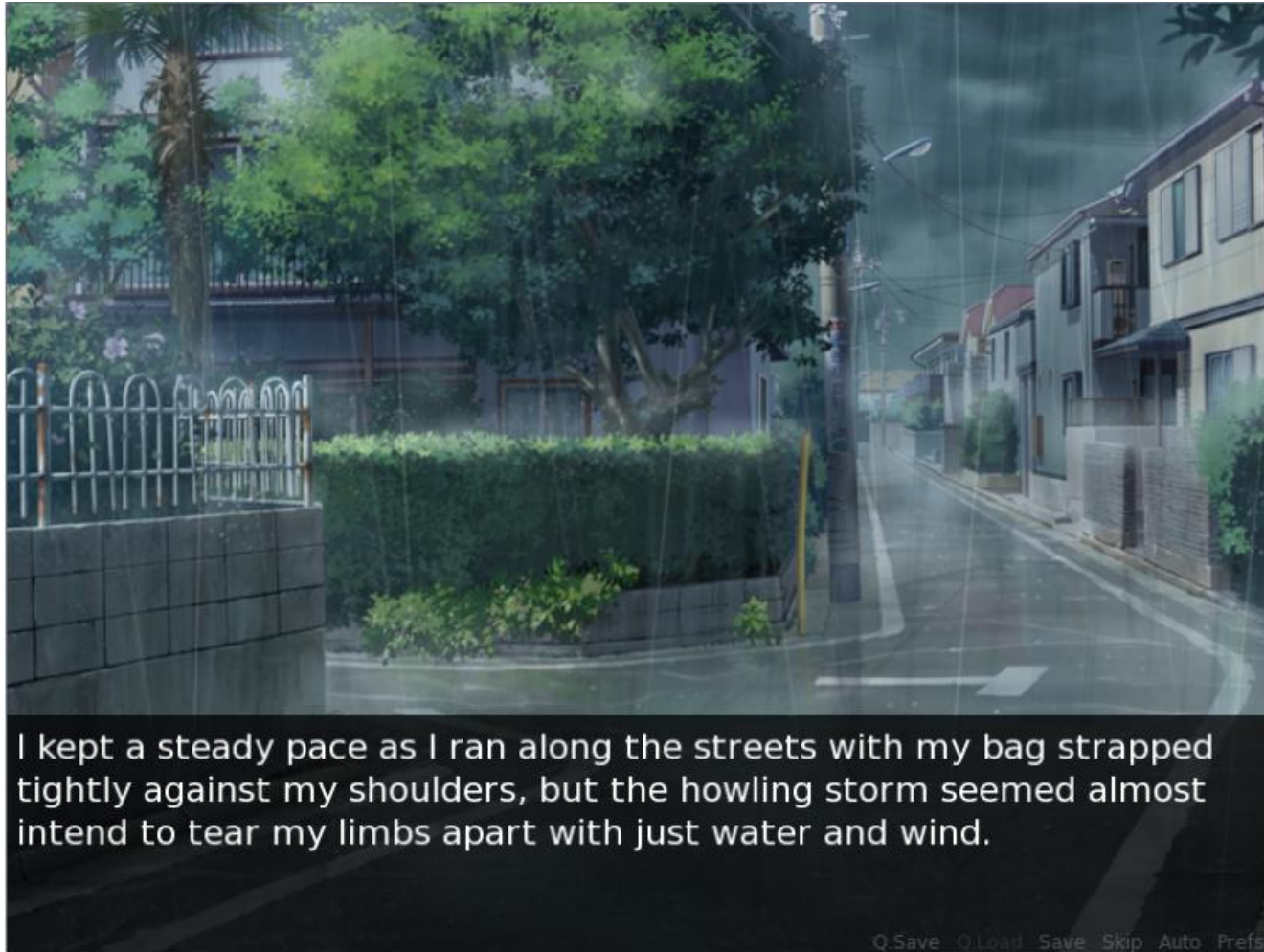


Figure 38: Storyboard 2

Unfortunately, the sky started to rain, and Ceiland was forced to run underneath the full force of the storm while bruised and battered. His wounds and terrible misfortunes began to gnaw into his heart as he begins to hallucinate in despair.



Just as he was about to lie down and give up under the grim, depressing rain, his good friend and counselor Maine Gerrard caught him right at the backdoor of the Midori Café, and invites him in. The two of them briefly talked about the various incidents happening on Ceiland.

Figure 39: Storyboard 3



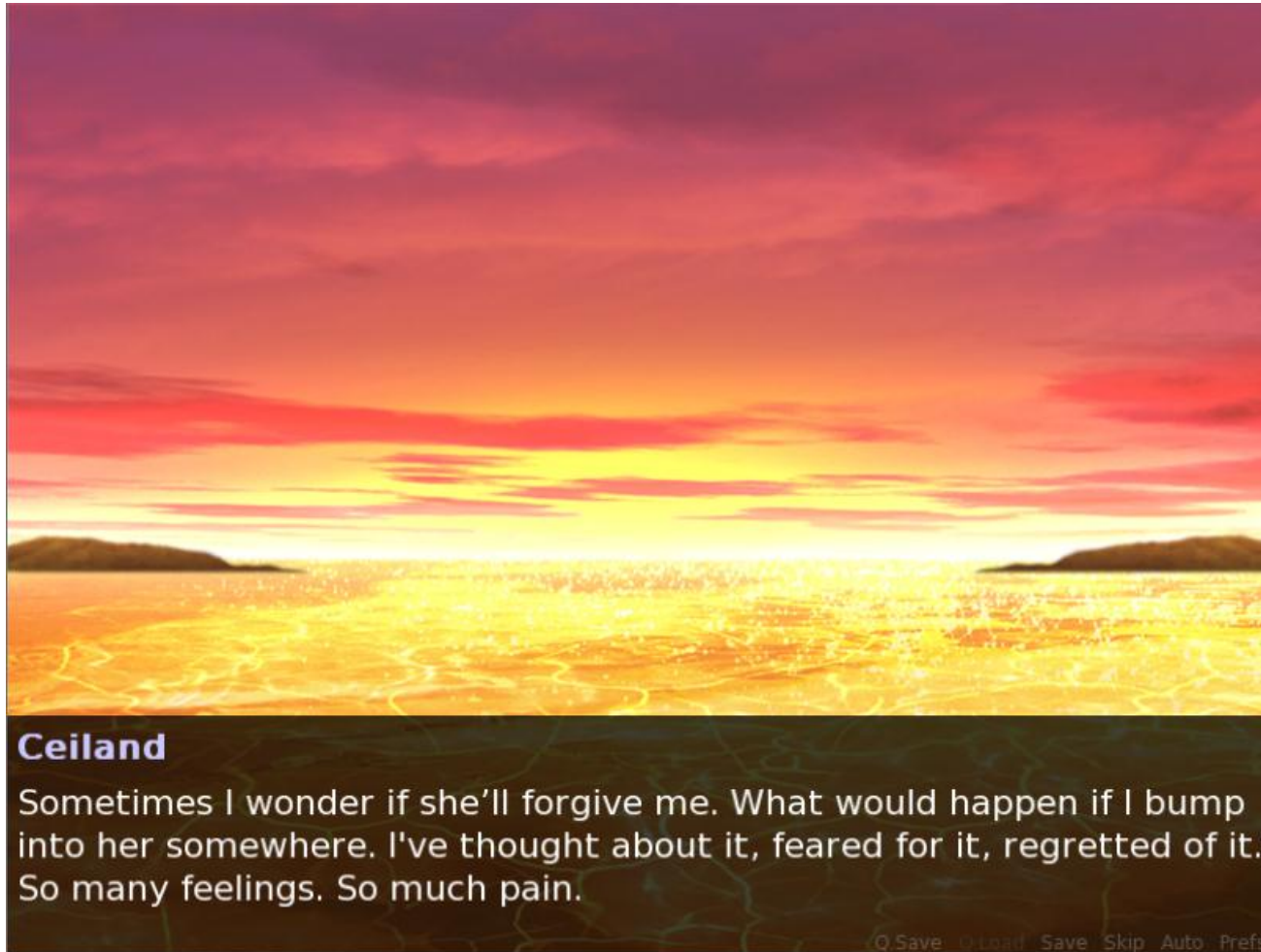
Day Two. He had returned late the night before with the rain as excuse, but his mum was worried all the same and fussed excessively the next day. Ceiland is frustrated, but he understands that his mum was plagued by his father's death in the past and wisely kept his silence. He then bid his mum goodbye and went to school.

Figure 40: Storyboard 4



The moment Ceiland slipped down onto his desk and tried to sleep, his two best friends Shenea and Quron went right into his private space and forced him up. While Ceiland tries as much as possible to keep his distance and even tells Shenea outright to stay away, they wouldn't budge an inch. Ceiland was in truth grateful for the friendship. Later, he went to the police station to lodge an official report about the increasingly worse bully.

Figure 41: Storyboard 5



Ceiland went to the sea and reminisced about his past. It was a past full of arrogance and blindness, much like the bullies who were tormenting him right now. He wished sincerely to solve the problem once and for all and without violence, and with that maybe one day be given the chance to apologize to 'her'.

Figure 42: Storyboard 6



The night however, proved to have something malicious in store. Ceiland began reliving his past with 'her' of every little detail, right down to the last moment where his jealousy and arrogance finally brought forth a fatal mistake. It was a complete nightmare.

Figure 43: Storyboard 7



Day 3. Ceiland went to school feeling worse and uncomfortable. He was however greeted with a terrible surprise when he found out that both of his friends, Shenea and Quron, have been kidnapped by the bullies. He raced to the rooftop, but in his state of complete panic was easily knocked out by Zhon Yang and his people.

Figure 44: Storyboard 8



It was terrible. As soon as he woke up, Ceiland found out that both of his friends were terribly injured, and despite all of his fury and despair, nothing will dissuade Zhon Yang from getting revenge at Ceiland for reporting him to the police. Just as Zhon Yang was about to kill Shenea, a mysterious girl appears. That was the turning point of everything.

Figure 45: Storyboard 9



Maine

So. A great ending to a great tale.

The Days After. The crisis was solved, and Ceiland learned an important lesson that day, and he began to have more confidence in his own beliefs instead of blindly putting all the guilt onto himself. A couple of days later, he skipped school to take a drink with Maine and briefly talked about the mysterious girl, Hersa. Maine showed an unusual caution towards her, and after considering what happened that day, Ceiland decided to take Maine's advice and steer clear from the girl.

Figure 46: Storyboard 10

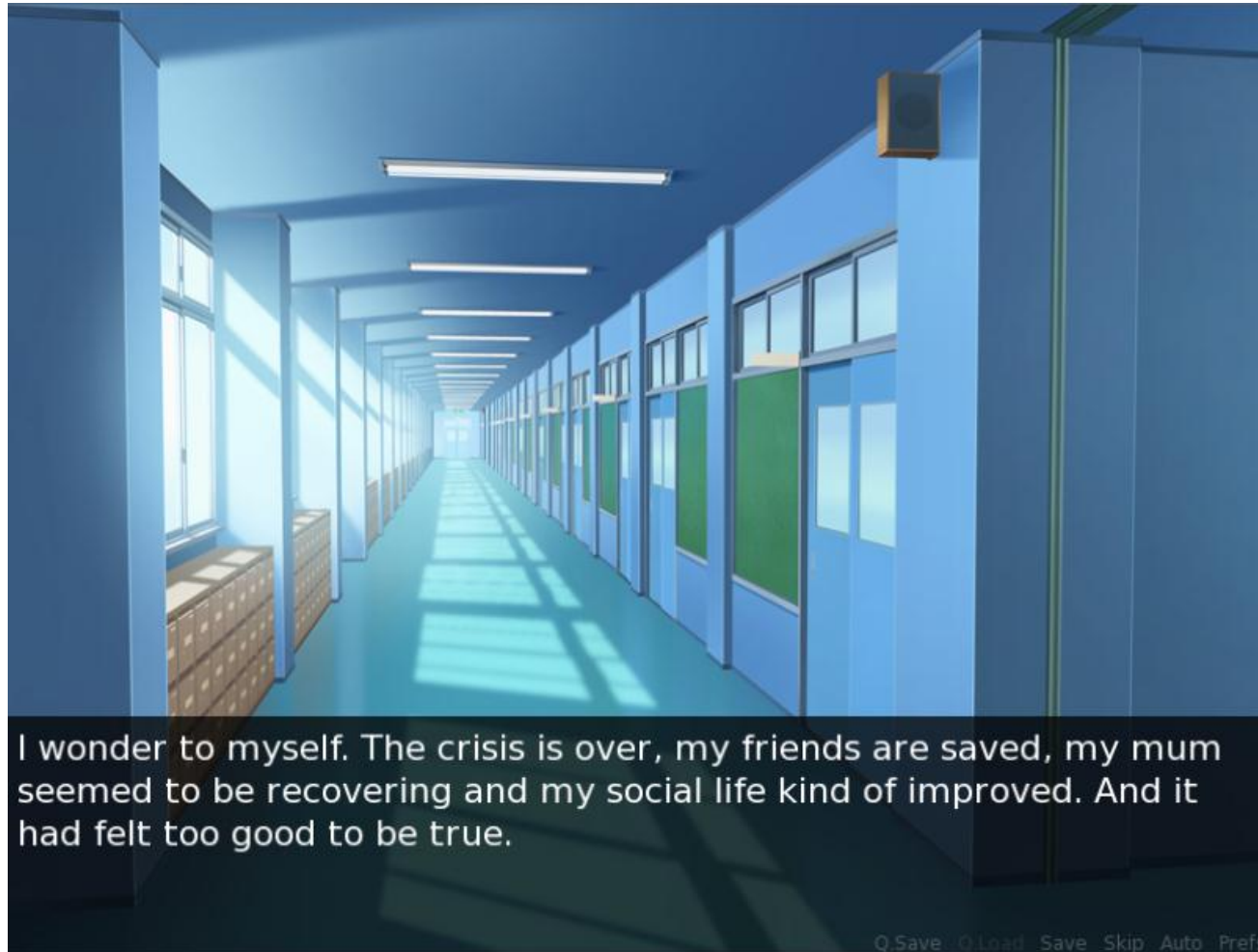


Figure 47: Storyboard 11

For some reason, he begins to question about his lucky situation and found that everything just happened to go in the right direction too many times. He began to doubt whether everything was a dream. However, Ceiland stumbled into Hersa at the school corridor towards his class, and he promptly forgot about his doubts (and Maine's advice) and began talking to her. Right there, right now, for the first time since a very long time, Ceiland felt truly happy.

Or is he?

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

This project aims to create a game that could appeal to the better side of an adolescent's growing personality, while promoting reading as a recreational hobby through the use of the visual novel medium. The prototype has been created with all basic elements integrated into the game, and they are Text, Art, and Music.

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APPENDIX

Script.py

You can place the script of your game in this file.

Declare images below this line, using the image statement.

eg. image eileen happy = "eileen_happy.png"

image bg_white = "white.png"

image bg_black = "black.png"

image red = "red.png"

image schooltopday = "schooltopday.jpg"

image skyday = "skyday.jpg"

image skydark = "skydark.jpg"

image skyrain = "skyrain.jpg"

image streetmidnight = "streetmidnight.jpg"

image denki = "denki.bmp"

image schoolroad2rain = "schoolroad2rain.jpg"

image schoolroad2light = "schoolroad2light.jpg"

image schoolroadmid = "schoolroadmid.jpg"

image schoolroad2day = "schoolroad2day.jpg"

image classroomday = "classroomday.jpg"

image corridorday = "corridorday.jpg"

image sstairday = "sstairday.jpg"

image gateday = "gateday.jpg"

image house = "house.bmp"

image kitchendark = "kitchendark.bmp"

image kitchenlight = "kitchenlight.bmp"

image kitchenday = "kitchenday.bmp"

image bathdark = "bathdark.bmp"

image bathlight = "bathlight.bmp"

image cafestairs = "cafestairs.bmp"

image toiletdark = "toiletdark.bmp"

image officegray = "officegray.png"

image roomlight = "roomlight.bmp"

image roomdark = "roomdark.bmp"

image doorclose = "doorclose.bmp"

image dooropen = "dooropen.bmp"

image searoadeve = "searoadeve.bmp"

image seaeve = "seaeve.bmp"

image seaday = "seaday.bmp"

image searoadday = "searoadday.bmp"

image maine 1 = "maine1.png"

image maine 2 = "maine2.png"

image maine 3 = "maine3.png"

image maine 4 = "maine4.png"

image maine 5 = "maine5.png"

image maine 6 = "maine6.png"

image maine 7 = "maine7.png"

image maine 8 = "maine8.png"

image maine 9 = "maine9.png"

image she cheer = "shecheer.png"

image she cheersmile = "shecheersmile.png"

image she fearlessmile = "shefearlessmile.png"

image she normal = "shenormal.png"

image she normalsmile = "shenormalsmile.png"

image she normalsurprise = "shenormalsurprise.png"

image she pat = "shepat.png"

image she prepare = "sheprepare.png"

image she prepare2 = "sheprepare2.png"

image she cheerfulprepare = "shecheerfulprepare.png"

image she cheerfulstandard = "shecheerfulstandard.png"

image she punchesurprise = "shepunchsurprise.png"

image she serious = "sheserious.png"

image she serious2 = "sheserious2.png"

image she serious3 = "sheserious3.png"

image quron holdlaugh = "quronholdlaugh.png"

```
image quron surprise = "quronsurprise.png"

image quron surprise2 = "quronsurprise2.png"

image quron serious = "quronserious.png"

image grunt bored = "gruntidle.png"

image grunt smile = "gruntsmile.png"

image grunt annoyed = "gruntannoyed.png"

image sandbox = "sandbox.jpg"

image sandbox gray = "sandbox gray.jpg"

image sandbox dark = "sandbox dark.jpg"

image sandbox darker = "sandbox darker.jpg"

image sandbox darkest = "sandbox darkest.jpg"

# Declare characters used by this game.

define unknown = Character('???')

define girl = Character('Little Girl')

define cei = Character('Ceiland', color="#c8c8ff")

define maine = Character('Maine', color="#c8c8f8")

define hersa = Character('Hersa')

define zy = Character('Zhon Yang')

define yusof = Character('Yusof')

define sm = Character('Sen Meng')

define sh = Character('Shenea')

define qu = Character('Quron')

define mum = Character('Mum')
```

```
define dad = Character('Dad')
```

```
define rk = Character('Random Kid')
```

```
define stu1 = Character('Student 1')
```

```
define ust1 = Character('Unsympathetic Student 1')
```

```
define ust2 = Character('Unsympathetic Student 2')
```

```
define ust3 = Character('Unsympathetic Student 3')
```

```
define everyone = Character('Everyone')
```

```
define sean = Character('Sean')
```

```
define hm = Character('Headmaster')
```

```
define lc = Character('Lazy Cop')
```

```
define rp1 = Character('Random Cop 1')
```

```
define rp2 = Character('Random Cop 2')
```

```
define rp3 = Character('Random Cop 3')
```

```
# The game starts here.
```

```
transform basicfade:
```

```
    on show:
```

```
        alpha 0.0
```

```
        linear 1.0 alpha 1.0
```

```
    on hide:
```

```
        linear 1.0 alpha 0.0
```

init python hide:

```
for file in renpy.list_files():  
    if file.startswith('img'):  
        if file.endswith('.png'):  
            name = file.replace('img/', '').replace('/', ' ').replace('.png', '')  
            renpy.image(name, Image(file, yanchor=400))  
            continue  
        continue  
    continue
```

transform run:

```
zoom 1.2  
  
ease 0.35 yalign 0.66  
  
ease 0.35 yalign 0.35  
  
repeat
```

label start:

```
$ firstfade = Fade(2.0, 1.0, 2.0)
```

```
$ raindissolve = Dissolve (2.0)
```

```
$ slowdissolve = Dissolve(1.5)

$ sshake = Shake((0, 0, 0, 0), 1.0, dist=15)

$ slideawayup = CropMove(1.0, "slideawayup")

$ slideawaydown = CropMove(1.0, "slideawaydown")

$ slideawayleft = CropMove(0.5, "slideawayleft")

$ circirisout = ImageDissolve("schoolroad2rain.jpg", 1.4, 8)

$ pixellate = Pixellate(3.0, 5)

$ gruntcenter = Position(xpos=0.5, xanchor=0.5, ypos=0.5, yanchor=0.5)

$ quronleft = Position(xpos=0.27, xanchor=0.5, ypos=0.55, yanchor=0.5)

$ sheright = Position(xpos=0.27, xanchor=0.5, ypos=0.615, yanchor=0.5)
```

scene bg_white

with firstfade

play music "loneliness.ogg" fadein 2.0

cei "Hey.... I, I don't really mean to...."

unknown "Hik.... U.... Uu...."

cei "I'm sorry.... I.... Let me help, please....?"

unknown "Don't touch me!"

cei "Ah...."

"Why exactly did I do it back then? Perhaps I was just too boorish, perhaps a whim got itself tangled up in my mind."

"Six years old was not exactly the age of self-control."

"But still, what I did was utterly inexcusable. Irreversible."

"One look into her eyes and I understood that this fragile friendship that she tried so hard to build was lost forever."

"Never mind the days we spent playing at the park, running about like hyperactive idiots."

"Never mind the days we made a promise that we'll always be together."

"At this moment, this single birth of regret that would last for an eternity, all for that stupid, stupid fit of anger that I could never take back,"

"She and I – we lost everything –"

stop music fadeout 2.0

jump day_1_bully

label day_1_bully:

scene schooltopday with firstfade

scene schooltopday

cei "Ugh...."

"Where am I...?"

play music "desolation.ogg"

sm "Hahahaha! I did it! I kicked him awake in ten seconds! Twenty ringgit for Sen Meng brah yo!"

yusof "Shit. Damn this useless piece of shit, can't you stay dead even for a few more seconds? Huuhh??"

"Smack!" with vpunch

cei "Agh!"

unknown "That's enough, Yusof! Are you stupid? Didn't I tell you never to hit the back of the head? If he dies here I'm going to string you up to the police myself!"

show grunt annoyed at gruntcenter with slowdissolve

yusof "Oh, uh, sorry."

sm "Hahahaha, that's our brother Yusof alright! Anyway, let's go to the usual place and gamble a round; I feel like I'm suuuper lucky today!"

show grunt bored at gruntcenter with slowdissolve

zy "Hmph. What are we waiting then? Yusof, dump the trash; we'll wait for you at the gate."

scene schooltopday with dissolve

yusof "Okay boss. It's so much trouble though...."

"I sneaked a cautious eye at the leader as they walked right past me, but thankfully he seemed to have lost interest at my pathetic form."

cei "Ugh!" with hpunch

"Seng Meng on the other hand did kick me one last time in the stomach before he went away, laughing."

"But his hits are like mosquito bites if I compare them to Zhon Yang's, so I guess I actually got lucky today."

cei "Guh...."

yusof "Hehehe, you don't like that? How about you try and take it off my hands then? Who knows I might just be generous today, that I am! Ahahahahaha!"

"I ignored his taunts and groaned aloud."

"A huge sense of relief welled inside me as I finally relaxed and listened to the door slamming shut behind the two delinquents, and their dreary footsteps slopping away."

"Yusof wore an annoyed look on his face, but I know that since Sen Meng and Zhon Yang were gone, he won't try to hurt me."

"Despite his huge body and seemingly massive strength, the guy was actually a coward at heart and stupidly honest."

"The brute simply imitates whatever Zhon Yang and Sen Meng did to me, but when asked to do the dirty job himself he would look as terrified as a cornered rabbit."

cei "...."

yusof "Tch. Whatever. Here we – go!"

"I stared impassively as my black Targus bag soared over the fence and sank beyond my sight."

"I really got lucky. If it was the other two they would dump all the contents of my bag first – with Zhon Yang taking it a step further by cutting the straps – before throwing it away."

"But Yusof is lazy. And has a troubled conscience. Not that I wouldn't sock him in the face if ever given the chance, but he originally wasn't a bad person."

".... I must be stupid to even think of something like that. Which means what I'm about to do is doubly, triply stupid. But...."

cei "Hey."

"He didn't seem to hear me. That was probably a sign from god that I should shut up, but if there's even the slightest hope that I can make him listen...."

cei "Hey, Yusof."

yusof "Huh? Uh, what?"

cei "Do you think this is fun? Beating people up?"

yusof "Of course it is!"

cei "Do you think that doing this is right?"

yusof "I don't know. If Zhon Yang says it's okay, then it's okay, right?"

cei "But it's not, Yusof. Actually, try to think about this yourself: Would you like it if somebody beats you, throws your stuff, and steal your money?"

yusof "Nobody hurts me. Only Zhon Yang can, but since I'm his friend so there's nothing to worry about."

yusof "You better shut up or I'll tell him that you're talking about weird stuff."

"I guess that's that. If he'd actually agreed with me I should suspect some horrible trap and probably run away from this school."

"Yusof took a few steps towards me as if daring me to speak, but that obviously is just counterproductive."

"You don't intimidate a victim if you want them to react. I simply closed my eyes and proceed to ignore him completely."

yusof "Hmph."

"He wasn't sure what to do with me, and in the end he just left."

"I couldn't see Yusof's expression with my eyes closed, but it was probably filled with disappointment from the lack of response."

"But will he doubt? Will he mull over what I've said today? No matter how naïve he tries to be, he still is fifteen years old. Half an adult."

"He should understand what I'm saying."

"I hope."

stop music fadeout 2.0

pause 2.0

play sound "raindrop.ogg"

pause 1.0

scene skyday with raindissolve

play sound "raindrop.ogg"

scene skydark with raindissolve

play music "smallrain.ogg" fadein 1.0

scene skyrain with raindissolve

cei "Ah...."

"It's raining."

stop music fadeout 2.0

jump Midori_Cafe_1

.

.

.

Options.py

This file contains some of the options that can be changed to customize

your Ren'Py game. It only contains the most common options... there

is quite a bit more customization you can do.

##

Lines beginning with two '#' marks are comments, and you shouldn't

uncomment them. Lines beginning with a single '#' mark are

commented-out code, and you may want to uncomment them when

appropriate.

init -1 python hide:

Should we enable the use of developer tools? This should be

set to False before the game is released, so the user can't

cheat using developer tools.

```
config.developer = True

## These control the width and height of the screen.

config.screen_width = 800

config.screen_height = 600

## This controls the title of the window, when Ren'Py is

## running in a window.

config.window_title = u"Dustbin Dreaming"

# These control the name and version of the game, that are reported

# with tracebacks and other debugging logs.

config.name = "Dustbin Dreaming"

config.version = "0.0"

#####

# Themes

## We then want to call a theme function. themes.roundrect is

## a theme that features the use of rounded rectangles. It's

## the only theme we currently support.

##
```

```
## The theme function takes a number of parameters that can
```

```
## customize the color scheme.
```

```
theme.crayon(  
  ## Theme: Crayon
```

```
  ## Color scheme: Tree Frog
```

```
  ## The color of an idle widget face.
```

```
  widget = "#1c140d",
```

```
  ## The color of a focused widget face.
```

```
  widget_hover = "#86827e",
```

```
  ## The color of the text in a widget.
```

```
  widget_text = "#cbe86b",
```

```
  ## The color of the text in a selected widget. (For
```

```
  ## example, the current value of a preference.)
```

```
  widget_selected = "#f2e9e1",
```

```
  ## The color of a disabled widget face.
```

```
  disabled = "#ffffff",
```

```
  ## The color of disabled widget text.
```

```
disabled_text = "#1c140d",

## The color of informational labels.

label = "#1c140d",

## The color of a frame containing widgets.

frame = "#cbe86b",

## The background of the main menu. This can be a color
## beginning with '#', or an image filename. The latter
## should take up the full height and width of the screen.

mm_root = "seaeve.bmp",

## The background of the game menu. This can be a color
## beginning with '#', or an image filename. The latter
## should take up the full height and width of the screen.

gm_root = "#79C8C8",

## If this is True, the in-game window is rounded. If False,
## the in-game window is square.

rounded_window = False,

## And we're done with the theme. The theme will customize
## various styles, so if we want to change them, we should
```

```
## do so below.

)

#####

## These settings let you customize the window containing the

## dialogue and narration, by replacing it with an image.

## The background of the window. In a Frame, the two numbers

## are the size of the left/right and top/bottom borders,

## respectively.

# style.window.background = Frame("frame.png", 12, 12)

## Margin is space surrounding the window, where the background

## is not drawn.

# style.window.left_margin = 6

# style.window.right_margin = 6

# style.window.top_margin = 6

# style.window.bottom_margin = 6

## Padding is space inside the window, where the background is

## drawn.
```

```
# style.window.left_padding = 6

# style.window.right_padding = 6

# style.window.top_padding = 6

# style.window.bottom_padding = 6

## This is the minimum height of the window, including the margins

## and padding.

# style.window.yminimum = 250

#####

## This lets you change the placement of the main menu.

## The way placement works is that we find an anchor point

## inside a displayable, and a position (pos) point on the

## screen. We then place the displayable so the two points are

## at the same place.

## An anchor/pos can be given as an integer or a floating point

## number. If an integer, the number is interpreted as a number

## of pixels from the upper-left corner. If a floating point,

## the number is interpreted as a fraction of the size of the
```



```
## displayable or screen.
```

```
# style.mm_menu_frame.xpos = 0.5
```

```
# style.mm_menu_frame.xanchor = 0.5
```

```
# style.mm_menu_frame.ypos = 0.75
```

```
# style.mm_menu_frame.yanchor = 0.5
```

```
#####
```

```
## These let you customize the default font used for text in Ren'Py.
```

```
## The file containing the default font.
```

```
# style.default.font = "DejaVuSans.ttf"
```

```
## The default size of text.
```

```
# style.default.size = 22
```

```
## Note that these only change the size of some of the text. Other
```

```
## buttons have their own styles.
```

```
#####
```

```
## These settings let you change some of the sounds that are used by
```

```
## Ren'Py.
```

```
## Set this to False if the game does not have any sound effects.
```

```
config.has_sound = True
```

```
## Set this to False if the game does not have any music.
```

```
config.has_music = True
```

```
## Set this to False if the game does not have voicing.
```

```
config.has_voice = True
```

```
## Sounds that are used when button and imagemaps are clicked.
```

```
# style.button.activate_sound = "click.wav"
```

```
# style.imagemap.activate_sound = "click.wav"
```

```
## Sounds that are used when entering and exiting the game menu.
```

```
# config.enter_sound = "click.wav"
```

```
# config.exit_sound = "click.wav"
```

```
## A sample sound that can be played to check the sound volume.
```

```
# config.sample_sound = "click.wav"
```

```
## Music that is played while the user is at the main menu.
```

```
# config.main_menu_music = "main_menu_theme.ogg"
```

```
#####
```

```
## Help.
```

```
## This lets you configure the help option on the Ren'Py menus.
```

```
## It may be:
```

```
## - A label in the script, in which case that label is called to
```

```
##   show help to the user.
```

```
## - A file name relative to the base directory, which is opened in a
```

```
##   web browser.
```

```
## - None, to disable help.
```

```
config.help = "README.html"
```

```
#####
```

Transitions.

Used when entering the game menu from the game.

config.enter_transition = None

Used when exiting the game menu to the game.

config.exit_transition = None

Used between screens of the game menu.

config.intra_transition = None

Used when entering the game menu from the main menu.

config.main_game_transition = None

Used when returning to the main menu from the game.

config.game_main_transition = None

Used when entering the main menu from the splashscreen.

config.end_splash_transition = None

Used when entering the main menu after the game has ended.

config.end_game_transition = None

Used when a game is loaded.

```
config.after_load_transition = None
```

```
## Used when the window is shown.
```

```
config.window_show_transition = None
```

```
## Used when the window is hidden.
```

```
config.window_hide_transition = None
```

```
#####
```

```
## This is the name of the directory where the game's data is
```

```
## stored. (It needs to be set early, before any other init code
```

```
## is run, so the persistent information can be found by the init code.)
```

```
python early:
```

```
config.save_directory = "Dustbin_Dreaming-1347892274"
```

```
init -l python hide:
```

```
#####
```

```
## Default values of Preferences.
```

```
## Note: These options are only evaluated the first time a
```

```
## game is run. To have them run a second time, delete
```

```
## game/saves/persistent
```

```
## Should we start in fullscreen mode?
```

```
config.default_fullscreen = False
```

```
## The default text speed in characters per second. 0 is infinite.
```

```
config.default_text_cps = 0
```