

Ben Sabin's Portfolio

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Non-linear dialogue sample (longer): An extract from Kamigawa: A Visual novel (7 pages)

You go into the back room of the shop and are immediately hit by wisps of thick, spiced smoke.

A mountain of a man, wearing a specialised mask and covered in intricate tattoos stands with his back to you.

The woman goes in front of him, picks up a wand-like instrument that's covered in delicate needles, and starts to poke them into the man's flesh.

As she does this, the man's tattoos begin to writhe and come alive. Ethereal demons, weaponry, and all manner of foul things dance around the man, bound to his skin.

TOUMA_SHOCKED

What is this?

The man bows his head.

JUNICHIRO

Welcome. I am Junichiro. To what do I owe this visit?

CHOICE

1. Bow in return
2. **IF** actTwo_playerBackground = 'orphan' Explain what's going on to Touma
3. **IF** actTwo_playerBackground = 'Imperial' Demand to know what's happening
4. Compliment the mask

You lower yourself in a formal bow and Touma follows suit. You hear Junichiro chuckle.

JUNICHIRO

So I see the Imperials still drill manners into their pups.

JUNICHIRO_GAS

As it should be..

PLAYER

This is a Hyozan tradition.

PLAYER

A poisoner etches deadly tattoos onto the members of the gang as a sign of loyalty.

PLAYER

If the tattooed ever betray the gang, their tattoos flay them alive.

PLAYER

To receive another tattoo means this man has attained a new rank.

You look across Junichiro's covered body.

PLAYER

This man is of high rank within the Hyozan.

JUNICHIRO

Are the Imperials so devoid of morals that they can't even be bothered to instill common courtesy within their pups?

JUNICHIRO_GAS

Unsurprising.

PLAYER

What is the meaning of this?

TOUMA_ANGRY

Tell us what's happening!

IF actOne_reiInTeam = TRUE

REI_SAD

It's a Hyozan tradition...

REI

Those tattoos symbolise when a member has attained a new rank within the gang.

REI

It's both an honour and a show of loyalty.

REI_SHOCKED

Should the member betray the gang in any way, the tattoos come to life and flay the member alive.

REI

This man is clearly a high-ranking member of the gang.

JUNICHIRO

Your Hisaku friend here is right. But tell me...

JUNICHIRO

Are the Imperials so devoid of morals that they can't even be bothered to instil common courtesy within their pups?

JUNICHIRO_GAS

Unsurprising.

ELSE

Junichiro breathes for a few moments before answering.

JUNICHIRO

Such uninformed pups...

JUNICHIRO

It's almost sad to think the Imperials care so little for their own that they send you to a place like this.

He sighs, and wisps of purple gas escape his mask.

JUNICHIRO

These tattoos are a Hyozan tradition. We receive one whenever our standing in the gang changes.

You notice just how covered Junichiro's body is and realise that he's clearly a high-ranking member of the gang.

JUNICHIRO

They're both an honour and a binding of loyalty.

JUNICHIRO_GAS

Should a member ever betray the Hyozan, these tattoos come to life and flay that person alive.

JUNICHIRO

It's quite fun to watch...

He pauses for a moment.

JUNICHIRO

But tell me... are the Imperials so devoid of morals that they can't even be bothered to instill common courtesy within their pups?

JUNICHIRO_GAS

Unsurprising.

END_IF

PLAYER

I like your mask. It's very... *inspiring*.

TOUMA_SURPRISED

Touma stares at you in bewilderment.

Junichiro chuckles.

JUNICHIRO

You can never be too careful with who sees your face...

JUNICHIRO

Or what might be in the air.

He laughs again, and as he does so, wisps of purple smoke escape the mask.

JUNICHIRO

Are the Imperials so devoid of morals that they can't even be bothered to instil common courtesy within their pups?

JUNICHIRO_GAS

Unsurprising.

TOUMA_SHOUTING

Who are you calling pups?

IF actOne_team = 'rei'

REI_EMBARRASSED

I'm all for threatening the biggest foes and all, but maybe let's not jump to that with the man covered in flesh-flaying tattoos...

ELSE_IF actOne_team = 'asuga'

ASUGA_ANGRY

Are you really so dumb that you're going to threaten a man covered in flesh-flaying tattoos?

ELSE_IF actOne_team = 'both'

REI_EMBARRASSED

You realise this man is covered in flesh-flaying tattoos, right?

ASUGA_ANGRY

Are you really so dumb as to threaten him right now?

ELSE

PLAYER

Hey, maybe don't threaten the man covered in flesh-flaying tattoos, Touma.

END_IF

Touma scowls.

Junichiro laughs.

JUNICHIRO

You're such spirited pups. You remind me of me when I was an Imperial...

CHOICE

1. You were an Imperial?!
2. Why are we even here?
3. Say 'pup' one more time

Junichiro chuckles some more.

It rings out hollow from his mask.

JUNICHIRO

You'll find a lot of the Reckoners down here were once loyal dogs of the Imperial Court.

IF actOne_reiInTeam = TRUE

REI

It's true.

REI_HAPPY

When Imperials come to see just how unjust their cause truly is, they either join us...

REI_ANGRY

... or the Reckoner gangs.

TOUMA_ANGRY

The fools that leave are weak, leaving us all the stronger for it.

REI_HAPPY

I really look forward to the day you join the Hisaku ranks, Touma.

He spits at Rei's feet in response.

END_IF

TOUMA_ANGRY

Only traitors and scum desert.

JUNICHIRO

I guess you would say I'm both?

JUNICHIRO

I assure you, I only turned traitor on those that deserved it...

JUNCHIRO_GAS

Like your precious Emperor.

JUNICHIRO

I expect you're here to find someone.

JUNCHIRO_GAS

Or a couple of specific people...

JUNICHIRO

Am I wrong?

You say nothing.

Junchiro laughs.

JUNICHIRO

And you'll do what, exactly?

JUNCHIRO_GAS

You're in my territory now. Don't forget that... pup.

END OF EXCEPRT

Linear dialogue sample (longer): A cutscene in a comedic fantasy game (8 pages)

INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

We see the interior of a small, countryside inn, run by GERTRUDE, a gruff older woman who just wants quiet patrons who leave when they're meant to so she can go to bed. The patrons are drinking their pints, playing cards, and generally minding their business. This peace is interrupted when our adventurer, MARCELLA, bursts through the door.

MARCELLA

Good evening, simple folk, it is I!
Lady Marcella. Let's get the fanfare
out of the way early, yes? Please, do
try to contain yourselves, I'm simply
here for a rest with my companion.

The patrons sluggishly turn and look at MARCELLA, before murmuring to themselves and returning to their own conversations. GERTRUDE grumbles behind her bar.

MARCELLA (ANNOYED) (CONT'D)

... Right. Well, good.
Glad that's out the way.

She turns to look out the door.

MARCELLA (CONT'D)

Oh, do hurry up, Perina! That scrawny
boy from the last village was much
better at moving my bags than you.

An exasperated PERINA enters through the door, hauling a large, leather-bound trunk. The clothes they wear would be a hint that they're a bard, but they're so weatherworn and battered that it's hard to tell under all the muck.

PERINA (ANGRY)

For the last time, I am not your bag
handler, I'm your biographer!

MARCELLA

Of course you are, my dear, but needs
must.

(beat)

Where did the scamp doing it before
run off to, anyhow?

PERINA

You used him for bait against the
Swamp Boggart.

MARCELLA

Oh that's right! A rather ingenious
idea on my part if I do say so myself.

PERINA

It was pretty convenient that it was
using the lad's limbs as drumsticks...

MARCELLA

Billy's sacrifice --

PERINA

Andrew's.

MARCELLA

Right, Andrew's sacrifice will not be
in vain! He will be remembered as the
heroic bag handler of Lady Marcella
for time immemorial.

PERINA

Not the boy you fed to a Swamp Boggart
so you could backstab it?

MARCELLA

I hardly think that's relevant, dear.

Just then, SPROUT, a large, colourful toadstool with arms, legs and a sinister looking face, leaps over MARCELLA'S discarded luggage trunk and into the inn.

SPROUT

Ooh, what we got here, then? This one of them fancy human meeting places?

GERTRUDE

Oi! Talking mushroom, this here ain't no 'fancy' place. I won't be having my inn besmirched in such a manner...

SPROUT stares at GERTRUDE.

SPROUT

That's what you notice?
Not a talking toadstool?

GERTRUDE (SIGHING)

Trust me, love, you're the least odd thing I've seen 'round these parts...

SPROUT shrugs, then waddles over to MARCELLA. She and PERINA make their way to a table, the two trying to step around SPROUT.

MARCELLA

Ugh, Perina, why is this thing still following us?

SPROUT

The name's Sprout, and as I've repeatedly told you, I'm stalking you because you ate those sacred mushrooms in that enchanted grove.

(sighs)

It's a hard lot being a vengeful nature spirit. I could have been made into the form of an angry tree, a raging river, or a terrible beast.

He points a finger at MARCELLA.

SPROUT (CONT'D)

But no! You had to stuff your face
with some sacred bloody mushrooms and
I just happened to be the first in
line to be called in as... this!

PERINA

Oh, quit your bellyaching. You've only
been following her for a few days.
I've been with her for over a year!

(pause)

I used to dream of my plays being seen
all over the land, my sonnets bringing
people to tears, and the soft melodies
of my lute lulling the troubled to sleep.

They turn and look at MARCELLA, who is adjusting her hair and
pouting at herself in a mirror.

PERINA (CONT'D)

Now I just follow this pillock around,
writing down all her 'great deeds' and
pulling leeches from my breeches...

MARCELLA

Oh you bards! Such jesters. I know
you're thrilled to be in the company
of one so daring as myself.

(beat)

Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to
see if the innkeeper has any fan mail for me.

MARCELLA heads towards the bar. PERINA pulls a pipe out of their
pack and lights up. They instantly relax. SPROUT gazes at them.

SPROUT

Can I have a puff?
Might do my old bones good.

PERINA (CONCERNED)
Do you even have bones?

SPROUT
You really want me to answer that?

PERINA
... No.

SPROUT (HAPPY)
Then pass it here!

PERINA (HESITANT)
But what if it's a distant relative of
yours I'm smoking?

SPROUT lets out a wet, bubbling cackle.

SPROUT
Let me tell you, if a spirit ended up
embodying a baccy plant, then it did
something even worse than me!

SPROUT grabs the pipe, takes a large puff of it and coughs.

SPROUT (CONT'D)
Ooh yeah. That's good stuff.

PERINA
You're a strange and worrisome
creature.

SPROUT
Would you prefer it if I left you
alone with her?

He jabs at thumb at MARCELLA, who is arguing with GERTRUDE.

MARCELLA
What do you mean there's no mail?

GERTRUDE (FRUSTRATED)

Why would there be?

MARCELLA

Because this is The Strangled Pony
Inn, is it not?

GERTRUDE

No! This is the Beleaguered Badger
Inn. The Strangled Pony is back
Westwards, through the swamp.

PERINA rubs her temples, exasperated.

PERINA

Please don't. You're much better
material, at least.

SPROUT

Thought so. Now, let's get riproaringly
drunk! That's what we're
meant to do here, right?

MARCELLA comes rushing back.

MARCELLA

No time, fetid fungi! We must head
back into the swamp.

PERINA (DISMAYED)

What?! Why?

MARCELLA

You must have taken an incorrect turn.
We've ended up at the wrong inn!

PERINA (UNSURE)

Wait, that can't be. We definitely
followed the path we were meant to.
(pause)

Unless we got turned around when that
strange green fog rolled in?

MARCELLA (DELIGHTED)

Yes! I bet it was some dark force
trying to thwart us. How wonderful!

SPROUT

An inn's an inn. Why can't we stay
here? I was gonna try to discover what
meat was in the 'Mystery Meat' Pie.

MARCELLA

Because we're at the wrong place
according to my carefully planned
itinerary!

SPROUT (CONFUSED)

... Come again?

MARCELLA (SIGHING)

Before I set off on this perilous
journey I published my route so that
my adoring fans would know where to
send me their adulation.

PERINA

I've a bad feeling about this. Plus I
really need to sleep in a cosy bed...

MARCELLA

And you can! Just as soon as we cross
back through the swamp, defeat
whatever is impeding us through
trickery, and reach The Strangled Pony
Inn! In this quest, we cannot fail! My
well-deserved praise awaits! Come on!

MARCELLA dashes out the inn. PERINA shakes their head before

standing and heaving the luggage trunk back towards the door.
SPROUT steals a man's ale, downs it, then sways out of the door
laughing.

END OF EXCERPT

An excerpt from one of my scripts from Love Island: The Game (Boat Party), showcasing interactive dialogue. In this, the player and their partner are walking through a fake haunted house at a theme park in Spain. – Non-linear dialogue sample (shorter)

You continue on in the dark and eventually find yourself in a large room.

You discover that the light you saw earlier is being emitted by some embers in a small fireplace.

They erupt into brilliant flames as you enter, illuminating what looks to be an ornate dining room.

PLAYER

Well this looks...

CHOICE

... delightful

... ominous

... gaudy

{HAUNTED_PERSON}

Really? You have odd tastes.

{HAUNTED_PERSON}

Yeah... where's the next scare going to come from?

{HAUNTED_PERSON}

I don't think he designed this place.

PLAYER

No, not *Gaudi*... never mind.

The table begins to vibrate, rattling cutlery and glassware.

Soon, the whole room is shaking.

A picture frame on the wall falls down.

PLAYER

What do we do?

{HAUNTED_PERSON}

I don't know...

Just then, large, rubbery fake spiders attached to elastic webbing start to drop from the ceiling.

PLAYER

Spiders!

CHOICE

How cute! They look so silly

Thank goodness they're not real

It's a good thing I'm the Spider Queen!

IF {HAUNTED_PERSON} flex_trait = 'low' OR 'mid'

{HAUNTED_PERSON}

You can almost hear the 'boing' noise they're making.

ELSE

{HAUNTED_PERSON}

Nope! Not OK with them.

{She} covers {her_p} eyes.

END_IF

IF {HAUNTED_PERSON} flex_trait = 'low' OR 'mid'

{HAUNTED_PERSON}

I dunno, it'd make this experience a lot livelier.

ELSE

{HAUNTED_PERSON}

Ugh, I'd be breaking through those walls if they were.

END_IF

{HAUNTED_PERSON}

... What?

You arch your back up and raise your arms, imitating an aggressive spider.

PLAYER

Minions! Come forward and recognise your beloved Spider Queen!

IF {HAUNTED_PERSON} direct_trait = 'high'

{HAUNTED_PERSON}

You're a strange one at times.

ELSE_IF {HAUNTED_PERSON} direct_trait = 'mid'

{HAUNTED_PERSON}

Do you do this with real spiders?

ELSE

{HAUNTED_PERSON} chuckles to {her}self as {she} watches you.

END_IF

You hiss.

PLAYER

Do not fear my companion. {She} is an honoured guest.

A harsh cackle echoes around the room. The fireplace extinguishes and the room is instead filled with disorientating light effects.

END OF EXCERPT

Linear dialogue sample (shorter): An opening scene to a light-hearted, sci-fi mystery game.

A. Defective - Ace Detective

CHIEF AMBER

Sir, we have the, um, request you put in for.

CAPT. HULLBREACH

The detective? Excellent, show them in.

CHIEF AMBER

Well, about that, sir..

A. DEFECTIVE

Greetings, Captain!

CAPT. HULLBREACH

What... is this thing?

A. DEFECTIVE

I am Unit 3087452, but my new Roblox Corp. designation is "A. Defective".

CAPT. HULLBREACH

Is this some kind of joke?

CHIEF AMBER

No, sir. It seems our communication to HQ was scrambled. They thought you requested this instead.

CAPT. HULLBREACH

Why in the name of Pluto would I put in a request for... this?!

A. DEFECTIVE

I can confirm that my manufacturers were equally perplexed by the request, but more than happy to fulfil the order. In fact, they were positively jubilant about it.

CAPT. HULLBREACH

Why?

A. DEFECTIVE

I am a defective product, my only function was to be scrapped,
but there was an issue with this.

CAPT. HULLBREACH

Such as?

A. DEFECTIVE

I was contaminated with a highly transmissible virus, which ups
the sass levels of all computers in my vicinity to ensure no
cooperation is possible. The scrapping machine would not comply
with any commands.

CAPT. HULLBREACH

Wait, are you saying our computers are now...

A. DEFECTIVE

Sassy as all hell? Yes, Captain.

END OF EXCERPT

Bark Lines

Non-Genre Specific:

1. "This isn't working!"
2. "I'll handle this."
3. "Look out!"
4. "Hey! I know you."
5. "Why are you talking to me?"
6. "Anyone got a solution?"
7. "Where did I leave my... nevermind."
8. "I thought I'd be more prepared."
9. "I can't do this!"
10. "Of course I know that."

Sci-Fi:

1. "I miss my home world."
2. "These specimens are fascinating!"
3. "Where did I put my plasma infuser?"
4. "My suit is breached... oh wait, no it's fine."
5. "My visor is playing up."
6. "Have you seen the latest episode of Robot Crushers?"
7. "Apparently a cruiser went down in the Bulford cluster."
8. "Do you ever just think about how big space is?"
9. "It can get pretty lonely out here..."
10. "I spilt coffee on the console... don't tell anyone."

Fantasy:

1. "A farmer found a goblin's head in her field the other day. She thought it was a lettuce at first, 'til it winked at her."
2. "This linen is so scratchy. Why can't we just be naked?"
3. "I hope that mad wizard isn't up to anything strange again."
4. "Did you hear one of Lord Merlon's knights was eaten by a troll? Guess it needed the iron."
5. "What? I only sell cabbages, leave me alone... unless you want to buy a cabbage?"
6. "My spells aren't working!"
7. "Damn! Broke another lockpick. Good thing I carry 99 spares."
8. "I'm out of potions!"

9. "I can't see a thing in this helmet."

10. "You think you're some sort of hero, eh? Go on then, tell me the names of all the other heroes!"

Item Descriptions

Non-Genre Specific:

1. A small iron pot used for cooking.
2. A badly chewed pen.
3. A mahogany table. Its colour is deep and rich.
4. A torn-up tire. It won't be of any use to anyone again.
5. A lighter that's still got half of its fuel left.
6. A filing cabinet that's missing an entire draw.
7. A ruler that has millilitre measurements printed on it... for some reason.
8. A white mug, though it's hard to tell due to all the stains.
9. A PC monitor with a dead pixel. Useless.
10. A discarded piece of chewing gum - only partially chewed.

Sci-Fi:

1. Two pieces of scrap metal welded together. Possibly art?
2. Some sort of tech. At least you assume that's what it is.
3. A plasma cutter.
4. A rusty, robotic head.
5. A circuit board.
6. The scorched remains of a xeno.
7. What looks like modelling clay, potentially being used to make C4.
8. A portable data chip.
9. An alien egg sack. It's pulsating.
10. Some kind of alloy. It's like nothing you've ever seen before.

Fantasy:

1. A corroded hoe.
2. A shattered bottle. Whatever liquid it contained has spilled out.
3. An old tome, the pages crack with age.
4. A blacksmith's hammer, it's worn from use but has been well looked after.
5. A rusty horseshoe with a bit of hoof still attached.
6. An extremely sharp dagger with a bejewelled hilt.
7. The head of a goat with a strange symbol carved into its skull.

8. A ring that's warm to the touch. It changes appearance whenever you look away.
9. A thick liquid bubbles within this bottle.
10. An empty leather coin purse. There's a neat cut down one side.

Lore Entry 1

Fantasy Wizard Journal:

Let me preface this entry with honesty of the most painful kind; I was wrong. I went in search for the dark secrets of this world, those that would be best left in the shadows, in ignorant bliss of what their consequences would truly hold. I compiled the arcane tomes of old, written by the once great scholars of this land. What I discovered was inspired genius that made all recent works pale in comparison.

These scholars, who defined their craft hundreds of years ago, were bold, courageous, and not afraid to tangle with the forces that hold our realm in its state of flux. With their knowledge and my work, I could surely slip past the veil that masks our universe's secrets and achieve a level of understanding like no one else before! I would be the harbinger of change in this world. The prophet, the catalyst, the spark that ignites the flame!

I was wrong.

Instead, all I have wrought is destruction and agony. The land flows with the blood of the innocent. I have bathed in it, for that is how to truly understand the suffering I have inflicted. The madness I allowed into this realm. Those creatures... that... power... may whomever find this journal know that I, Percival Astrande, am a fool and should never be forgiven for my actions. I go now to help those that I still can, and likely to my death. I can only hope to do some good before my time comes, but I fear that there is no hope of that.

With much sorrow and regret,

Percival

Lore Entry 2

A Series of Emails

From: Paula Lavinski / To: Kate Wellsdon / Earth Date:
07:11:2105 / Earth Time: 21:47

Hey Kate,

So, I went of the station this morning to check on the state of the solar panels and found one of your spanners still attached to one of the bolts.

I should just report you for this as that's insanely dangerous, but I know you're a good engineer, so will chalk it up to a simple human error. Just make sure you never do something like that again! Had that come loose, it could have done some irreparable damage.

Kind regards,
Paula

From: Kate Wellsdon / To: Paula Lavinski / Earth Date:
07.11.2105 / Earth Time: 22:01

Hi Paula,

I'm really confused by this - I haven't performed any maintenance on the solar panels in the last two months and I've definitely used all of my spanners since then. They're all accounted for as well.

- Kate

From: Paula Lavinski / To: Kate Wellsdon / Earth Date:
07.11.2105 / Earth Time: 22:27

Kate,

I get that you are worried about the repercussions of this, but as I've said, I won't report you. Please do not lie to me any further, though. The spanner's registration number confirmed that this belongs to your equipment belt. The logs also show that you were attending the solar panels last week.

Regards,
Paula

From: Kate Wellson / To: Paula Lavinski / Earth Date:
07.11.2105 / Earth Time: 22:29

Paula,

I'm not lying! I can show you that all of my spanners are right here – just come to my cabin. I have also definitely not been to the solar panels, despite what the logs say.

Something isn't right. Will you please come here? I'm really confused by all this!

- Kate