Game and Learn:
An Introduction to Educational Gaming
7. Games and Storytelling

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The Characteristics of Game Stories

Ancestry of Interactive Fiction (Montfort)

- Riddles
    - e.g. Riddle of the Sphinx
- Puzzles
    - e.g. Detective Mysteries
- Literary machines
    - e.g. Queneau's *100,000,000,000,000 Poems*, other OuLiPo works
- Dungeons & Dragons
- AI Conversational Machines
    - e.g. ELIZA/DOCTOR, SHRDLU
- Early Computer Games
    - e.g. *Hunt the Wumpus*, *Mouse Maze*, *Trivia*

Components of Game Narratives

- Inputs
    - commands (in the world) -> diegetic or hypodiegetic (stories within stories)
    - directives (about the program) -> extradiegetic
- Outputs
    - replies -> diegetic/hypodiegetic
    - reports -> extradiegetic
- Characters and Related Types
    - Player(s)
    - NPC
    - Other Persons

Game Spaces and Narrative Architecture (Jenkins)

- Evocative Spaces

- Enacting Stories

    - Broad goals/conflicts

    - Localized incidents (micronarratives)

- Embedded narratives

    - Game as an information space discovered, structured, and restructured by the player

- Emergent Narratives

    - Constructed by the player

Games and Narrative Levels (Frasca)

Level 1: representation and events ("what happens")

Level 2: manipulation modes ("what the player can do")

Level 3: goal rules ("what the player must do to win")

Level 4: meta-rules ("what player modifications to the other three levels are allowed")

Constructing the Story

The Hero's Journey (Campbell)

- Three parts to the journey:

  - **The Departure**: the hero is called to adventure

    - Someone is in need of aid, and the hero is called upon to help

  - **The Initiation**: the hero undertakes a journey (physical or spiritual) to reach the goal that will secure the needed aid

    - The hero undergoes a process of change

  - **The Return**: the hero accomplishes their task, and aid is rendered

    - The hero receives some reward

The Detailed Journey

- **The Departure**:
  - The Call to Adventure
  - Refusal of the Call
  - Supernatural Aid
  - The Crossing of the First Threshold
  - Belly of The Whale

- **The Initiation**:
  - The Road of Trials
  - The Meeting With the Goddess
  - Woman as Temptress
  - Atonement with the Father
  - Apotheosis
  - The Ultimate Boon

- **The Return**:
  - Refusal of the Return
  - The Magic Flight
  - Rescue from Without
  - The Crossing of the Return Threshold
  - Master of the Two Worlds
  - Freedom to Live

Character Roles (Propp)

- **Main Characters:**
  - Protagonist (Hero)
  - Antagonist (Villain)
  - Dispatcher
  - Donor
  - Helper
  - Person Sought-For
  - False Protagonist (False Hero)
- **Supporting Characters:**
  - Family Members
  - Connectors

Character Functions

Introduction

#	Function	Example
1	Absentation	A member of the family absents him/herself.
2	Interdiction	An interdiction is given to the hero.
3	Violation	The interdiction is violated.
4	Reconnaissance	A villain makes an attempt to get information.
5	Delivery	The villain gets information about the victim.
6	Trickery	The villain tries to deceive the victim.
7	Complicity	The victim is deceived.

The Donor Sequence

#	Function	Example
12	1st Donor Function	The hero is tested by a donor of a magical agent.
13	Hero's Reaction	The hero reacts to the agent or donor.
14	Receipt of Agent	The hero acquires the use of the magical agent.
15	Guidance	The hero is led to the object of search.
16	Struggle	The hero and villain join in combat.
17	Branding	The hero is branded.
18	Victory	The hero defeats the villain.
19	Liquidation	The initial misfortune or lack is liquidated.

The Body of the Story

#	Function	Example
8	Villainy	The villain causes harm to a family member. - OR
8a	Lack	A family member lacks or desires something.
9	Mediation	A misfortune is made known, the hero is dispatched.
10	Begin Counteraction	The hero (seeker) agrees to counteraction.
11	Departure	The hero leaves home.

The Hero's Return

#	Function	Example
20	Return	The hero returns.
21	Pursuit	The hero is pursued.
22	Rescue	The hero is rescued from pursuit.
23	Unrecognized Arrival	The hero, unrecognized, arrives home or elsewhere.
24	Unfounded Claims	A false hero presents unfounded claims.
25	Difficult Task	A difficult task is proposed to the hero.
26	Solution	The task is resolved.
27	Recognition	The hero is recognized.
28	Exposure	The false hero or villain is exposed.
29	Transfiguration	The hero is given a new appearance.
30	Punishment	The villain is punished.
31	Wedding	The hero is married and ascends the throne.

Notes:
- 12–14 can also occur as a block prior to the 8–11 block;
- 23–24 and 25–26 can also occur prior to 19;
- 17 can occur between 25 and 26.

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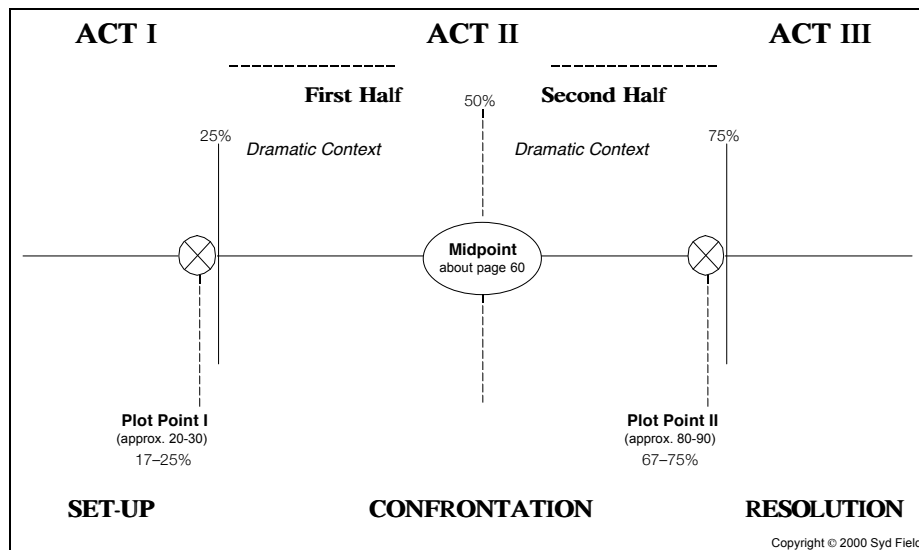| #	Function	Example
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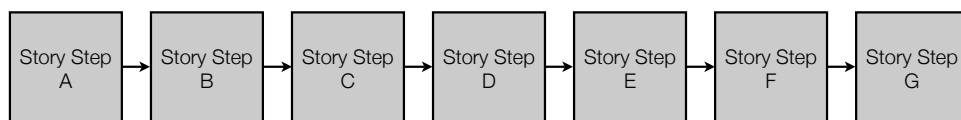
The Basic Screenplay Paradigm (Field)

ACT I — ACT II — ACT III

First Half — 50% — Second Half

25% — 75%

Dramatic Context — *Dramatic Context*

Midpoint about page 60

Plot Point I (approx. 20-30) 17–25%

Plot Point II (approx. 80-90) 67–75%

SET-UP — CONFRONTATION — RESOLUTION

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Storytelling for Games (Sheldon)

- Five Major Modes:

  - Linear

  - Branching

  - Controlled Branching

  - Web

  - Modular

Linear Storytelling
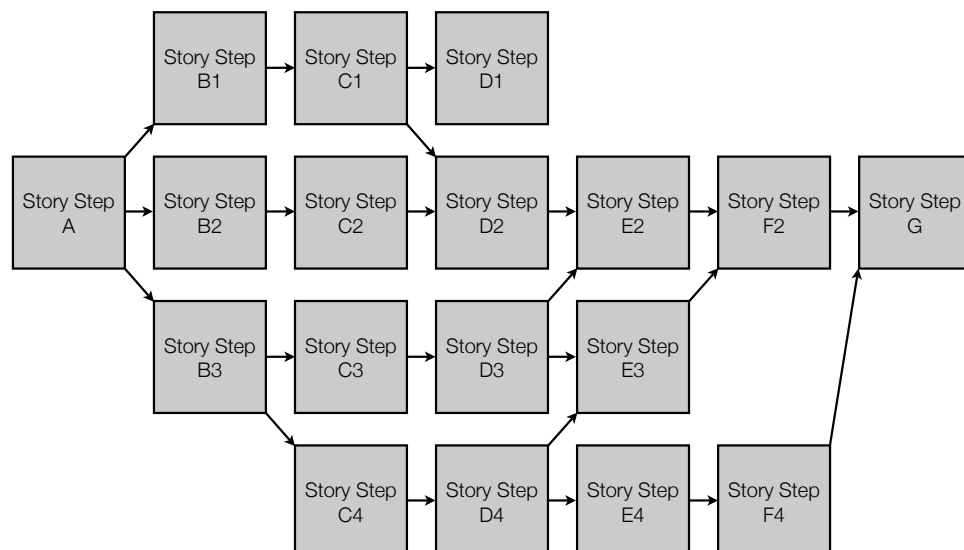
| Story Step A | → | Story Step B | → | Story Step C | → | Story Step D | → | Story Step E | → | Story Step F | → | Story Step G |

Linear Storytelling Example:
Portal

Branching Stories
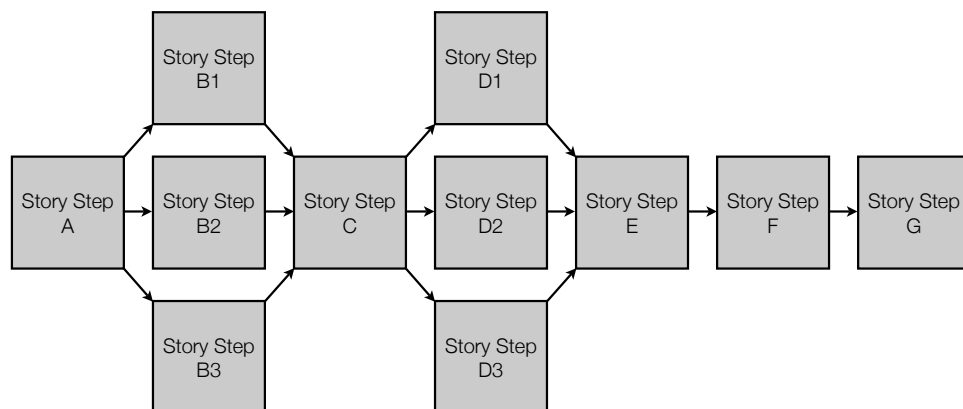
Branching Stories Example:
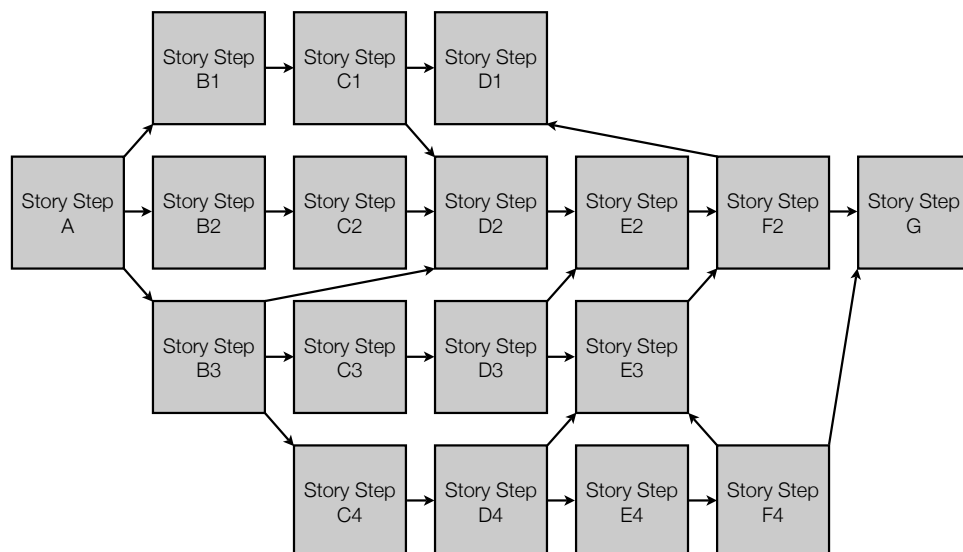## *La Pucelle Tactics*

Controlled Branching

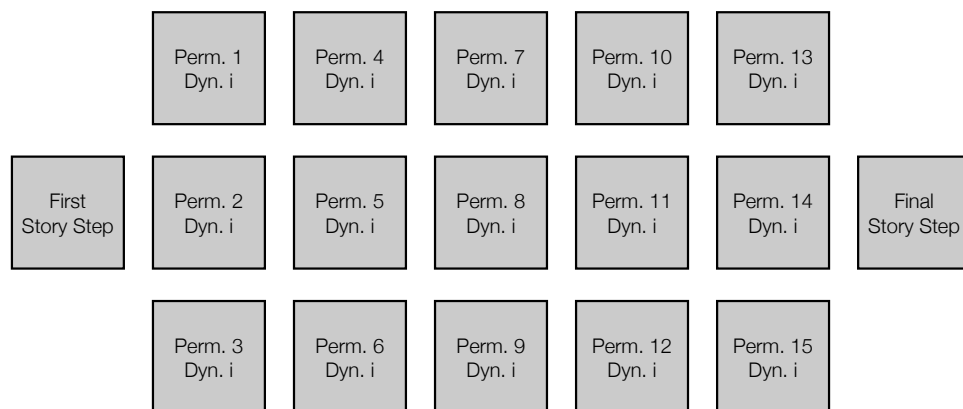## Controlled Branching Example:
Grim Fandango

"Web" Stories

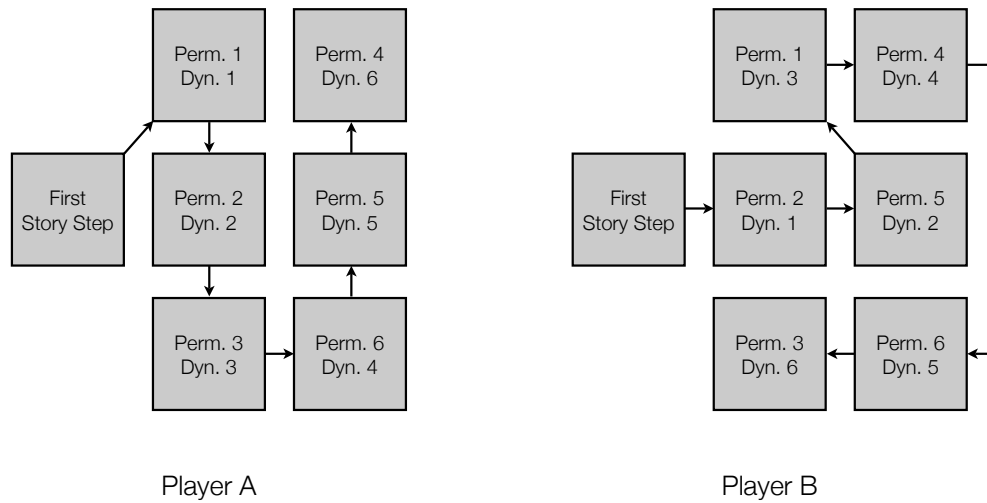# "Web" Stories Example:
Jak & Daxter: The Precursor Legacy

Modular Storytelling

Perm. 1 Dyn. i	Perm. 4 Dyn. i	Perm. 7 Dyn. i	Perm. 10 Dyn. i	Perm. 13 Dyn. i

First Story Step	Perm. 2 Dyn. i	Perm. 5 Dyn. i	Perm. 8 Dyn. i	Perm. 11 Dyn. i	Perm. 14 Dyn. i	Final Story Step

Perm. 3 Dyn. i	Perm. 6 Dyn. i	Perm. 9 Dyn. i	Perm. 12 Dyn. i	Perm. 15 Dyn. i

Modular Storytelling In Action

	Perm. 1 Dyn. 1	Perm. 4 Dyn. 6
First Story Step	Perm. 2 Dyn. 2	Perm. 5 Dyn. 5
	Perm. 3 Dyn. 3	Perm. 6 Dyn. 4

Player A

	Perm. 1 Dyn. 3	Perm. 4 Dyn. 4
First Story Step	Perm. 2 Dyn. 1	Perm. 5 Dyn. 2
	Perm. 3 Dyn. 6	Perm. 6 Dyn. 5

Player B

Modular Storytelling Example:
Far Cry 2

Resources Cited

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- **Game Videos:**
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  - *La Pucelle Tactics:* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IelsVROEsGo
  - *Grim Fandango:* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtOMCJByp2c
  - *Jak & Daxter: The Precursor Legacy:* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvdC6AOqu8U
  - *Far Cry 2:* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Nn3N9GSSsg

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