



---

# VENICE

---

By Sarah Strunk



FALL 2020  
GAME 332 – OGSD  
Professor Seth Hudson

# Table of Contents

PITCH / STORY OUTLINE: .....	2
WORLD VISUAL EXAMPLES:.....	4
CONFLICT MAP:.....	5
NARRATIVE DESIGN BRIEF: .....	6
CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS: .....	7
MARIS.....	7
MARCELINE.....	8
QUEST EXAMPLES: .....	9
QUEST ONE: .....	9
QUEST TWO:.....	10
SCRIPT SAMPLE: .....	12
APPENDIX: .....	17
AUTHOR’S NOTE/STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: .....	18

## Pitch / Story Outline:

### Pitch:

Maris, a “Hybrid” who can transform from girl to fish, navigates two conflicting worlds; One of her mortal mother, who died after she was born, and one of her father, the Fish King who went missing many moons ago – though she doesn’t know that at first. Living in Venice, an outcast and orphan in society, 15-year-old Maris longs to know where she comes from and how she possesses Hybrid powers. When Maris is searched out by another Hybrid named Marceline, she discovers that her life and origins are more complicated than they appear to be. In this narrative driven, third-person perspective game, players will follow Maris through the city of Venice as they uncover her origins, figure out what Marceline’s true motives are, and follow her true destiny, all while overcoming the challenges of being caught between two very different worlds.

### Story Outline:

Set in Venice during the Renaissance era, Maris, a plucky and penniless orphan, tries to balance life as she is torn between two worlds: one of the Land Folk and the one of the Fish People. One day, a storm suddenly appears, causing chaos as the townspeople attempt to save their shops from destruction. The water ferociously rises while thunder and lightning rip carts and flag poles apart. Maris finds herself trying to help a woman pull her fruit cart away from the rushing current but loses her grip, falling into the water and being crushed by the cart. Buried under the roaring surface, Maris suddenly finds herself transforming into a fish, a power she wasn’t aware she had, allowing her to escape. When the storm calms and Maris reappears on land, wet and muddy with a gash in her arm, the woman who watched her drown accuses her of being a witch. Maris, disoriented and frightened, must flee. Fortunately, one of Maris’s only friends, Jamie, hides her and they find reprieve in the healer Terrowin’s shop. While Terrowin stitches up her wound, Maris finds out important details that set her on her first quest – find the ancient underwater fresco and uncover her true origins.

After finding the fresco underwater, she discovers that she is a “Hybrid,” half mortal and half fish, able to switch between the two. Maris learns from the fresco that the Land Folk and Fish People once lived harmoniously but broke out in a war of greed and power. When the Land Folk began to industrialize, they were slowed by the Fish People clogging up the canals. The Land Folk weren’t willing to share and tried to rid the Fish People access to the canals. When that failed to work, The Land Folk, paranoid of the powers they possessed, started capturing Fish People and slaughtering them for the market. The fresco tells that tale and acts as a prophecy,

### Key Terms:

**Land Folk** – The humans who occupy Venice.

**Fish People** – Mystical fish creatures who live in the sea. They possess magical powers and once inhabited the canals of Venice. Very few exist in present day and most Land Folk believe they are of legend.

**Hybrids** – A rare breed of half fish and half human (though never both at the same time). With gills and feet, they can traverse both elements, balancing a life in the sea and on land. Their unique combination of qualities makes them extremely powerful beings.

showing that a war of revenge is coming and that a Hybrid will be responsible for raising the water levels of Venice, ultimately drowning the Land Folk and conquering it as an underwater city of their own. The last panel of the fresco shows that there is one person who can act as the mediator between two worlds, their destiny being to make things right again, restore peace, and show that there is good amongst masses of evil, one just has to look for it.

The events get more complicated when a woman named Marceline appears and claims she is Maris' older sister, heir to the Fish Throne and the self-crowned queen. Marceline confesses that she is dying of Polupoisoning, a disease that takes over one's body, slowly polluting the blood in their veins until it turns into thick sludge and they die. Growing weaker by the day, Marceline recruits Maris to take over as queen, however, Maris refuses to follow Marceline's plan when she finds out that Marceline is raising the water levels, seeking to drown Venice and finally getting revenge on the Land Folk. Maris can't imagine wiping out the place she's resided for 15 years, her home, and her friends Jamie and Terrowin. Maris turns on her sister and decides she must save the Land Folk from devastation and drowning; She feels in her veins that the two can live in peace. Marceline doesn't understand why humans are worth saving when they've caused her so much pain in her own growing up.

Things get even more complicated when Maris finds pieces to a broken fresco and puts them together showing that Hybrids can absorb powers from other Hybrids by killing them. She realizes that Marceline has shifted her plans, now plotting to kill and absorb Maris's powers. The two sisters must face off in a battle on the shores of Venice, where land and sea meet. Will Maris step up to the challenge, fighting Marceline to protect her beloved home and friends, or will Marceline wipe them all out in the name of the Fish People? Does Maris have what it takes to restore peace to two opposing worlds? *Can Venice be saved?*

## World Visual Examples:

If you are looking for a song that captures the beauty and magic of the world of *Venice*, try “Tsimsium” from the *Life of Pi* soundtrack

This is how I imagine the world of *Venice* from a bird's eye view (right). It is made up of bridges and passages on land with an equally intricate system of underwater crossings in the canals. Staircases will act as pathways to get from one area to the other and they will be spread out on the map, allowing for multiple entry and exit points. This



will allow the player to find unique paths to take on quests, whether they choose to walk on land or swim as a fish (sometimes there won't be an option). This third-person game will have the player see the character's perspective during gameplay but will feature the bird's eye view shots during cutscenes, on maps, and when the water level is rising.



This next set of pictures are inspirations for Terrowin's healing shop (the location of the scene in the Script Sample).

The shop itself is mostly made of dark wood, with small bottles of varying shapes and sizes lining the shelves. I want to combine the unique hanging feature and the staircases in the photo (bottom right) with the old, dusty, and darker mood of the picture on the top left.



## Conflict Map:

- **Imminent**

- External – Maris survives a drowning and that makes her appear to be a witch so she must run from the angry mob before she is killed.
- Internal – Maris, an orphan with newfound fish powers that she keeps hidden, doesn't know her true origins and wants to understand where she came from.

- **Over-arching**

- Does the good in the world outweigh the bad and selfish? What makes the human race worth fighting for? Are they even worth saving? Maris must choose between being the Queen of the Fish People and fighting *only* for them, or being an outcast on land, putting up with the pettiness of war and greed, but saving her home and her best friends, Jamie and Terrowin.

- **Central**

- Maris doesn't want to take the throne from Marceline if it means she has to say goodbye to the Land Folk. She cares deeply about Jamie and Terrowin and sees the good in them. She struggles to help Marceline see the good in them too. She must make the choice to fight against her only family, whom she's wanted to know for so long, or go against all odds to save the people she cares about.

- **Examples of Conflict**

- Maris must not only survive drowning in the storm but survive the aftermath of being accused of witchcraft.
- Maris must find the fresco, buried under the wreckage in the North Harbor to uncover her origins and find out the prophecy.
- Maris must collect broken pieces of a fresco after quests to get useful information about Hybrids, her powers, and Marceline's plan.
- Maris must learn how to utilize both her powers as a fish and her strategy as a human to fight Marceline.



## Narrative Design Brief:

The main way that the story of *Venice* will progress with regards to gameplay is through tasks and quests. Tasks will be smaller items of the game's agenda that the player can complete, like fetching a lantern or finding a broken piece of the fresco. These will ultimately encourage the player to explore the game's world. Quests are larger, slightly more intensive journeys that allow the player to discover information, goals, or objects that will progress the narrative. Another way the story will be told is through cutscenes. The game will open with a cutscene of the storm and show how Maris suddenly transforms into a fish under the water, escaping her own drowning. This moment is when both the player and Maris find out that she is not completely human, not only throwing the player into the action but allowing them to make discoveries alongside Maris. Another cutscene (the Script Sample on page 12) will take place after Jamie and Maris find reprieve from the angry mob in Terrowin's shop. There, Terrowin hints that Maris should find the ancient fresco and the cutscene ends, prompting the player to start their quest.

Stealth, puzzles, and a time constraint are three additional elements that the game will utilize. Stealth will be built in by forcing the player to hide from the townspeople after being declared a witch and when Maris sets off on her first journey to find the underwater fresco. While the player won't need to use stealth for the entire game, the witch hunters will calm down eventually and the player will learn how to use the canals, it will allow them to gain that skill for later use in the game. Puzzles will be included in two ways; First, the player will need to figure out how to get from place to place, some areas can only be traversed as a fish and some only on foot. Second, the player must complete "Fetch Quests" where they have to find and acquire pieces of a broken fresco that are hidden around the city and in the canals. When pieced together, they will gradually reveal information about Hybrid powers, allowing the players to learn new powers along their journey. Once the fresco has all the pieces, the last slide will reveal that Hybrids can absorb another Hybrid's powers by killing them, hinting that Marceline has new plans for Maris. During the final battle of *Venice*, a time constraint will be added – Marceline will force the water levels of Venice to rise, drowning the city in 15 minutes unless Maris and the player can stop it.

In terms of the UI, tasks and quests will appear at the top left of the screen and a map will show the player where they are in the bottom right. All dialogue will be featured at the bottom center of the screen to make it accessible for players who are hard of hearing or want closed captioning. The target platform is the PS4, Xbox, or a similar console because the player needs to have multiple controls in order to walk around, transform, hide, collect items, and eventually, fight. While the UI will have these elements, keeping it simple will allow the player to focus on the narrative and the world of *Venice*.

## Character Descriptions:

**MARIS** (female, 15 years old) – A plucky and penniless girl living in Venice during the Renaissance, Maris is quick on her feet despite her skirt slowing her down. There's something off about her which she is set to figure out (psst! She's a Hybrid). She's seen as an outcast in the town and without any parents in sight, she's completely orphaned, causing her years of emotional damage and pain. Regardless, her spunky personality and moral heart of gold can't let anyone go un-helped if they are in dire need, though she usually comes off as quiet to the townsfolk. Even though most of the time she keeps to herself, she confides in her best friend Jamie as well as the town's healer, Terrowin. Terrowin, outcasted for being crazy, helps her feel not so alone and acts as a mentor figure to her. Maris finds it hard connecting with others because of years spent on her own but has learned to count on Jamie and

Fun Fact: Maris, a name of Latin origins, means "of the sea"



"Maris" inspiration (top) and "Hybrid gills" (bottom/above).

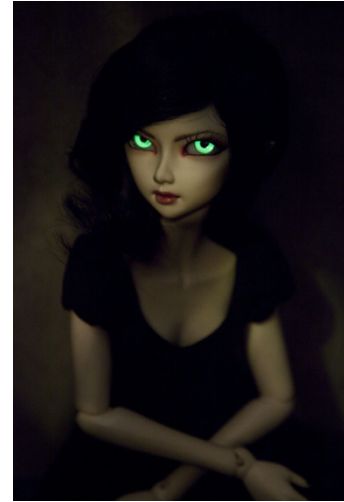
Terrowin. Maris's quiet exterior hides her damaged and lonely interior, but her true friends know that she's strong, cunning, and looks for the bright side, always. Once Maris finds out she is a Hybrid, she struggles with navigating and balancing being a part of two worlds: one of the Land Folk and one of the Fish People. There is so much she doesn't know about her origins, so she carries an existential longing to find her true self and will go to extreme lengths to find it. Maris is tough, curious, and willing to learn the hard way, wanting to discover answers in her own way on her own time. In every way, Maris is determined, persistent, and clever. Even though she doesn't know where she comes from or where she belongs, she always finds ways to make the best of the moment, dig deeper and never stop searching, surviving, and fighting for what she believes in.

*"At the heart, people are good.  
They are what make the world go round." - Maris*



**MARCELINE** (female, late 20s) – Maris’s older sister, though unknown to Maris at first, seeks her out in order to fulfill her own vengeful destiny of drowning the city of Venice and the Land Folk, taking Venice as her own underwater city. Marceline is tall with black hair, striking green eyes (that glow with anger), and a taste for luxurious things with her dresses being a mixture of Renaissance and Victorian style made with the finest of fabrics. Heir to the Fish Kingdom throne and self-crowned queen (since neither of her parents were alive to crown her), Marceline took over from a young age after her fish father disappeared (their mother died during Maris’s birth). Unlike Maris, Marceline never had to face living in poverty on the streets of Venice and has been living like royalty ever since inheriting the throne. Marceline’s power-hungry nature and merciless reign make people scatter and she instills fear in her people. Her tense nature caused by childhood trauma of losing her parents makes her a tough cookie to crack and, like a trapped animal, when Marceline is scared, she lets anger and fear drive her actions. She possesses Hybrid powers but is dying of Polupoisoning (a disease that takes over one’s body, slowly polluting the blood in their veins until it turns into thick sludge and they die). While the Polupoisoning runs through her veins, so does anger, boiling into rage and losing control of her emotions. She’s a fierce ruler, cunning and smart, with a history of manipulation. Marceline will do whatever it takes to avenge and expand the Fish Kingdom, wiping out the Land Folk once and for all, and will get rid of anyone who gets in her way.

Fun Fact: Marceline, a name of French origins, means “young warrior”



*Outfit inspiration (color and style) for Marceline (above) with her key trait, glowing green eyes (top).*

## Quest Examples:

Quest One:	“She’s A Witch!”
Overview	After getting caught up in a sudden storm, Maris’s grip slips while pulling a cart out of the canal and she falls in the roaring waters. Crushed under the water by the cart, Maris’s fate is looking grim until, unbeknownst to her, she transforms into a fish and escapes. When she reappears on land after the storm has passed, confused and wounded but alive, the townspeople accuse her of witchcraft.
Objective	<i>Run away from the violent mob of angry townspeople. Hide behind objects and in alleyways as you make your way to the medicine shop to heal your wounds.</i>
What is gained?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speed Experience Points</li> <li>• Stealth</li> </ul>
NPCs involved	<p><b>JAMIE</b> – Maris’s best friend. Cast out for his red, curly locks, Maris empathizes with him. Jamie is small for his age, very lean, but most of all loyal.</p> <p><b>TOWNSPEOPLE</b> – A very angry mob who chase after Maris. They carry pitchforks and flames in hand.</p>
How the quest is initiated:	The conflict that this quest responds to is Maris needing to save herself from being killed. This quest labels her even more as an outcast than she was before. The player must resolve this conflict in order to survive and get into the game.
Consequences the player faces if the quest is successful or unsuccessful:	If the quest is successful, then Maris will have gained stealth points and have a safety base at the medicine shop. There, she will uncover more hints (via cutscene) of her true origins and be given her first quest. There is no option to get killed by the townspeople. If the mob gets too close to the player, there is a fail-safe mini-cutscene where Jamie grabs Maris and pulls her into an alley way. He notices her wound and tells her to follow him the back routes to the healer’s shop.
How this will be technically achieved:	The player will start by being singled out and yelled at by the mob. They will have to run from the mob through the streets using the joysticks on the controller. When they run long enough or past a certain building, Jamie will grab Maris and pull her into the shadows of an alleyway (the fail-safe option). This will be a cut scene (grabbing her, holding his hand over her mouth as they watch the angry mob run by). He notices her wound and tells her

	that they have to get to the medicine shop. Cut scene ends. The player follows Jamie (who gives hint about where the mob is coming from) so that Maris can hide on her way to the medicine shop. Jamie also offers guidance to the player so that they know where the medicine shop is located.
--	---

Quest Two:	“Underwater Fresco”
Overview	After successfully making it to the medicine shop, Terrowin stitches Maris’s wound. She notices an open book on the shelf with a symbol of a fish that intrigues her. The other characters do not know she possesses hidden powers, Maris doesn’t even know much about them yet, and she is desperate to find out. Terrowin explains the legend of the Fish People to her and claims that there is ancient fresco showing more underwater in around the shores of Venice. The fresco is the next step in finding out her origins.
Objective	<p><i>Get to the outskirts of the city to find the underwater fresco and uncover your origins.</i></p> <p><i>You will need to collect a lantern along the way but be careful, there’s still a mob after you!</i></p> <p>Hint: You don’ have to use your feet. Hint: Stairwells are your friend.</p>
What is gained?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stealth</li> <li>• Information</li> </ul>
NPCs involved	<p><b>TERROWIN</b> – The healer, an ancient man who is fond of Maris and Jamie. He acts as a guide and mentor, giving them hints and healing aids. He sees Maris for who she is instead of how everyone else views her and is the closest thing to a father figure she has.</p> <p><b>JAMIE</b> – (see character description from previous quest)</p>
How the quest is initiated:	The purpose of this quest is for the player to find out more information about Maris’s origins. This quest responds to Maris wanting to know where she comes from and who she is. She knows she possesses powers, but to what extent?
Consequences the player faces if the quest is	If successful, Maris will see the images that describe what Terrowin told them about the Thousand years war, but it will more importantly show the second half of the fresco (that was ripped out

successful or unsuccessful:	of the book). The second half will show what Hybrids are and also that a young hero, who is destined to make things right, will fight the ultimate moral battle to restore peace to Venice. Besides using stealth to navigate to the water (via a stairwell) without being seen, this quest does not contain difficult obstacles. There is not an option to fail as this quest is crucial in terms of giving information to progress the narrative.
How this will be technically achieved:	Once the player gets to Terrowin's shop, a cutscene will be used to hints about objectives and ways to achieve them. The cutscene was carefully written to act as the prompt for the quest, and as soon as it ends, the player will be ready to start their first quest.

## Script Sample:

BACKGROUND NOTE: MARIS is what is known as a "Hybrid" - someone who can turn from human to fish, and vice versa, able to navigate both the streets and canals of Venice. She recently discovered her powers and knows little about her true origins, desperately longing to find out.

FADE IN:

INT. THE HEALER'S SHOP - MID-DAY

MARIS, a 15-year-old penniless orphan with brown hair, and her friend JAMIE rush into the HEALER'S shop from the cobblestone streets of Venice. Maris is sopping wet, dragging her weighted down petticoat and muddy boots behind her. She looks more ragged than normal, her tousled hair coming out of its braid and a mixture of blood and dirt speckling her clothes and face.

JAMIE, a boy of the same age with curly red hair immediately bolts the door and frantically pulls down the blinds, rattling thousands of glass bottles that line the shelves.

Once inside, Maris collapses but catches herself, gripping the countertop as blood seeps through her shirt sleeve. They are both sweaty and out of breath. The healer, TERROWIN, an ancient man with a wizard-like beard, calmly stares at them.

TERROWIN

What did you two do this time, huh?

JAMIE

The townspeople - they're after Maris.

MARIS

They think I'm a witch.

(beat)

Do you have anything to stop the bleeding?

Maris rolls up her sleeve and winces at the ruby red gash.

Terrowin goes in the back and comes out with vibrant blue liquid which he applies to Maris's wound. Jamie pushes a stool to her but she doesn't sit.



MARIS  
(winces)  
Ahh! You didn't say it would sting.

TERROWIN  
Jamie, would you fetch me my sewing  
kit? And a towel?

JAMIE  
Yes, sir.

Jamie retrieves the sewing kit and a towel.

TERROWIN  
Bite down.

Maris is tough but winces and accepts Jamie's second seat offer.  
Looking around the colorful and dusty old room to distract  
herself, a book on the upper shelf catches her eye. She spits  
out the towel.

MARIS  
What's that book?

TERROWIN  
Hold still.

MARIS  
The green one, on the top shelf, with  
the silver fish on the binding.

Terrowin refuses to look up from his stitching job.

TERROWIN  
Those were my father's books.

MARIS  
Can I look at it?

Without prompting, Jamie grabs the rolling library shelf  
ladder and starts to climb, reaching for the green binding.

He places the BOOK on the counter near Maris's good arm.

Maris opens it to random pages filled with ancient symbols of

humans and fish, completely forgetting the needle puncturing her flesh. Terrowin ties a knot, and she winces once more.

TERROWIN

All done, kid.

MARIS

Do you know anything about the Fish People?

Terrowin wipes off his bloody needle and squints to see the open pages of the book.

TERROWIN

Legend tells that the Fish People once lived among the Land Folk in peace but then broke out in a terrible war. Very few people know what happened after the Thousand Years War.

MARIS

The what?

TERROWIN

The war between the land and the sea.

JAMIE

I thought my grandfather told me that the Land Folk won, and the Fish People fled.

TERROWIN

Oh, they always tell the story from the winner's perspective, don't they?

JAMIE

So, they didn't flee?

TERROWIN

Most of them did. But some say that, to this very day, that the Fish People still exist. Some even believe that illegitimate children, born of fish and folk, possess powers and walk about.

(beat)

The best part is, if one did, we wouldn't even know it.

Maris tenses as she catches Terrowin's eyes locking on hers. She averts quickly, looking at another page in the book.

MARIS

What's this mural?

Terrowin points to an image of a fresco in the book but the second half of it is ripped out.

TERROWIN

It's an ancient fresco that is said to tell the tale of what really happened to the Fish People. Some say the second half tells the prophecy of what is to come.

MARIS

Where is this fresco?

TERROWIN

I've heard rumors that it's somewhere in the North Harbor, though I'm not sure you could get to it now. The storm made a mess and water levels are still high.

Terrowin turns to face Maris.

TERROWIN (CONT'D)

Unless I suppose, one of you can hold your breath.

Maris's eyebrows quiver and a subtle smile breaks free.

Terrowin closes the book and hobbles over to the ladder to return it to its place.

Maris grabs Jamie by the arm and whispers to him.

MARIS

I'm going to find that fresco.

JAMIE

Maris! There's still a mob of angry people after you.

MARIS  
Which you're going to lead away...from  
me and the path to the North Harbor.

JAMIE  
Why do you want to find this so badly?

MARIS  
Jamie, please don't ask. I just need to  
know what it says.

Jamie looks at Maris with concern but nods. He believes in her.

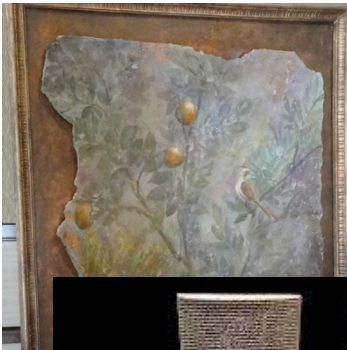
JAMIE  
Go out the back. Follow the canal  
north. I'll lead them south. Be  
careful, Maris.

FADE OUT.

## Appendix:

The image to the right, is a **fresco**. I chose this as a reference image because I liked the way it is cracked and how there is fading on the image and in the colors.

This image acts as inspiration for the underwater fresco in the first major quest.



The image to the left is also of a fresco, except it is a broken piece. This image, as well as the one below it, mimic my vision of how the broken fresco will look like in the “Fetch Quests.”



This image is what I imagine the fresco to look like once Maris finds the pieces and puts them together. Of course, it would have to be smaller than a traditional fresco (since they are normally large and made out of watercolor and papier-mâché), so probably more like a tablet.

The picture of the glowing blue eyes is an idea I had for Maris. Once she learns more about being a Hybrid and how to use her powers, she finds her strength and courage and something in her clicks. The glowing blue eyes (probably shown through a climatic cutscene before the final battle between the sisters) signal that she is ready to step up to the challenge and save her home.

Everything she has learned throughout the game will come into play now. Maris is ready to save Venice, *are you?*





## Author's Note/Statement of Purpose:

The Original Game Story Design project has challenged me as a writer and a critical thinker. The combination of developing a story within an interactive format combined with the various types of writing we had to complete was both intensive and rewarding. From the details of the storyline to the details of the design and formatting, quality was something I never overlooked. One of the sections where I feel I shined was in the Script Sample because I was able to pull from my screenwriting experience to bring my characters to life, give them voices, motives, and quirks in a short interaction. Additionally, the Narrative Design Brief was the most challenging section because of my lack of knowledge and experience playing video games, however, with a little help from Professor Hudson and my peers, it was in that section that I did the most growing and learning. I am proud of how I tackled that aspect of this project and how it turned out. Overall, this project showed me that while I certainly have strengths and weaknesses in different areas of writing, I was able to dive in and try something I'd never done before. It is in these situations that challenge (and scare) me, that I grow into a better writer.

In the last 10 to 15 years, more and more video games have risen to the top because of their focus on story, and *Venice* is no different. It offers a cinematic storytelling experience where the player is at the forefront of the game, playing as Maris and uncovering the story right alongside her. A player of *Venice* would most likely be in their late teens and 20s, like RPGs and action-adventure games, and wouldn't mind playing along with a linear narrative. Conflicts, both imminent and overarching, were designed to be realistic and reach any player. *Venice* utilizes the player's empathy and emotions to experience the story while the narrative drives them to complete it. *Venice* additionally sets itself apart from other games by bringing up the topic of rising sea levels in Venice, Italy. While the game attributes them to Marceline, the vengeful Queen of the Fish People, my hope is that the game could partner with climate change initiatives to bring awareness to this issue. A portion of proceeds would also go to that cause, leaving consumers engaged in that issue while also being able to take part in an interactive storytelling experience.

My process for this project was to start by completing one section each week – something that was successful because Professor Hudson held us accountable for it (thanks!). I enjoyed watching my ideas evolve over the course of six weeks, especially since the concept of *Venice* started as a dream I had in October, so it was exciting to work that into a more solid piece. The biggest area I struggled with was how to balance narrative and gameplay, making sure that my narrative wasn't impeding the interactive components of this project. At first, I wasn't sure how to design gameplay that would work *with* the narrative and not *for* it (making sure cutscenes were not "rewards"). In order to do this, I had to do something no writer likes to do... let go of my ideas. Releasing those initial ideas that would have worked for a movie but not for a game was a great exercise that I'm glad I was forced to do (yes, there is a spec script with Marceline's

emotional and climactic monologue from the final battle... in the trash folder). Collaboration helped me overcome this challenge. By attending office hours, talking through my ideas with Professor Hudson, and having my peers gave me new perspectives on how to shape the story, I was able to overcome that challenge.

During our peer review, I tried to give me honest feedback while also supporting my peers. There is a delicate balance (that is not always easy to achieve) between praise and criticism, but both are necessary. I trusted my peers to give me honest feedback but also knew that if I didn't agree with something, I could choose not to implement it. I found both Seth and Christian's feedback on my Narrative Design Brief section to be especially helpful since they helped me to clarify elements of gameplay using their vast knowledge of games. When giving feedback to my peers, I used my storytelling background to ask clarifying questions about the plot, characters, and the world. I took about 45 minutes on each peer review in order to fully comprehend the story and give quality feedback that would aid in their revisions.

The main reason I took Game Story Design was because of my long-term career goal to make theater and film more immersive and engaging for audiences. This course helped me to write more interactive stories which I will take me into future writing courses and in my career.

In true GNR fashion, here are my three takeaways, or lessons, that I've learned:

- **Lesson 1:** You don't need to be a gamer to take this class. Of course, it helps to have some knowledge, but really, it's about throwing yourself into something you've never tried before and running with it. *The best place to grow is outside of your comfort zone!*
- **Lesson 2:** Peer reviewing takes a delicate balance of being supportive and critiquing. It's equally important to lift up your peers as it is to tell them places that need work. Plus, you might find that *giving feedback can be even more rewarding than receiving it.*
- **Lesson 3:** Creating agency in games is important, however, you can still add agency to a linear story. Coming from someone who read choose-your-own-adventure books growing up, choice doesn't mean having multiple endings. Choice can be included in smaller, yet equally important places. *The path is straight, but the journey is not.*

This course forced me to take a closer look at a different area of media and unpack its unique style of writing and development. In all honesty, I did try playing a few video games during this semester, and while they may not be my strong suit (I can't get past the running tutorial in *The Last of Us* because my body goes one way and my eyes looks the other way until I get eaten), I've allowed myself the freedom to leap into unknown areas, knowing that I have a safety net to catch me when I fall. This course gave me the chance to learn as much as I could in a safe environment, one without judgement and with a lot of support. I learned a lot from this class. These are the lessons I will take forward with me into the future, wherever I may go.