

# Brief 4: Caden's Cadenza

## Brief instructions

The team behind the hit "Instrument Champion" has asked you to design the narrative for their next hit rhythm game.

- The brief states that the client is unsure of what instrument the protagonist will use, and because of that, the instrument the protagonist finds isn't defined. That way it should be flexible enough to be any instrument the client decides on.
- The main gameplay is based on the gameplay of Old School Musical, and the rewards are mostly story progression, with potential to get something extra if you clear a song perfectly, or clear a "special" section of a song
- The brief asks for the story to focus on characters associated with the player, and their wants and needs. I have chosen not to focus on individual side characters, but rather focus on the overall mood of towns as you travel through them. Seeing their struggles and every day lives improve as you help people. Sometimes individual characters from the town might join your cause, but only briefly.

## Reason for choosing this brief

I have played Crypt of the Necrodancer, Guitar Hero, Osu, Audiosurf and some other rhythm games, and I have always felt like they have too much focus on gameplay, and not enough on story. So I wanted to make a rhythm game with a focus on story.

## Premise

The people lived in bliss until one day, the heir of the king forsook the throne and ran away. Nobody knew where she had gone, and there was no sign of her coming back. This was the last straw for the king, which allowed the demon to take hold of him. With the negative emotions from the demon overflowing, the king thought if he wasn't allowed to be happy, nobody else was, so he stole the people's emotions. To prevent the people from gaining their emotions back, he seized all instruments within his kingdom. Unknown to everyone else, the princess had travelled as far as her body could carry him, and had collapsed near a river. Just down this river lived a figure clad in white robes and silky white hair. They took in the princess and nursed her back to health. One day there was a break-in at the king's treasury, and an instrument was stolen. During his escape, the thief was caught and dropped the instrument into the river, which carried it away. The instrument was never found, until one day, the princess' caretaker presented the instrument to the princess, saying she was the only one with the power to defeat her father. With this newfound possession, the princess decided that it was time someone saved the people from the emotional dystopia they were living in.

## Games like the brief

### *Old School Musical*



- **What it does well:** It has sweet tunes inspired by old school video games and an intuitive input system.
- **What it does badly:** There is a story being delivered alongside the gameplay, meaning you want to focus on what is happening in the background, but you also want to focus on hitting all the notes. Your difficulty setting also seems to be the same for an entire playthrough, meaning even if you improve quickly you still have to continue at the same difficulty unless you want to start over.
- **What it does narratively:** You and your brother are characters in a video game world that starts glitching out, causing your abusive mother to go missing. Despite her being abusive, you and your brother still love her, so you go looking for her.
- **Is it a good fit for your game?:** I like the input system and how the gameplay is displayed, however I don't like that the background is so distracting during gameplay. Perhaps a mix of non distracting backgrounds during gameplay, and intermission parts where the story takes place would be good. I do think I want my game to have a similar input system, so that part does fit rather well.

## Crypt of the Necrodancer



- **What it does well:** The moment to moment gameplay is fantastic, every input potentially being the end of your run makes the stakes really high if you want to retain your combo.
- **What it does badly:** Being a roguelite, the game loop can become a bit repetitive, and random equipment upgrades means you can be lucky and get a ton of good items, or be unlucky and get no upgrades at all.
- **What it does narratively:** You play a female character called Cadence, who is the daughter of a famous treasure hunter. Her father has gone missing, while looking for her father, she falls to her death. She just happened to fall into the crypt of the Necrodancer, who revives her and makes her heart beat to the music.
- **Is it a good fit for your game?:** I do like split second decisions being important, however I want a more wholesome vibe to my game, so perhaps it should be more forgiving. Overall I don't think it is a good fit, it was more a source of inspiration.

## Elite Beat Agents



- **What it does well:** Making it feel like your actions have an impact. Even though you're only playing a rhythm game, which typically doesn't make your actions feel impactful.
- **What it does badly:** The game is very old, and being among the first to use a pen for touch in combination with rhythm games makes the input system feel rather awkward.
- **What it does narratively:** You play as agents of a secret agency meant to help and encourage people with music, song and dance. Each mission is its own little mini story and you solve problems within each story by clearing sections of the song.
- **Is it a good fit for your game?:** I like the theme of helping people out with your music, and would like to incorporate that into my own game.

## Epic Mickey



**What it does well:** It perfectly encapsulates the goal I want the protagonist to have in my game, although slightly different. It gives all of the forgotten Disney characters a place of their own, and really justifies their inclusion in the game.

**What it does badly:** While you have a magic paintbrush, you aren't allowed to use it to create anything new, you can only restore what has been ruined. Which is an understandable decision, but still feels like the game is limiting your creativity.

**What it does narratively:** A wizard with a magic brush had created a miniature world for discarded Disney characters using his magic paintbrush. As he finished his work for the day, he put the paintbrush aside and retired to his bedroom. Mickey saw what the wizard had done, and wanted to try for himself, unaware of the consequences of misusing the magic paintbrush. He ends up using too much paint, which creates a horrid monstrosity which corrupts the miniature world and consumes all colour in it. Mickey quickly runs away and goes to sleep, but as he lies in his bed, the monstrosity, Blot, pulls him into the miniature world, and as he is being pulled in, he manages to grab onto the magic paintbrush, which he uses to restore the world to what it used to be.

**Is it a good fit for your game?:** Theme wise is it as close to a perfect fit as I can think of. While I don't want the protagonist to be the cause of the disaster that plagues the kingdom, I do want them to be the one to return the kingdom to the state it was in before, when the people lived wholesome lives and everyone was happy.

## Narrative Pillars:

### Music is Magic

Since the brief has asked for gameplay to be focused on playing songs correctly, I decided that giving the songs a magical power would link the story and the gameplay together. The world is based around the magical ability to share emotions through music. When the people play music all around the kingdom, they eat, drink and dance together. Everyone gets along and everyone is happy. The protagonist will use this magical musical ability to share emotions with people, and that way return the kingdom to the state it used to be in.

### Wholesome

The brief has asked for focus on characters' wants and needs, and people have an innate need for community. Being with others makes us feel better, and thus, bringing people together is a wholesome theme. The whole world is based around sharing your best moments with those around you. And the purpose of the protagonist is to bring that back to the world. I believe many games today have a focus on individual empowerment, and almost none have a focus on empowerment as a community, and I want the protagonist to show how communities can work together to become strong. The only time this is not followed is when emphasising the extreme contrast.

### Extreme Contrast

While it isn't specifically related to the brief, extreme contrast provides clear distinctions for the player to more easily understand what is what. To show the emotional difference between the bad guys and the good guys and to provide a more impactful change that comes as a result of the player's actions, making them feel more powerful.



# World Building

## O - Origin

The game takes place in a fictional kingdom called Allegría. The reason I picked a fictional world is to allow the appearance of the game to be more expressive, to reflect the emotions of the people. And to allow buildings and nature to have unconventional shapes and colours without it seeming out of place. I want the world to visually represent the Wholesome and Extreme Contrast pillars.



## G - Genre

Drama/Adventure - The main focus of the story is the relationship between the princess and her father, but on her way towards her end goal, the princess travels far, meets many people, and learns a lot. During her travels she encounters many troubled souls and helps them as best she can. The princess' helping people relates back to the Wholesome pillar and Music is Magic, as she is helping them back to their music sharing selves. And the adventure relates back to the Extreme Contrast, as she travels through the kingdom, she brings the people out of the emotional dystopia they are in, and makes them cheerful again.

## T - Tone

The tone is dark from the start, but there is always supposed to be a hint of hope. As you progress through the game, and you help more people, the tone of the game is meant to become more cheerful. This relates back to the Extreme Contrast and Wholesome pillar. As the game goes from being very gloomy to cheerful and happy.



## T - Tropes

### Characters

- Fake King

The king is possessed by a demon, and therefore isn't himself. Although the people are unaware of this, thinking the king has just become a terrible ruler.

- I Am Not My Father

While Caden knows that the king isn't himself, it is difficult for her to think of her father without thinking of the way he is while he's possessed. She knows in her heart that her father isn't the person he appears to be, but as she runs away, she can't help but think she doesn't want to become what his father is.

### World

- Black and White Morality

The villain is a demon who has no motivations other than causing despair and pain. The people are all good samaritans who help each other and find joy in the company of their peers, they all want the best for each other.

### Plot

- The Quest

The purpose of the quest is to complete a certain task, and the focus on the story is placed on the events and encounters that the protagonist runs into during his adventure. Rather than the hero's journey, which has more of a focus on the end goal, and the growth of the characters during the journey.

## C - Conflict

There is very little conflict in the kingdom of Allegria, as the people never felt that there was a power dynamic between the royal family and the people, there was very little to be unhappy about. What conflict arises is usually fairly minor and/or is resolved easily. That is, until the king had his life ripped from his hands, and he couldn't think clearly anymore. He used his power to force his will upon the people, which they couldn't do anything about.

## S - Scope

The scope of the game is contained within the fictional kingdom of Allegria, and only covers stories within the kingdom's borders. The game addresses the people of the kingdom and the relationship between the protagonist and her father.

## H -History

For as long as records show, the kingdom has been ruled by fair and generous rulers. The king and queen currently sitting upon the throne were no different. They made sure that the people of the kingdom felt as close to the royalty as possible, even being allowed to step into the castle unannounced and talking to the royalty in person without guards. The people had their full trust and as a result, the people of the kingdom felt they were listened to and treated as equals. This kept the discord and uproar to a minimum, usually handled before it was even allowed to begin. This made everyone in the kingdom feel safe and content.

## P - Possible Futures

- The princess manages to defeat the demon possessing her father, her father returns to normal, and makes amends with the people by sharing his wealth and personally working to rebuild what he had ruined
- The princess fails to defeat the demon and instead has her emotions stolen right at the end
  - The king returns to steal everyone's emotions and the kingdom is fully enveloped in the emotional dystopia the princess was meant to save the people from
    - The population of the kingdom decreases every year until the kingdom consists of nothing but the king and his attendants, at that point the king no longer feels that his anger is justified, and the demon loses its grip on him. The king comes to his senses and defeats the demon, but it is too late, his kingdom is already in shambles
  - The people rally and confront the king themselves
    - They kill the king, not realizing that he wasn't the one behind it all, and without a ruler, the kingdom falls apart
    - They realize a demon has possessed the king, and defeat it, bringing the king back to his normal self. The King realizes his faults and does his best to repent by bringing the kingdom back to what it once was

## S - Stakeholders

The princess, Caden

The king, Elegor

The guardian, Barim

The tinkerer, Libell

# Characters

## Protagonist - The Princess, Caden Opus



### **What are they like?**

Her real name is actually Cadence, but as it is a name given to her by her father, who was never really there, she grew to dislike it, and decided to go by the name Caden instead. Raised to believe she wasn't worth more than the people of the kingdom, despite her title, she thinks of everyone as equals, no matter their background. She has always looked up to her father, although she has always sensed that something was off as her father didn't spend much time with her, like the other fathers did. She believes everyone deserves to live their lives in the way that makes them happy. Because she was being taught how to behave as a princess by her servants, none of whom she had any real connection with, she never had any motivation to follow the rules set upon her. She didn't have a mother figure to look up to, and she rarely even saw her father, so she grew up only trusting her gut feeling and acted upon her own desires, rather than some arbitrary rules that someone else had made.

### **What do they want?**

- She wants her father to treat her like his daughter, and not be as distant as he is
- She wants the people to be happy again

### **What they do to get what they want**

She goes from town to town, sharing emotions with people and working her way towards the castle, where she'll confront her father.

### **Why you've made this decision**

The client wanted a personal conflict between the antagonist and the protagonist, but I didn't want it to be a conflict based in anger. Referring back to the Wholesome pillar, I want the conflict to be resolved in a wholesome way, that being the father and daughter working things out and becoming a family again. The princess is just unaware of what is plaguing her father, and she needs to find out about it to be able to help him.

## Antagonist - The King, Elegor Opus

### What are they like?

The king used to be a staunch ruler of his kingdom, keeping the divide between the rich and the poor as small as possible. Treating everyone as equals, he and his wife were regarded as the ideal royal family. But his wife grew weak with the years, and he allocated more and more of his wealth to the wellbeing of his wife. As they were awaiting their child, she became even more sick. Finally, as the princess was born, the queen was too weak to keep up the fight, and passed away. This caused the king to fall into despair. Unsure of what to do, he withdrew what remained of his funding of the people, and spent it all on servants that would take care of the princess as she grew up.



Seeing the king in such a vulnerable state, the demon quickly moved through the shadows and into the king's chambers. Latching onto his despair, he could feast on the king for years to come, until the king was broken down enough for the demon to take over completely.

After being possessed, the princess' forsaking the throne was the last straw for the king. The princess was the only thing the king had left, and now she was gone too. If the king wasn't allowed to be happy, nobody else was.

### What they Want

He wants to have his happiness back, but as he doesn't know how to get it back, he thinks bringing everyone down to his level of misery is the only solution for him to feel better

### What they do to get what they want

The king procures a magical bell that, when rung, produces a droning sound that drains the emotions of anyone caught by the sound. The droning sound also drowns out all music, preventing the people from restoring their emotions.

### Why you've made this decision

Relating back to both the Wholesome and Extreme Contrast pillar, the people live in joyous times, enjoying their lives and sharing their happiness with each other, they're living the most wholesome lives possible. But on the other side of the spectrum, we have the king, who's lost everything, and all his faith in happiness, the contrast between these two are what motivated me to make this decision. And the king's decision to steal everyone's emotions further calls back to the Extreme Contrast pillar, as the lives of the people change completely when it happens.

## Side Character - The Guardian, Barim Tonean

### **What are they like?**

He is a very friendly and welcoming person, who takes care of anyone who he happens to come across that is in need of help, human or otherwise. He grows his own vegetables in his garden behind his riverside cabin.

He is the spiritual guardian of the kingdom, and his well being reflects upon the land just as the land's well being reflects upon him. He is doing his best to keep up the facade for the princess, for the princess not to worry about the wrong thing. But as the kingdom is in dire straits, it does take its toll on the guardian.

### **What they Want**

The kingdom to be returned to the state it was in before. If it is not returned, the guardian would become frail, and eventually wither away.

### **What they do to get what they want**

He entrusts the only instrument that has been located in the kingdom to the princess, and sends her on a mission to defeat the king, so that the kingdom can be returned to its former state.

### **Why you've made this decision**

I wanted to have a character that can push the princess in the right direction, someone who already knows what she has to do, and how. I also wanted a character that doesn't necessarily always appear to be with the protagonist, although they are. He knows everything that goes on in the kingdom, and is supporting Caden from the sidelines.



## Side Character - The Tinkerer, Libell Edhalt

### **What are they like?**

Grew up in a town on the outer edges of the kingdom. Was always more keen on creating unique ways to make music than using an already finished instrument. She likes making her own windpipes, and once she made a harp out of a bent twig. She never had much of an opinion on others, but her family kept saying that the royal family isn't what it used to be, and that they are the reason the people aren't always happy anymore. This has sort of planted the idea in her mind that the royal family isn't to be liked. Her family always treated her hobby of making instruments as a waste of time, since there were finished instruments everywhere for her to use instead.

### **What they Want**

To prove to her parents that her instruments aren't a waste of time.

### **What they do to get what they want**

Set out on an adventure to help people by playing music from her own instruments.

### **Why you've made this decision**

I wanted a character that would be able to quickly tinker together an instrument, since the king has stolen all instruments, there are none left for a side character to use, and thus, they would need to either steal one, or make their own. I also wanted a character that would be able to plant an instrument that would play a song after a while, saving the protagonist from losing their emotions.



## How do these people conflict?

**Caden + Barim =** At one point the guardian will call back the princess, however the Princess believes she has the end within her grasp, and ignores the guardian's call.

**Caden + Elegor =** The princess never felt like her father was actually there as she was growing up. Unsure of the reason, her thoughts tended to lean towards her being an unwanted child. And she never got any answers from her father, so a lingering anger started growing inside of the princess. Although her love for her father never faded, it still hurt.

**Caden + Demon =** The princess wants to banish the demon at any cost, to get her father back. The princess doesn't actually know from where or when the demon came, but she knows that she has to defeat him. The demon is also what is keeping the people from being happy.

**Caden + Herself =** The princess struggles with her own thoughts in regards to fighting his father. Of course fighting your parents isn't easy, but she knows that it isn't actually her father she is fighting, but the demon that possesses him, which helps the princess and her sanity.

**Elegor + Demon =** Elegor doesn't actually want the people to suffer, and his intentions aren't evil. However, with the overflowing negative emotion of the demon, he is forced to make decisions that he doesn't like.

**Barim + Demon =** Barim is aware that the demon is the cause of the withering of the land, and thus wants it banished as soon as possible, not only so that he can recover, but also so that the land can thrive again.

**Caden + Libell =** Libell has a lingering feeling that the royalty are no good to be around, as imprinted by her parents. Sometimes this shows, and an argument breaks out, as they are working towards a common goal, but with different intentions. Libell thinks she can reach her goal without Caden, and vice versa. But as they part ways, they realize that they can't do it alone, and find their way back to each other.

## Plot

### The princess is born

The birth of the princess had been a long awaited event in the kingdom. However it didn't turn out the way anyone would have expected. The queen had become weak from the pregnancy, and as the princess was born, the queen drew her last breath. The princess grew up being pampered by the servants of the castle, as they had been ordered to, in the absence of a mother figure for the princess.

I wanted the birth of the protagonist and the events that followed to be shown in the game, as the whole game is based on the king's actions after the princess is born, and the princess's journey to ultimately help the king repent for his actions.

### Limitless possibilities, limited happiness

Caden grew up with almost anything she could ask for, at least material things. Having anything at the tip of her fingers was nice, but she never really felt like it fulfilled her needs. She didn't know much about who her father was as a person, as the only people who tended to her were servants. Her father rarely showed himself outside of his chambers and when he did he seemed to avoid her. This confused Caden, as she had seen the fathers of the people play with their children, and play music together with their families. But she had never seen anything close to that, not even a smile from her father.

Even though you have access to everything money could buy, you won't be truly happy. And as humans, what we crave the most is community, and belonging, and Caden didn't feel she had either as she was growing up, and this bothered her a great deal. All she wanted was a wholesome relationship with her father.

### Shadow of a father

Caden could recall two moments where she had met her father, and actually interacted with him, and not just seen him in one of the corridors or just slipping into his chambers. The first was when she was a child, she had fallen ill, and she cried for her father. She cried and cried until the servants couldn't handle it anymore. They fetched the king and he sat by her bedside, watching over her with guilt in his eyes until she fell asleep. She knew her father struggled with the passing of her mother, and that she didn't want to bother her father, that's why she rarely called for him, but sometimes the servants just couldn't provide what she craved, and she gave in. She hated it, as it made her feel inadequate and weak. So she tried her best to make sure that when she saw her father, she would act healthy, and happy, to show him she wasn't a burden.

The other moment was her tenth birthday. She had told her servants many times she wanted to practice swordsmanship like the other soldiers, but they were unsure, and waved off her requests. Then on her birthday, her father gave her a sword. It was the best gift she had ever received. It was made of wood, but that didn't matter to her. She practiced against

everything in the castle. Her bed frame, her wardrobe, her door, the suits of armor adorning the halls, whatever she could imagine being her enemy, including her servants, to their dismay. But apart from these two moments that she holds dear to her heart, her father has been mostly absent, and it has resulted in her having to teach herself her own walk of life.

The king may not know how to be a proper parent, or show her that he cares, or play with her. But even then, he does still feel the fatherly instincts when his child is unwell. He isn't a lost cause, he just needs to learn that you won't know everything from the start, and failing is okay. You learn as you go, but you need to actually make the effort of trying first. I wanted to show that the king does care, but he just doesn't know how to show it.

## Exploring new territory

As the princess turned 15, she was given more freedom in where she was allowed to go. The first thing that came to mind was meeting the people and she decided to go to the nearest village. As she arrived she watched the people eat, drink, dance and play music together, it looked like a lot of fun. As she approached them the music stopped, and they looked at her with distaste. Nobody seemed to like her, and she didn't understand why. She asked why everyone's mood suddenly became so gloomy. A man grunted and explained that they don't like royalty around here. The lifestyle of the nobles makes the others suffer. After the birth of the princess, the King had increased taxes on the people of the kingdom to pay for his attendants' increased care of the princess. So the people had suffered more because of her birth.

This is to show the relationship that the princess and her father had as the princess was growing up, setting the scene for one of the princess's wants. Also shown here is the extreme contrast between the princess's view of the people, and the people's view of the princess. And to give the princess a purpose, for her to recall how the people used to be before they had their emotions stolen. An intermittent goal to achieve on her way towards her ultimate goal, to get her father back and to help the people get their emotions back.

## The throne, forsaken

The princess couldn't help but feel like this was wrong, and went to speak to her father immediately. She pleaded and begged that he released his servants and gave the money back to the people, but the king would have none of it. The king told her the people were meant to serve her. As he said those words, the princess could see a shadow envelop the king. A demon had been breaking down the king's faith in his people, and it had finally managed to possess him. This scared the princess, and caused her to run away. Away from the castle, away from the servants, away from her father. She travelled far, past towns, villages, cottages. She travelled until her body couldn't travel any further and collapsed.

The purpose of this event is to show the player that something is wrong with the king, that he isn't himself. And also to show that the princess is afraid of what has taken control of her father. Which is meant to act as a soft deterrent during the game. That the princess is still afraid to confront the demon, but is still determined to help her father. Showing that bonds are stronger than fear, echoing the wholesome message of the game.

## Not so rude awakening - Introduction

She woke up in a bed, unsure of who it belonged to, but she didn't have the energy to question it. She saw a figure across the room, and smelled the soft aroma of soup. She ate what she could, before she fell asleep again. When she awoke, the figure was gone. Lost and unaware of her situation, she set off on the nearest road, hoping she would meet someone she could ask. Finally she reached a town, but there was no music, no dance, no food or drink being shared. She didn't understand. That's what they did in the towns. They played music together, and danced like their lives depended on it, and shared food as if it was their last meal. But now only a few people were walking around aimlessly. She stopped a woman to ask her why there was nobody playing music. And in response she pointed out that nobody had heard music for two years. The princess was shocked, what had happened? How was it nobody had played music for two years? She had heard music being played in another village only days before. Unsure of what to make of the situation, the princess asked why they didn't play any music. And the woman explained that the king had stolen all of their instruments, and with that, their will.

I wanted Caden's awakening to be a soft and welcoming one as per the Wholesome pillar. So I decided that she was found by an unknown person, and brought back to their cabin where she was taken care of, and was allowed to rest. I also wanted to convey to the player just how odd the people's new behaviour was to Caden. And having someone explain to Caden what her father had done allows me to convey it to both the character and the player in a natural way.

## A gift from a guardian

The princess was appalled. She knew she had to confront her father, however she didn't have the power to do so. With a clear goal in mind, she went back to the house she woke up in to gather her thoughts and come up with a plan. As she opened the door, she saw the same tall figure as when she awoke in this house. The figure was clad in long white robes that seamlessly transitioned into their long white hair. Caden stood there in silence as the figure told her to come inside with a gentle voice. The figure had prepared tea, which they shared while the figure introduced himself. His name was Barim Tonean, and he was the guardian of the land in the kingdom. He said it so casually, as if that's something everyone hears all the time. Caden couldn't quite understand the concept of a guardian. But Barim explained his role, and his relationship with the land, how he and the land are codependent. He can help the land become healthier, but only if he has strength himself, which he gets from the land, and now that the land is in such a dire state, he has no strength. As they drank their tea, Barim explained all that had happened in the time Caden had been asleep. How the king had become furious when his only heir had forsaken the throne, and had taken his anger out on the people by stealing their emotions and instruments. Because he thought if he wasn't allowed to be happy, nobody else was. Barim gestured for Caden to follow him.

They walked into a separate room, here Barim opened a cabinet, and the princess was struck with awe. The only instrument to exist outside of the king's treasury. Barim told her to take it, and make her way to her father, and convince him that what he is doing is wrong, and give the kingdom back to the people.

Barim knows that Caden is the daughter of the king, and what state the king is in. And knows the only one who could defeat her father and bring him back to who he used to be is the princess. This is setting up the expectation of the player and will ultimately pay off in a big moment which exemplifies the Extreme Contrast pillar.

<player gains control of the character>

## The adventure begins

Caden and Barim leave the house and go to the first village. Here Barim explains to Caden how she is meant to play the instrument to transfer her emotions to the people. As they all celebrate, a child comes running saying her sister is in the other town nearby, and she needs to be saved too. Barim then leaves Caden to her journey, saying she has given her what guidance he can provide, and goes back to his house. Meanwhile Caden continues on to the next town.

I wanted to provide a natural feeling tutorial for the player, as Caden has never played an instrument before, Barim teaches her how to do that, while also explaining how she can help the people by transferring emotions using her music. I also wanted a more urgent reason to continue to the next area than just going there because it's on the way.

## An unlikely friend

Upon arrival, Caden notices there's some sort of commotion going on. She approaches cautiously and finds that there is a military squad on the town square, taking the townspeople prisoner. She runs up to them and asks what they are doing, being the royal guard and everything, they should be helping the people, not causing them harm. This is when the first henchman of the king, a military officer type dude, tries to apprehend Caden, and she has to defeat them. A cascade of music restores the emotions of the people standing around, watching. Afterwards, the soldiers, having their emotions restored, realize what they've been doing and rebel against the henchman. The henchman runs off, and approaching her and the prisoners comes an orange haired girl. She starts picking the locks of the shackles binding the prisoners. Caden sees that her actions are straight from the goodness of her heart, and asks if she'll join her on her travels, as she could use an honest and good hearted companion. The princess and the girl, Libell, introduce themselves and decide to join forces to help the people of the kingdom.

I wanted the player to encounter some sort of opposition rather early on, to show that there is more to be concerned about than just the king himself. All of the military underneath the king are mindlessly following his orders too. And I also wanted the protagonist's companion to be introduced, to allow for idle chatting between the two characters as they travel along. Offering exposition, and perhaps just some entertainment and character development.

## The instrumental companion

So together they go through the next two or three towns before they run into a big problem, namely that Caden's instrument has been stolen during the night. She and Libell go looking for it, and find out through restoring various people's emotions and asking them if they've seen anything, that there was a military squad in the town earlier, and the squad leader was carrying an instrument, they were also informed that the squad was moving back toward the castle. This gave Caden and Libell a lead, and they set off right away, toward the castle. Eventually they encounter the squad, but as they have no instruments, they can't do anything, or so Caden thinks. Libell throws together a makeshift instrument for Caden to use temporarily. With this makeshift weapon, Caden bursts out of the shrubbery next to the road, notes ablazing, catching the squad off guard. The squad leader, holding onto her instrument, stands back as he sends the rest of the squad to apprehend Caden. When the squad is defeated, the leader tries to run away, but as he turns around he is met by a very angry looking Libell, who holds onto him as Caden plays a tune to restore the emotions of the squad leader. Coming to his senses, the squad leader apologizes and returns the instrument to Caden.

This segment is to showcase Libell's ability to create makeshift instruments and show to the player, just as Libell wants to show to her parents, that it is a useful skill, and in this case, saved the protagonist from failing her mission. This way Libell feels that she is getting closer to her personal goal, as well as the large scale goal, which is a bit motivational factor for her.

## A flickering light

Arriving at the town at the foot of the mountain which the castle rests upon late at night, as Caden and Libell are about to retreat to bed for the night, Caden stays up fighting her inner demons. She starts doubting herself, thinking she isn't doing the right thing, and that she won't be able to confront her father, the way he is. While Caden is in the midst of her thoughts, Libell knocks on her door, asking if she also couldn't sleep. They talk for a bit, and Libell becomes increasingly angry at Caden for her lack of determination and her faltering belief in herself. She tries to reason with Caden, but as Caden is too consumed by her thoughts, she decides she doesn't have time to wait around for Caden to come to her senses, and sets off on her own, to complete their goal. As Libell leaves, Caden retreats to her bed, but is unable to sleep, tossing and turning, worried about Libell. Eventually she realizes that Libell is putting herself in danger by trying to complete their quest on her own, and goes after her.

Fighting your father isn't easy for anyone, especially not when you are unsure of the outcome of it. And I wanted to convey that by having Caden's struggle with her emotions surrounding her end goal. I also wanted to use her personal struggles as a springboard for making her realize how much she cares about Libell. The purpose of her overcoming her self doubts and eventually rescuing Libell is meant to echo the wholesome message of the game. Showing the value of a relationship where you care more about the other person than whatever you are battling with at any given moment.

## Dual-edged reunion

When Caden finds Libell, she's been captured and is in the possession of the first henchman, who's back for revenge. She defeats the henchman and rescues Libell. Afterwards Caden apologizes for her selfishness and not seeing the importance of their goal. Reunited once again, they continue up the winding path toward the castle.

This is meant as both a heartwarming reunion for Caden and Libell, but also finally a chance for the player to defeat the coward that ran away at the start of the game. That way it both reflects the wholesome message in the reunion, but also reflects the extreme contrast between the weak cowardly henchman that you encountered at the start, and the upgraded, now actually dangerous henchman the player defeats in this segment.

## Almost there

As they make their way inside the castle, they are met with a “welcoming party” of soldiers. After defeating them, they spot the king behind the squad. He monologues about how Caden doesn't mean anything to him, and that he despises her for what she has done. However Caden retaliates by pointing out that she knows that it's the demon speaking, and not the king, that the demon is just trying to fool her into giving up on her quest. After a fierce battle, the king looks into Caden's eyes, and they show a deep remorse, he faintly whispers that he is sorry for what he's done, before the expression on his face grows sour and he retreats backwards. The demon then communicates with the king, telling him to stop resisting, and runs away to gather his strength.

I wanted the battle to be split into two parts, the first where you are shown a glimpse of Caden's father, still held prisoner by the demon. Giving both the player and Caden a clear sign that it isn't too late, and that she can still complete her quest. And a second part, where the demon tries to squash whatever hope Caden got from seeing her father's honest eyes. Both calling back to the wholesome and extreme contrast pillars.

## Believing in your father

Chasing after the king, they finally reach the great hall, where the king has taken a seat upon his throne. He is hunched over, and as they approach they can hear a deep cackle. The intensity of the cackle increases until he finally looks straight at Caden with a twisted smile. He monologues about how he is going to defeat them, and take back control of the kingdom, and make everyone live in despair for the rest of their days. But Caden isn't having any of it. She knows that her father is in there somewhere, and he would never treat the people the way the demon is. As Caden draws her instrument, she plays her heart out, playing for her father, and the time they've lost.

The demon had done his best to convince Caden that there's no use, and that they cannot defeat him. But Libell has shown that courage and motivation are more powerful than fear. I wanted this to be a wholesome message for the players to bring with them. That even though you may have doubts about yourself, as long as you stay determined and keep your will strong, you will reach your goal, and nothing can stop you from that.

## Fool me once, shame on me - Black Moment

But even all of her effort isn't enough. The king appears to be becoming weaker, and kneels down on the floor, grabbing his chest. Caden thinks this means her father has come back to her, and approaches him. As soon as she reaches the king, he knocks Caden's instrument out of her hands, and proceeds to ring his bell. Caden and Libell are both caught in the drone of the bell, and their emotions are stolen.

The black moment, to make the player feel the exhilaration of thinking everything is over for a brief moment. Then after a brief moment, showing that it isn't and they have to finish the fight to save the kingdom, as they are the ones in control.

## The greatest, smallest instrument - Finale

As the king is laughing maniacally, as he has finally managed to bring an end to the only thing in his way. All hope seems lost, Caden and Libell are just standing there, having lost the motivation to complete their quest. But as the darkness begins setting around them, a little tune starts playing. A tune coming from Caden's pocket. Libell had managed to slip a music box into it, which fills her with determination. Caden looks back at Libell, who is too far away to hear the music box, and is still emotionally blank. Seeing this, Caden promises herself and Libell that she won't fail, she will see this through, and save the kingdom from this terrible demon. Caden takes her chance and makes a run for it, grabs her instrument and with a bombastic cadenza, draws the demon out of her father, and watches as it disappears, never to be seen again.

The point of this segment is to show that sometimes, you aren't fighting your own battle, you are fighting someone else's, and that's a wonderful thing. Sometimes you need help from others to overcome your own battles, and it is okay to rely on others. But when someone helps you, you also need to make sure you don't take that for granted, and do what you can, with what help you have received. This story is just filled with wholesome messages, isn't it?

## A kingdom restored

Caden runs towards her father, and catches him before he falls onto the floor, he looks at her with a great deal of shame, but Caden just smiles at him. She carries him over to his throne and sits him down on it, then she runs over and plays a tune for Libell, to bring her back to her senses. As Libell wakes from her emotional slumber, she realizes what has happened, and hugs Caden. They had done it, they had vanquished the demon and saved the kingdom from falling apart. All that remained now was restoring the people's faith in the royal family, and giving back what had been stolen.

And finally, the payoff, their adventure has come to an end, and they have completed their quest. The king repents for what he's done, and does what he can to restore what he has taken from the people, both in terms of materialistic things, but also in their beliefs. A wholesome ending to a wholesome adventure.

# Scene

## Introducing Libell

The town Libell lives in is relatively small, with a couple of shops stocking food, herbs, and every day necessities, as well as a blacksmith. Other than that, the rest of the town is residential buildings, and a large square in the middle of everything. It is on this square that the people have gathered as a squad of soldiers have marched into the town. It is a dark and rainy day, there isn't a single glimpse of the sky through the clouds. The squad has stopped their carriage in the middle of the square and the leader is calling forward citizens by name. The ones who are called forward are handcuffed and chained to the carriage. Nobody knows why this is happening, and the soldiers won't say. But everyone is worried for the ones that are already chained, and fear more than anything that their name would be called.

The way this scene is portrayed is meant to serve as a counterpoint to the wholesome pillar, and thus resonating with the extreme contrast pillar. Nothing is wholesome, everything is terrible, and the people are suffering.

The people do nothing but look on as one after one, the citizens are handcuffed. That is until Caden runs up to the soldiers and tries to reason with them, this causes confusion in the crowd. Caden brings out her instrument and restores the emotions of both the soldiers and the people. Giving them their compassion and empathy back. As they come to their senses, the crowd is shocked at what is going on. An orange haired girl quickly makes her way through the crowd, a ray of light shining down on her fiery hair. As she runs, she reaches into her bag and gets a tiny metal rod out. She uses this to release the handcuffs of the captured citizens and looks at Caden, who still has her instrument in hand. Someone who stood up to the royal guard, in times like these, is surely someone who would help her on her own quest.

Caden looks over and notices the girl and her awe inspired stare. She can't help but feel a bit abashed about the situation. But eventually as Caden realizes it's the orange haired girl that helped release all the citizens, she realizes her good heart, and approaches her. She and the orange haired girl, Libell, introduce themselves to each other. As they look at each other, they both smile, and there is a mutual understanding that they both need each other's help. Caden asks her if she would like to come along on her quest to save the kingdom from the emotional dystopia they are in. Libell looks closer at Caden, analysing her. She thinks Caden looks kind of like the princess, but brushes that thought away, after all it doesn't make any sense for the princess to be this far from the castle. Libell then says that if she can be of any use, she would love to help Caden on her quest.

Then, as Caden and Libell meet, and realize they have the same want to help people, their goals align and they join forces. This is meant as a call back to the wholesome pillar, in that even though your end goal might not be the same, if you can work together along the way, you can share the load and help each other. And I want the introduction of Libell to reflect their relationship as a whole, going forward in the story.

## Potential problems during development

I might be making use of some tropes that I don't realize are there, which might be something that is pointed out later on in development, and to avoid that, some aspects of the story might need to be rewritten.

Finding ways to make playing tunes to restore people's emotions interesting, and not repetitive might be a challenge. To address this, I believe a lot of focus has to be put on the narrative reason and motivation for the action, rather than making it a simple task that you are supposed to repeat.

The story is somewhat haphazardly put together, and thus, after being reviewed, might have sections cut from it, or replaced. And that is why the story is mostly split into different feelings, or conflicts, for them to have a connecting narrative progression, but not be tied to each other in a more strict way.

## Client feedback

Feedback - We love your pitch. We really like this evil bad guy character, and we'd like him to have a personal grudge against the main character. Maybe the villain is actually the main character's wife or ex-wife. I'd like the story at large to represent their relationship somewhat!

Response - I thought the feedback was fair, as the antagonist didn't have any specific reason to conflict with the protagonist, making the core of the story relatively weak. So I changed the protagonist from being a random bystander in the forest to being the rightful heir of the throne. The king had started treating his people worse and worse, and the princess didn't like that. Eventually the princess found out that the king was possessed by a demon and ran away in fear, forsaking the throne. And thus their bonds were shattered. But could vanquishing the demon bring the king back to his senses? I thought this was a good way to address the feedback from the client, without fundamentally reworking the antagonist.

## Reflection

I enjoyed working on this a lot. Having client feedback is something I haven't dealt with before, but I feel like it both made the story better, and adapting the story to fit the feedback was fun. I may have spent a bit too much effort on the protagonist and antagonist, as well as how the world would be constructed. This meant that I didn't have as much time to work on the side characters, or the actual development of the plot, but despite the limited amount of time spent on it, I still feel like the outcome is good enough. I am not sure I did quite what the assignment asked for when it comes the way I wrote the plot and analysis, but I feel it was the most suitable solution to convey my thoughts behind the plot.