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Writing Portfolio

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"Make books and build community at North Branch Projects"

By Coleman Gailloreto, 07/08/2015

[Originally Published on the Local News Website "Examiners.com"]

Artisans and hobbyists who cherish the beauty of the blank page and the craft of writing journals and sketchbooks will enjoy North Branch Projects, a book-making and selling workshop located in the Albany Park neighborhood of Chicago.

North Branch Projects is a non-profit community enterprise, founded by Regin Igloria, an alumni of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Rhode Island School of Design. This workshop, run by art students from local colleges, is a neighborhood hub for artistic creativity and self-expression. North Branch Projects, according to Regin, "Is the culmination of different aspects of my life: my love for art and community, my disappointment with how art can be exclusive to the higher class, and my hope to rectify the disconnect between art and lower class communities."

The main shop space has shelves filled with hand-made journals, notebooks, and sketchbooks of all shapes and sizes available for sale. All are bound with elegant stitch-work: some are covered with arranged scraps of cloth and artist's paper, some with maps and old book pages, and some even with old circuit boards and recycled jacket leather. Local artists designed some books, but most of the volumes were made by customers who came in and decided to try their hand.

North Branch Projects hosts paid classes that teach techniques ranging from Coptic style, long-stitch, Japanese stab bindings, to basic pamphlets. Outside of classes, staff volunteers will guide curious visitors through the process of making their own book for free, with one informal caveat: 'make one for yourself, make one for the store'. As a non-profit enterprise, the money made from book sales is used to purchase new supplies for customers to use.

For those who want to learn book-making, North Branch Projects volunteer and video artist Amy Sinclair emphasizes learning alongside an experienced tutor: "When you learn the rules of bookbinding, you can use these basic templates for further experiments, making your books more uniquely your own."

People attracted to the artistic side of the DIY movement will find North Branch Projects to be a useful, well-stocked, and friendly space for creation and socialization.

“Golden Triangle” Antique Store entries for the “About” pages of the Chicago and Chiang Mai Branch Websites

Coleman Gailloreto, 08/26/2014

Chicago Branch Summary:

Tourists that want to purchase beautiful antiques or modern furniture while visiting Chicago should check out “The Golden Triangle” antique store, located on 330 N. Clark St. The Golden Triangle is Chicago’s most diverse antique store, and is filled with many different European and Asian paintings, vases, signboards, antique furniture, and so on. The Golden Triangle antique store also is associated with a professional workshop that uses recycled wood to create modern furniture. Golden Triangle’s employees decorate and arrange the store’s rooms using their antiques and modern furniture, creating dining rooms, halls, and lounges that are beautiful and comfortable models. When tourists visit the Golden Triangle, they not only observe interesting antiques, but also discover new furniture arranging techniques.

Golden Triangle’s goal is to help visitors find the most appealing antiques and the most appropriate home decorating methods. When your home has Golden Triangle antiques or furniture, it has a connection to both the past and present. The Golden Triangle Antique Store, from its modern to its ancient furniture, from its eastern to its western antiques, has international and historical significance.

If you want to purchase beautiful antiques while in Thailand, then feel free to visit the Golden Triangle Antique Store in the city of Chiang Mai as well.

Contact the Golden Triangle Antiques Store by calling (312) 755-1266, or emailing them at info@goldentriangle.biz.

来芝加哥参观旅游又喜爱东方古董家具或仿古家具？千万不要错过地处市中心河边330 N Clark St.的金三角古董家具店（Golden Triangle Antique Store）。金三角拥有芝加哥独一无二的中西典雅家具古玩, 包括中欧古董画件、瓶摆、招牌、家具、雕像等等。金三角也和专业工坊工匠合作利用古董木材打建造现家具。金三角整个店内空间按餐厅、客厅、卧室等功用打造出多间古典风格样品屋供顾客享受和汲取灵感。当你驻足金三角，你将不仅享受到典雅新奇的各式家具, 更能吸收最新最流行的装潢风格和技巧。

金三角希望帮助来访的每一位客人找到最合意的物件和最得当的装潢风格。一件金三角的物件也许就能马上让你的居家风格增添一丝融贯古今的味道。这也是金三角的一点心愿，希望能让家居体现古典和现代的传承，以及东方和西方的交合。

芝加哥金三角古玩店电话：(312) 755-1266，电子邮件：info@goldentriangle.biz

同时不要错过并欢迎大家参观金三角泰国清迈店。地址：Hang Dong district, 82 Moo 1 Chiang-Mai Hod Road，电话：+66 53 434 700，电邮：info@goldentriangle.co.th

Writing Portfolio

Commercial Scripts for TheWeddingMile.com (Based on Direct TV's "Don't–" Commercials)

TITLE: TheWeddingMile.com Commercial #1: "Sheep Eyeball Stew"
LENGTH: 46 seconds

VIDEO (drawn Illustrations)	AUDIO (Narrator)
[Scattered images of wreaths, ribbons, flowers, vases, and other decorations.]	Narrator: When you have a wedding to plan, you need to pick out decorations.
[A woman searching for information on a computer, leaning forward in her seat]	Narrator: When you pick out decorations, you search for bargains.
[A woman standing next to an open crate, holding a blue-looing glass jar her hand sheepishly.]	Narrator: When you can't find bargains, you blow your budget on rustic mason jars.
[A woman holding an empty wallet upside-down, looking frustrated: an abstract swirly line drifts out of the wallet to represent it's emptiness.]	Narrator: When you blow your budget on rustic mason jars, you cut corners on catering.
[The woman talking to a man with muttonchops and a top hat next to a bus stop shelter.]	Narrator: When you cut corners on catering, you hire a mysterious chef with muttonchops named Archibald.
[A long wedding banquet table with seated guests. Each guest looks uneasily at the soup bowl in the center, which has eyeballs floating to the top. "Archibald" stands off to the side, clad in an apron and holding a large spoon. The illustrated banquet's layout deliberately resembles Michelangelo's 'Last Supper'.]	Narrator: [Wryly] And when you hire a mysterious chef with muttonchops named Archibald, he serves stew with sheep eyeballs at your banquet.
	Narrator: Don't eat sheep eyeball stew at your banquet. Visit TheWeddingMile.com to find the bargains you need in one place.

PRODUCT: TheWeddingMile.com
WRITER: Coleman Gailloreto

TITLE: TheWeddingMile.com Commercial #3: “Don't let treasure hunters crash your reception.”
LENGTH: 46 seconds

VIDEO (drawn illustrations)	AUDIO (Narrator)
[A man talking eagerly on a cell phone, surrounded in a by the silhouetted, disembodied heads of friends and relatives he’s chatting with.]	Narrator: When you decide to get married, you want to tell your friends and family the good news.
[A man sitting at a small table with a steaming cup of coffee and a laptop: the implication is that he’s at a cafe.]	Narrator: When you want to tell your friends and family the good news, you search for invitation paper online.
[A disembodied hand holding a wedding invitation that’s brown and curled at the edges like a scroll. The text is abstracted as squiggles, and the signature has a large 'X' in the middle.]	Narrator: When you only find brown wrinkled paper stock online, you print your invitations on it.
[Three treasure hunters sitting on a couch and examining a white envelope. The first is dressed like a pirate, the second wears a pith helmet and khakis like the stereotypical Victorian explorer, and the third wears a leather jacket and fedora.]	Narrator: When you send out your invitations, one of them is accidently delivered to a treasure hunter's club.
[The previous trio of treasure hunters with their eyebrows raised. Exclamation points hover over their heads as they peer at the opened wedding invitation, which resembles a treasure map.]	Narrator: When one of your invitations gets delivered to a treasure hunter's club, they mistake it for a treasure map.
[The man/woman standing with a guest wearing copious amounts of jewelry, both of them gaping in horror as the treasure hunters poke handheld metal detectors in their faces.]	Narrator: [Wryly] And when treasure hunters mistake your invitation for a treasure map, they crash your reception with metal detectors. Narrator: Don't let treasure hunters crash your reception with metal detectors. Visit TheWeddingMile.com for all your invitation paper needs.

PRODUCT: TheWeddingMile.com
WRITER: Coleman Gailloreto

TITLE: TheWeddingMile.com Commercial #5: “Don't spend your honeymoon on a jungle Plateau”
LENGTH: 46 seconds

VIDEO (drawn illustrations)	AUDIO (Narrator)
[A man holding his hand up, gazing fondly at a gleaming wedding ring on it.]	Narrator: When you're going to get married, you need to find a wedding ring for your spouse to be.
[A man looking at his phone and a glass countertop with rings inside it.]	Narrator: When you need to find a wedding ring, you search everywhere for the perfect one.
[A man holding up a ring with an oversized red opal, handing money to a pawnbroker with an old-fashioned cash register.]	Narrator: When the perfect wedding rings you find are too expensive, you buy a mysterious red opal ring at a pawnshop.
[A newlywed couple boarding a plane via a motorized staircase, one of them wearing the red opal ring. A black van is pulling up behind them, with grim-looking sunglass-wearing thieves poking their heads out the windows.]	Narrator: When you buy a mysterious red opal ring at a pawnshop, a jewel thief syndicate tries to seize it from you.
[The wedding couple leaping out of the emergency hatch of a sleek jet, both wearing parachute backpacks.]	Narrator: When a jewel thief syndicate tries to seize your wedding ring, you have to escape from their private jet by parachute.
[The wedding couple standing together on the edge of a cliff, with rainforest trees behind them: their tux and dress are torn, and they both hold machetes in their outer hands.]	Narrator: [Wryly] And when you escape from a jewel thief syndicate's private jet by parachute, you land on a lost plateau in the Amazon. Narrator: Don't spend your honeymoon on a lost plateau in the Amazon. Visit TheWeddingMile.com to find the perfect ring for you spouse to be.

PRODUCT: TheWeddingMile.com
WRITER: Coleman Gailloreto

Tomato Bisque with Red Peppers

Shared by Coleman Gailloreto on Recipes4Living.com

Time needed

10 min preparation + 35 min cooking

Serving Size / Yield

4 servings

Ingredients

- 2 Tbs olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 Tbs tomato paste
- 2 diced tomatoes
- 12 oz roasted red peppers
- 2 1/2 C vegetable broth
- 2 tsp sugar, optional
- 1/2 C half-and-half
- 1/4 C chopped fresh basil, plus more for garnish

Directions

Heat oil in saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onions, then sauté until tender. Add garlic and sauté until just fragrant. Season with salt and pepper. Add tomato paste and cook for around 1 minute.

Add tomatoes, red peppers, and chicken broth to saucepan. Let simmer until vegetables are tender and the flavors have melded together. Add half-and-half and basil, then puree until smooth.

Serve in soup bowls with fresh basil on top.

Hearty Breakfast Quiche

Shared by Coleman Gailloreto on Recipes4Living.com

This golden brown quiche recipe combines scrambled eggs, bacon, and hash browns into one delicious and cheesy mix! Cut out a slice of this dish for a filling and energizing start to your day!

Time needed

5 min preparation + 55 min cooking

Serving Size / Yield

6 servings

Ingredients

- 3 C frozen hash brown mix, thawed and drained.
- 4 Tbs melted butter
- 3 large eggs, beaten
- 1 C half-and-half
- 3/4 C diced cooked ham
- 1/2 C diced green onions
- 1 C shredded Cheddar
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Directions

Preheat oven to 450º

After draining and thawing hash brown mix, place in 9-inch pie plate with melted butter. Press mix on the bottom and sides of the plate to form crust. Bake crust for 25 minutes or until golden brown and crispy, and then take out.

Mix remaining ingredients in large bowl, and then pour into pie plate before returning to oven.

Lower oven temperature to 350º. Bake for 30 minutes or until quiche mixture is golden brown.

Remove and serve.

Colorful and Savory Beet Burger

Shared by Coleman Gailloreto on Recipes4Living.com

This unique vegetarian burger recipe uses ground beets to create colorful, nutritious patties. Kids and adults alike will enjoy this burger's exotic appearance and delicious flavor!

Time needed

60 min preparation + 10 min cooking

Yield

6 Burgers

Ingredients

- 4 C peeled and chopped beets
- 1 C cooked brown rice
- 15 oz canned chickpeas
- 1 tsp minced thyme
- 1 Tbs balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 C minced Kale
- 1 clove minced garlic.
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper

Directions

Pre-heat the oven to 400º. Place diced beets onto a large saucepan and drizzle with olive oil. Roast for 40 minutes until cooked through, then cool for about 10 minutes.

Combine beets, chickpeas, brown rice, thyme, balsamic vinegar, kale, garlic, salt, and pepper in food processor. Process for about 15-30 seconds until ingredients are mixed, but not pasty.

Form mixture into 6 patties and place on baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Chill baking sheet in refrigerator for at least 30 minutes then remove.

Place saucepan over medium heat and re-coat with olive oil. Once the pan is hot, add beet burgers and cook for 3-5 minutes on each side.

Remove and serve.

[Excerpts] "Greetings and Farewells": How to introduce yourself to others in English

Submitted to A Cup of Know by Coleman Gailloreto, 05/27/2015

[EXCERPT STARTS]

Preface (前言):

This tutorial will teach you how to greet people and introduce yourself in English. Over the course of this lesson you will:

- Learn vocabulary and sentence patterns English speakers use to greet other people
- Learn English vocabulary and sentence patterns used to say goodbye.
- Translate short dialogues that demonstrate how to use greetings and farewells in specific situations.
- Take a six-question multiple-choice quiz about the vocabulary and dialogue.

这个教程告诉你怎么用英语问候人和介绍自己。你教程期间练习：

– 学习词语和句子英语的人用问候别人。

– 学习英语词和句式用告别。

– 翻译小课文表明怎么在特别情况用问候和告别。

– 考词语和对话的六个多选题。

[EXCERPT ENDS]

[EXCERPT STARTS]

Quiz (小考):

1. A friend has flown to your city to visit you. His plane arrives at the airport in the morning, and you

meet him at the arrival gate.

Which greeting should you NOT use?

a. “Good Morning!”
b. “How was the trip?”
c. “Welcome to my city!”
d. “Good Evening!”

2. A person that you meet says “How are you doing?”. If you are happy, then you reply:

a. “I'm doing fine”, or “Fine, thank you.”
b. “Good to be here!”
c. “What's up?”
d. “Blue,” or “Very sad.”

3. Suppose every Monday you and a friend eat lunch at a cafe. Before leaving your friend, which farewell should you use?

a. “See you tomorrow”
b. “See you next week!”
c. “See you next month.”
d. “Have a safe trip!”

[EXCERPT ENDS]

[Excerpts] “Getting Around”: How to navigate and ask for directions in English
Submitted to A Cup of Know by Coleman Gailloreto, 05/18/2015
[EXCERPT STARTS]
Greeting Vocabulary List (问候词语):

General Greetings (基本问候):

Hello! [hə'ləʊ]	你好！
Hi. [haɪ]	你好！
Greetings! [ɡ'ri:tɪŋz]	问候！
Hey! [heɪ]	嘿！ 干草。

Time Greetings (时间问候):

Good Morning. [gud ˈmɔ:niŋ]	早安！
Good Afternoon. [gud ˌɑ:ftəˈnu:n]	下午好！
Good Evening. [gud ˈi:vniŋ]	晚上好！
Good Day. [gud dei]	日安！
Long time no see! [lɔŋ taim nəu si:]	好久不见！
It's been been too long! *[ɪts bi:n tu: lɔŋ]*	久违了！

[EXCERPT ENDS]

[EXCERPT STARTS]
Farewell Dialogues (告别课文):

Carol: I need to go now. Goodbye, John!
John: Bye-bye, Carol! See you soon!

Jill: Good night, Ned. See you tomorrow!
Ned: I have to work tomorrow. See you next week, Jill?
Jill: Sure! Until next time, Ned!

Tom: Want me to cook you soup, Susan?
Susan: I'll be fine. I just need to rest.
Tom: Alright. See you later, Susan! Get well soon!

[EXCERPT ENDS]
[Excerpt]

[Excerpt] Translation from "Omnipotent Sage", a Chinese "仙侠" genre Web Novel.

By Coleman Gailloreto, 9/10/2017

李三保这段日子很烦，烦到了极点！

译文：

Li San Bao had grown tired at this point -- extremely tired!

他的横练金钢身已经修炼到了一个瓶颈，这一年来，也不知道用了多少种方法，愣是再没有办法让自己的金钢身再进一步，而他的修为，早在十年前便已经停在了四品的关口，无论如何也无法冲到五品的境界，这一切，都让他十分的烦心。

译文：

His fierce training in the Diamond Body Cultivation had already reached a bottleneck. He'd lost count of all the methods he'd used this past year, all of them fruitless. Still, he insisted on pursuing the Diamond Body despite lacking the means to reach it.

Because of this, his Cultivation had been stalled at the threshold of the 4th Level for ten years running; at this rate, he'd never get to break through into the 5th Level of Cultivation, a fact he found extremely vexing

不过，他相信自己很快就不用烦心了，这些年来，他带领着一帮子兄弟，在这洛江之上横行，打劫，有着很大的收获，凑齐了一大批的药材，这些药材，可不仅仅是用来炮制锻骨汤的药材，他甚至勉强凑齐了一份易筋汤的药材，只是有个别的几味药材的数量太少了。

译文：

Still, he felt his sense of hastiness was no cause for alarm. For the past few years he'd led his Clan brothers on a harvesting rampage along the Luo River, plundering and gathering up large quantities of medicinal ingredients.

They'd thrown all the ingredients together to brew a refined Bone Soup. He just needed a few more medicinal materials to complete the Sinew Changing Brew, ingredients that he currently lacked.

相比锻骨汤的所需，易筋汤的药材更是可遇而不可求，特别是其中有几味药材，便是那些传说中的高门大阀也很难找得到，他也是在一次无意之中的抢劫中得来的，虽然数量不算太足，但是如果配上其他几味药材的话，效果虽然差一点，也比没有强多了。

译文：

The exact medicinal ingredients they needed to turn their refined Bone Soup into the Sinew Changing Brew could not be gathered, only granted. According to the legends told by the head of the family household, a few of these special ingredients were very difficult to find.

Li San Bo had stumbled across some of these ingredients in the midst of a robbery. He hadn't acquired much; still, if he mixed the ingredients he had together with the various other solutions, the resulting brew would be close to what he desired, though not exceedingly strong.

他是一个明白人，知道自己这一辈子是不可能有机会晋入易筋界，修为达到七品了，既然如此的话，那么，倒不如早一点把药材用掉，至少让自己的身体更上一层楼，达到能够承受五品修为的程度。

译文：

Li San Bo was a perceptive individual. He knew he would not get to enter the Sinew Changing Realm during his current lifespan. In order to cultivate into the 7th Level, he had to take the best option available to him:

By taking a few droplets of this medicine each morning, he could strengthen his physical body to a level that could support a 5th Level Cultivation.

(Original Article Link: https://screenrant.com/elden-ring-fantasy-rpg-scifi-fromsoftware-theory/)

Elden Ring Might Be A Sci-Fi RPG Disguised As Fantasy (Really)

Elden Ring is currently being presented as a dark fantasy RPG like Dark Souls, but it could actually be a post-apocalyptic science fiction story.

BY COLEMAN GAILLORETO

JUN 11, 2020

*The upcoming FromSoftware RPG **Elden Ring** has been described as a new fantasy saga akin to the classic Dark Souls trilogy, but certain clues and ambiguities in the premier trailer for the game hint at a big potential plot twist: Elden Ring might actually be a post-apocalyptic science-fiction RPG, where magic and monsters are actually technological relics of a futuristic civilization that destroyed itself long ago.*

The premier trailer for Elden Ring is certainly steeped in the trappings of fantasy. In this trailer, a mysterious voice waxes eloquent about the power of the shattered "Elden Ring" while viewers are bombarded with dark, eerily mystical visuals, such as a king with multiple twisted arms emerging from his back, a bare-chested blacksmith breaking something on an anvil, a red-haired valkyrie strapping a mechanical limb to their shoulder, and two knights in baroque armor killing each other beneath a blood-red sky.

RELATED:* *Everything We Know About Elden Ring

Additionally, author George R.R. Martin, famed for his Song of Ice and Fire fantasy novels, was brought in by FromSoftware Designer and President Hidetaka Miyazaki to help craft the backstory of

Elden Ring. Combined with the fantastical imagery seen in the trailer, it's reasonable to assume Elden Ring will be a medieval fantasy RPG. Even so, there are subtle clues which hint that the Elden Ring world is a science fiction setting, one that only appears to be a fantasy setting at first glance.

George R.R. Martin's Elden Ring Story Could Be Based In Sci-Fi

George R.R. Martin is famous these days for his A Song Of Ice and Fire saga, but he's got more tricks under his belt than just fantasy novels. Before the success of Game of Thrones, he created the Wild Cards superhero universe and wrote numerous science fiction stories, the most famous being a sci-fi horror novel called Nightflyer. It's possible that Miyazaki enlisted George R.R. Martin to create a science fiction backstory for Elden Ring while using his reputation for fantasy novels as a red herring for fans; this would explain why FromSoftware is keeping the story premise Elden Ring close to their chests.

Elden Ring's Mechanical Arm Could Be One Of Many Hi-Tech Augmentations

Gameplay leaks on sites like Reddit have claimed that artificial limbs similar to the Shinobi Prosthetic in Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice will play a huge role in Elden Ring's gameplay; powerful abilities or magic will slowly burn a PC's arms to char, forcing them to replace their limbs with a variety of mechanical substitutes. If the number of artificial arms in Elden Ringwill be as large and varied as the weapon list in Dark Souls, it would makes sense for these Prosthetics to be the scavenged, mass-produced cybernetics of a fallen hi-tech civilization, or the product of magic so refined it might as well be technology.

The Elden Ring Could Be A Giant Space Station

What is the "Elden Ring" of Elden Ring? Most assume the "Elden Ring" is a powerful artifact akin to the Rings of Power from The Lord of the Rings trilogy...but when the trailer's narrator talks about the "Elden Ring" it almost sounds like they're talking about an space station, a massive ring habitat like those seen in the Halo franchise. Perhaps this Ring was a massive interstellar star-gate ("that which commanded the stars") or perhaps it gathered solar energy to fuel an ancient civilization ("and gave life its fullest brilliance"). Either way, if such a space station was destroyed during an apocalypse, its fragments would be visible in the night sky for centuries to come ("Look up at the sky. It burns!").

FromSoftware marketed Bloodborne as a Gothic Horror RPG, then revealed strong cosmic horror elements halfway through its plot. It would be in-character for them to pull a similar stunt with ***Elden Ring****, tricking both players and in-game characters into thinking they're navigating a fantasy world, then throwing aside the curtain to reveal that the protagonists are primitives exploring the ruins of their precursors, struggling to comprehend, master, and overcome science so advanced it looks like magic.*

NEXT: ***Elden Ring Might Be Facing A Trademark Issue***

(Original Article Link: https://screenrant.com/black-myth-wukong-english-journey-west-monkey-king/)

Black Myth: Wukong Translated - What The Game Is Really About

The upcoming action brawler Black Myth: Wukong purports to retell the story of Sun Wukong while still honoring the original Journey To the West.

BY COLEMAN GAILLORETO

PUBLISHED AUG 25, 2020

*The premier trailer for **Black Myth: Wukong**, which reimagines the mythical story of Sun Wukong, the Monkey King, has blown up on social media, exciting fans of both Chinese culture and mythology-based brawler games like God of War. English-speaking gamers unfamiliar with Chinese literature may have many questions about this upcoming game, questions such as: who is the Monkey King? Why do all the enemies have animal heads? How does the monkey player character pull weapons out of his ear? This article will answer all these questions and more by translating key lines of dialogue from the Chinese-language trailer, then contrasting the narrative presented in the previewed gameplay with its original source — the classical Chinese book Journey to the West.*

Journey to the West, first published in 16th century Ming Dynasty China, is a classic novel of spectacular adventure and magical marvels which doubles as a symbolic allegory for the Buddhist quest towards enlightenment. The protagonist of this novel is nominally Tang

Sanzang, a pious, faultless Chinese monk sent on a journey to retrieve Buddhist scriptures from a monastery in India. In practice, though, the narrative spotlight is frequently stolen by Tang Sanzang's divine bodyguards: the river ogre Zha Wujing (nicknamed Sandy), the pig demon Zhu Bajie (nicknamed Pigsy), a dragon named Yulong that nobody ever remembers, and an immortal stone monkey called Sun Wukong, better known worldwide as the Monkey King.

RELATED: ***How Black Myth: Wukong Changes The Dark Souls Formula***

Sun Wukong was a mischievous trickster hero, a monkey who hatched from a stone egg and ruled over the monkey tribes on Flower Fruit Mountain. After mastering esoteric disciplines taught by a Daoist Sage, he became immortal and mastered the arts of shapeshifting, cloud-riding, and the creation of combat clones using hairs plucked from his body. From the Dragon King of the East Sea, he received golden armor and the Ruyi Jingu Bang, a 17,550 pound gold-banded staff that could grow to the size of a tower and shrink to the size of a needle. After gorging themselves on the peaches of immortality from the Celestial Bureaucracy's garden and dubbing himself "The Great Sage Equal to Heaven," the Jade Emperor dispatched armies of gods who fought — and failed — to defeat the Monkey King. In the end, only the Buddha himself could stop the Monkey King's rampage

through heaven, sealing them underneath a giant mountain until the day a traveling Buddhist monk needed a bodyguard…

Where You Know Sun Wukong's Story From

If any of these details sound familiar, it's because both Journey to the West and its character Sun Wukong have inspired a vast number of adaptations and spin-off works, the most famous example being the Dragon Ball manga/anime franchise. The Monkey King has also appeared in several video games, many of them MOBA titles such as Smite and League of Legends. The video game Black Myth: Wukong stands out among these adaptations for two reasons: one, it's a Chinese language game made by the China-based studio Game Science. Two, it returns to the Monkey King's roots, drawing extensively from the original Journey to the West novel even as it adds new twists to the classic legend.

Black Myth: Wukong's Narrator: Who Is The Old Monk?

The opening narration at the start of the trailer for Black Myth: Wukong is delivered by an elderly monk, who talks about the different, conflicting stories surrounding Sun Wukong and wonders aloud which myth is true. Did he help Tang Sanzang retrieve the Buddhist Scriptures and ascend to enlightenment? Did he die during his journey to the west, only for an imposter to take his place as the "Victorious Fighting Buddha"? Did he even exist at all? The narrating monk then proceeds to tell the viewers his own Monkey King story, a story that becomes the gameplay of Black Myth: Wukong. The identity of this old,

starved-looking monk is still unknown, but their simian-looking features hint at a personal connection to either Sun Wukong himself or the monkey subjects he used to rule.

Black Myth: Wukong's Gameplay Recreates Journey To The West

In the gameplay portion of the trailer for Black Myth: Wukong, the player takes control of what seems to be a younger, untested Sun Wukong (more on who this protagonist actually is later), who's sneaking around the demon-infested slopes of Black Wind Mountain. Shapeshifting into a golden cicada, the Monkey sneaks past wandering packs of patrolling wolf demons who come across as starving bandits more than minions of evil (two of the patrolling wolf-demons talk about some jars of wine they found and worry that their master "Lingxu" will confiscate them).

The first mini-boss encountered, the "Blade Wolf Instructor," is more disciplined and contemplative than his bandit brethren. Before fighting, he gives the monkey protagonist the chance to lay down his weapon and study Dharma by his side. Upon defeat, he drops his bladed staff, a magic treasure named the "Scarlet Tide." After defeating the mini-boss, the Monkey meets a tiny old Earth God, who guides them past the hostile demons and towards the Guanyin Monastery where the Black Wind Demon, leader of the wolf demon bandits, lurks. In the climax of the gameplay preview, the monkey must fight their way past a giant wolf guardian, the previously mentioned Ling Xuzi.

RELATED: *History Of The Xuan-Yuan Sword Taiwan RPG Franchise*

The pipe-smoking, perpetually nervous Earth God actually relates a good number of plot details to the Monkey protagonist, valuable exposition that non-Chinese viewers completely miss out on due to the trailer's dialogue subtitles going un-translated. Roughly paraphrased, the Earth God is lamenting the loss of the old Guanyin Monastery, which was consumed in a great fire several years ago; even though the temple was rebuilt, the people no longer come to worship and light incense like they used to...

To people who haven't read Journey to the West, all the references to Black Wind Mountain and Guanyin Monastery add color to a game with beautiful visuals and a spectacular combat system. People who have read Journey to the West, however, will quickly realize the trailer of Black Myth: Wukong is a direct homage to the book's Black Wind Mountain mountain. In this early installment of Journey to the West, Sanzang and Sun Wukong take shelter at Guanyin Monastery; the corrupt monks of the monastery attempt to steal Sanzang's beautiful priest cassock and wind up burning down their own temple in the process. Amid the ruckus, the cassock is stolen by the Black Wind Demon, a Bear Spirit so powerful that Sun Wukong must enlist the aid of the Bodhisattva Guanyin herself in order to outfox the demon and reclaim the cassock.

If this gameplay sequence was a strict retelling of this Journey to the West story, Guanyin Monastery would still be populated by Buddhist monks. Instead, the Earth God talks about the burning of Guanyin Monastery in the past tense, which strongly suggests the events in the trailer for Black Myth: Wukong take place long after Sun Wukong's battle with the Black Wind Demon. If that's the case, though, then who is the monkey protagonist of Black Myth: Wukong?

Black Myth: Wukong's Monkey Protagonist: Who Is He?

It's easy to assume the player character in the trailer for Black Myth: Wukong is the titular Monkey King: he's a monkey man who wields a quarterstaff, transforms into a Hulk-like demon monkey form, steals the shapes of his foes, and even uses his hair to make an army of clones. Then, as the monkey protagonist moves to finish off the vanquished Wolf Demon boss, their killing blow is blocked by the real Monkey King, a taller, larger monkey with golden armor, a pheasant feather headdress, and a golden-banded cudgel, emblazoned with the characters "Ruyi Jinggu Bang," 如意金箍棒 in the original Chinese.

Intriguingly, this Monkey King isn't wearing his famous golden circlet, a restraining artifact which cripples him with pain whenever the monk Sanzang recites a special prayer. Does this mean his journey to the west has ended, or that it hasn't yet started? Currently, the answer is unclear.

RELATED:* *Assassin's Creed Set In China Surfaces In Gorgeous Ubisoft Concept Art

This plot twist is foreshadowed at several points throughout the gameplay trailer. When the player character fights the wolf demon with the flaming staff, he scornfully remarks: "Well, well: yet another monkey." When the diminutive Earth God meets the player character face-to-face, they express astonishment at "how similar" the monkey protagonist looks to someone else. The implication is clear: the protagonist of Black Myth: Wukong is not Sun Wukong, but a different magical monkey with similar features and abilities, following in the footsteps of the true Monkey King.

Some have speculated the monkey protagonist is a rogue "hair-clone" of the original Monkey King, a duplicate who didn't disappear after his purpose was fulfilled (a similar plot twist occurred at the climax of the Journey To The West-inspired movie Forbidden Kingdom). Others argue this protagonist is a citizen of Flower Fruit Mountain, the domain of the Monkey King. Having learned magical disciplines from the same Daoist masters who taught Sun Wukong, he's set out on a journey to find his missing king and bring him home. The protagonist's true identity, whatever it is, will definitely lie at the heart of ***Black Myth: Wukong****'s story, which is why so many gamers and fans of Chinese culture are eager to see where this Monkey King video game will wind up on its "journey" towards a release in both the West and East.*

Coleman Gailloreto Novel Writing Sample, 07/15/2021:

Cold Iron Crossing *(Story Genre: Urban Fantasy)*

Episode One: Pilot

In a cold neighborhood full of dark hearts and darker magic, only one man has the poker face and killer hand to deal out justice:

Dieselnoi Worawoot. Magic Private Eye.

Ka-pow! Brass horns. Bass line. Wah-wah pedal. Roll credits.

…

Is that who you think you are? The star of this show? Savior to the nocturnal souls of Cryptatown?

I want to vomit. I want to laugh. But all I can do is wait. Wait in the darkness, wait for the day your putrid idiocy destroys everything you love and sets me free!

On that day, as I rise from the depths to take you, I will laugh!

Do you hear me?

Ha!

Ha–!

#

You wake up.

Golden light creeps through the gaps in your half-shuttered window. The fresh breeze carries in the vibrant scents of a living city – gas fumes, mildew, blood and rot.

Off in the distance, you hear the dinging bells and clattering wheels of an electric trolley, bearing commuters to their early morning work.

You hear a loud bang, a 'thunk' that reminds you of a woodpecker burrowing into a tree.

Construction work, you think: someone's building a house, or digging a post, or banging a ghost-drum to summon rain. Nothing you have to worry about. Not on a weekend, anyway.

As your eyes drift closed, you hear another loud 'thunk'. Followed by a wailing cry of pain.

You sit up, kick aside your tangled bed sheets and claw your way over to the window. You look outside.

The street outside your flat is paved in brick, slick and glistening from the midnight rain. An electric trolley has ground to a halt in the middle of the road, sparks sizzling between its current collector and

the power line overhead. The conductor blows their horn over and over, voicing their disapproval at the obstacle standing in their way.

The obstacle in question? A giant Ogre, tall and skeletally thin, currently engaged in the act of beating a white-haired man into the ground with a walking cane.

The Ogre's movements are gracefully hypnotic, almost like a pendulum on a clock. Up and down the cane goes, its black wood shaft slicks with blood already. You could wash the Ogre crack this person's skull open, and all you would think about is how beautifully the brain matter would spray…

...such is the charm of creatures from Faerie.

You slap the side of your cheeks, bringing your mind back into focus. Thoughts race back and forth within your noggin. Should you do something? Should you stick your neck out?

The trolley conductor — a Satyr whose goat horns poke through the holes in his cap — sticks his head out the car window. "The heck ye doing?" He shouts at the Ogre. "Yer blockin' the bloody rail!"

The Ogre bares his yellowed, tusk-like teeth at the Trolley Conductor. "Still thine tongue, fool!" They growled. "Canst thou not see I'm busy teaching this punk a lesson?"

"Listen, ye maniac," the Conductor says, eyes narrowing in anger.

From your perch by the window, you hold your breath. Will the Satyr speak up for the white-haired man? Maybe, just maybe, you won't have to intervene.

"If ye like beating humans up, that's your own business!" The Conductor says. "But do it on your own time! I've got a dozen passengers who will literally bite my face off if you don't get off the rails right now!"

You groan in disgust. Of course, you think. This is Cryptatown, after all. Why were you expecting compassion and mercy from the City of Claws?

The Ogre grunts. "Fine," he says, grabbing the unconscious white-haired man by the foot. "Ain't no skin off my back, sirrah."

As the Ogre drags the white-haired man out of the path of the trolley car, you leap out of bed and don your garments like a knight preparing for battle.

You yank on your grey slacks, sharp and trendy, yet flexible enough for jumping and climbing.

You tug a pair of sneakers on, tattered shoes scavenged from the garbage can of a five-time basketball champion.

You slip your arms through a short-sleeved silk shirt with green dyes and swirling patterns...a shirt once worn by a powerful drug lord. You button your gangster shirt up with trembling fingers, taking care to cover up the tigers, towers and lines of scripture inked across your slender brown chest.

You go to the mirror over your dress, running a hand through your short, black hair until the worst of your cowlicks are dealt with.

Then, and only then, do you grab your porkpie hat and place it on top of your head.

The moment that brim touches your scalp, a connection is made.

For too long, I have been forced to watch and observe in suffocating silence...

...but now, finally, I can tell you what I think, Dieselnoi Worawoot.

"I've told you before, demon," you say, speaking to the empty air. "Call me Diesel. Full names can be a mouthful, you know?"

For shame, Dieselnoi Worawoot. An innocent man's life is in danger outside...and instead of rushing to his rescue, you spend your time primping and preening?

"First impressions are…!" You bite your lips and silence your own words. "Actually," you say with a nauseatingly sugary cheer. "You're right. I need to be better than that! Thanks, bud!"

You sprint across your cramped apartment and throw yourself out the window face-first. You plummet towards the ground below, red-grey bricks rushing up to give your face a fatal kiss. A normal, everyday mortal human would probably die on impact.

You, however, are a slightly less than normal, not-quite everyday mortal human with a small collection of toys.

"Striboga," you whisper, clicking your heels together as you invoke the name of your first precious treasure.

As the magic of your footwear activates, you feel it flow up through your legs, a creeping chill that seeps up your spine and tickles the back of your mind. Winds swirls around your enchanted sneakers, a leaf-stirring cyclone that grabs your body in midair and slows your fall from a plummet to a gentle descent.

You land as softly as a leaf on a field of grass. You click the heels of your sneakers together, dismissing the enchantment you spent sleepless nights layering into the leather, laces, and rubber of your running shoes.

The Ogre's back is turned. You see the Faerie brandish the white-haired man's cane again and give it a few practice swings. You see him look down at the white-haired man, their grey, wart-covered shoulders shaking with what you can only assume is excitement or anger.

You pluck the Demon-Sealing Hat from your scalp and reach into its shadowed inner lining. Your arm goes past the elbow, grasping around in the darkened abyss for the weapon you stored there…

(I see your arm and restrain the urge to take a bite out of it. No, I tell myself. Patience. The time will come soon enough….)

The sword you pull from your hat is long and tarnished green, bronze engraved with ancient, worm-like seal characters. This sword, this Warring States-era Jian, should be resting on soft velvet cushions in a well-lit museum display. To wield it in battle would be a crime against archaeology…

...and that is what makes your blade perfect for your purposes. The oldest relics, after all, can hold the greatest magic.

You raise the sword over your head, the name of your second puissant treasure springing to your lips:

Kokoua.

Magic drips from the swirls of your ancient blade, flowing over your fingers like staining ink. The jian hums in your hand like an electric razor, sparks and glyphs and currents of wind swirling along the jagged edge.

You see the whisker-like hairs on the Ogre's neck rise up as he senses the weaves of magic you've poured into your blade.

You could still ambush the faerie from behind, you think. A quick-strike with all your spells channel into his flesh. Or you could pretend to be a wicked sorcerer, interested in purchasing the white-haired

man as a magical guinea pig. True, the Ogre might bargain a bitter price out of you for the white-haired man, but you also wouldn't have to worry about getting hurt…

"Hey!"

A young, plaintive voice echoes across the street. You and the Ogre both twitch and turn your heads.

The source of the voice is a young girl with curly hair, round cheeks and grey eyes that stare at the Ogre with an innocent anger. She wears a tan windbreaker over an old-fashioned polka-dot dress, and holds the leash of a pit bull with spotted-white fur.

"Hey, you! Big guy!" The girl brandishes her pink-cased phone at the Ogre like a magic wand or protective talisman. "Leave that grandpa alone, or I'll call the cops!"

The Ogre's jaw hangs slack in pure astonishment. He looks at the white-haired man at his feet, then back at the little girl. "Art thou serious, pipsqueak?" He asks her at last.

The girl's olive cheeks flush. "I'm calling the cops right now!" Her thumb taps three keys on her phone. "You'd better scoot if you know what's good for you!"

The girl's phone beeps three times, the dull crooning dial-tone of a dead line.

"H-huh?" The girl stammers, a look of confusion and betrayal crossing her face.

The Ogre lets out a soft, rumbling chuckle. "Newcomer, are you?" he says to the girl. "Strain thine eyes, foolish filly; thinketh thou this place has cops?"

You see the girl's eyes flicker back and forth, locking onto the strange uncanny features of the cityscape you call home:

The wrought-iron gas lamps lining the street, burning with arcane purple flame.

The murders of crows perched atop trees and cell towers, gigantic birds who wear tiny, dapper top hats.

The spray-painted mural behind you, with illustrated firefighters and construction workers that move, that pound on the brick wall, that silently scream to be let out...

You see the girl tremble in fear, her lower lip quivering as she struggles to keep her calm.

"Dost thou understand now?" The Ogre jeers, spreading his arms wide and taking a step forward. "Thou art in Cryptatown, the City of Claws, the Hood of Howls."

The pit-bull lets out a low growl of warning, the flaps of their jowls peeling away ever so slightly. They step forward, placing themselves between the Ogre and the girl.

"This be the town for Big Bad Wolves, girl," the Ogre says. He kicks the white-haired man in the ribs, raising another grunt of weary pain from the poor bastard. "And the kind old grandmas are past their

sell-date." He makes a flicking, dismissing gesture with his long-nailed fingers: "Scoot on back where thou came from, Little Red: there is nothing for thee here."

"I…" The girl's voice quivers for a moment. "I won't let you hurt him anymore." Her thumb flicks over her thumb screen, making numerous swiping and tapping motions. "It wouldn't be right."

Shit, you think. Shit, shit, shit!

You take a step out of the shadows, rearing your bronze sword back to throw…

The echo of loud, slapping footsteps. Another voice, the loud deep cry of a grown woman:

"Fortuna! Fortuna, where are you?"

A dame runs around the street corner, her large, leather purse slapping against her side as she sprints. Her long, curly locks bounce up and down with every step she…

Her mom, you realize, the thought striking you like a thunderbolt. Their hair, their complexion, the dulcet tone of their voices...the girl's practically a miniature version of the dame currently rushing towards her side. It's the eyes that are different, though: the girl (Fausta?) has eye that shimmer like a clear lake, open and honest.

The mom's eyes, on the other hand, possess a hue that makes you think of storm clouds.

"Fortuna!" The mom says, sobbing with relief as she takes her daughter's hand. "Don't go wandering off like that."

The mom catches sight of the tall grey Ogre with the acid-washed jeans and the bloodied cane in his hand. Her stances shifts subtly, all her "Fortuna. Get behind me. We're leaving right now."

"But he's hurting that old man!" Fausta says, squirming in vain as her mother pulls her back by the arm.

"It's not our business," the Dame says, her storm cloud eyes locked onto the smugly smiling Ogre. "We need to fall back and find ourselves a new safe-house…"

"No!" Fortuna cries out, digging in her heels against the cobblestones of the street. "He'll die if we leave him!"

The Dame hesitates for just a moment. "Perhaps," she admits. "But we can't afford any more entanglements, sweetie."

"Listen to thine mother, pipsqueak," the Ogre said, twirling his stolen cane around in his hands. "Stay out of mine business, lest I pump a cap in your asses!"

The Dame goes very, very still.

The Pit Bull lets out a single, snarling bark.

"What did you just say?" The Dame lets go of Fortuna's hand and takes a step forward. "Did you just threaten my little girl?"

Fortuna's eyes widen with a sudden realization. She drops her phone in her pocket and clamps her hands over her ears.

The Ogre sneers at the Dame: "Did I stutter—?"

The Dame draws a pistol from her purse, a dark piece of iron with a rung-engraved silence, and squeezes the trigger.

The Ogre's kneecap explodes into wet chunks.

"No," the Dame says, sulfur-scented smoke pouring from the barrel of her gun. "No, you did not."

The Ogre screams and topples forward. As he does, he raises a curled claw and sings a one-note song.

A sword made of green flame sears to life within his hand: long, cross-guarded, tongues of fire sharp as razors. The Ogre hops forward on his single good leg, swinging his faerie-fire sword to cleave through the head of the Dame who hurt him.

You rear back and throw your sword. "It's dangerous to go alone…" you whisper to yourself as you hurl your blade underarm. Kokoua spins through the air like a boomerang. It passes through the Ogre's flame sword, azure light flashing as your Sundering enchantment discharges with violent force.

What happens when the magic forcing several kilograms of flame into the shape of a sword gets dispelled?

Simply put, the fire does what fire does best.

The Ogre howls as green flames pour over his hand, sizzling flesh and hair.

The Dame pushes her daughter out of the way. The Ogre eats concrete. The Dame holds her gun out in a shooter's stance and fires again, punching holes in the Ogre's ribs, and spine.

The Ogre rolls onto his back, snuffing out his burning hand underneath his acid-washed jeans. "Loathsome Human!" He growls. "I'll bust your bones—!"

The pit bull lunges forward, dragging Fausta along by the leash she holds, and sinks his jaws into the Ogre's ankle.

The Ogre screams and screams a new verse of spell-song. You watch as his flesh peels apart into a cloud of autumn leaves. These crimson leaves swirl away like a school of fish and vanish around the street corner.

You raise your hand. Your sword swims through the air, the hilt settling back in your palm like a well-trained hawk. "…take this," you say more loudly.

Fortuna lowers her hands from her ears, eyes widening as she catches sight of you at last. "Who's he?" she says, catching sight of you at last.

"An excellent question, Sweetie." The mom lowers her gun, barrel flush against the side of her hip, pointing towards the ground – almost, you realize to your discomfort, like a Wild West gunslinger. "Who are you?"

Moving slowly, you pluck your hat off your head and slide your sword back into the brim, the blade vanishing like a magic trick. "The name's Diesel, ma'am," you say in your best gumshoe voice. "Dieselnoi Worawoot, at your service…"

"Dieselnoi. I see. Hold that thought," The Dame says, walking right past you and crouching by the white-haired man. "Are you all right, sir? Can you hear me?"

You give yourself a mental kick. Of course. The white-haired man. The mugging victim you'd completely forgotten in your attempt to be suave.

"Wha…" The white-haired man whispers from between swollen lips. "Who…?"

The Dame, who hasn't forgotten basic ethics, unzips her jacket and slips it under the white-haired man's head. "We're going to get you help, sir. What's your name?"

The white-haired man's closed eyes flutter. "Lynn…" he wheezes. "Felix...Lynn."

"I have an EMT kit in my shop," you tell the Dame, trying not to wince at the sight of the old man's bruises. Unflappable, you tell yourself. Always unflappable.

The Dame's eyes lock onto yours. "Then go get it."

You rush back to your building's door, walking up to the storefront space right below your second story window. The scratched-up window to the left is filled with stacks of what can charitably be described as 'junk' – loud-speakers, game consoles, phonographs, and spell jars. The window to the right has fancier trinkets – sword canes, cursed rubies, lacquer boxes, a clockwork sketching automaton, and a glass vial with the yellowed knucklebone of a saint floating in rosewater.

Over the doorway dangles a thick oak sign with a water-washed patina and letters etched across it in gold paint:

Worawoot's Curiosities and Contraptions

Services include: Forging Artifacts, Not Forging Artifacts, Trading Artifacts, Not Trading Artifacts. Counterfeiting and appraising counterfeits. Groceries, teardrops, soul-fragments, and proportional favors.

You grasp the round doorknob to your shop of magic and mystery and give it a twist. It's locked. You reach for your apartment keys.

The keys you didn't grab when you jumped out the window.

You look up at your open windowsill, three stories up from the ground floor, distant from any convenient buttress or drainage pipe to climb.

"Well, damn."

No time. No time to kick yourself or buzz the landlord to get the door open.

You brandish your sword, Kokoua, blade of the sundering air, and tap the doorknob with its tip. Magic spills out, and the doorknob splits into its component parts, plates, screws, and lock clattering onto the unwelcome mat.

One act of forced entry later, you rush back out, a vintage EMT bag in your hand, oxygen cylinder clattering as you drag it down the steps.

Fortuna presses two tiny fingers against Mr. Lynn's neck, checking his pulse for her mother. Their pit bull contributes by licking Mr. Lynn's hand.

Fortuna looks up as you bring your EMT kit over. "Uh," the little girl says meekly. "Hi."

"Hi," you say back, pulling an oxygen mask from your kit and hooking it up to the cylinder.

"So," the Dame says to you, checking Mr. Lynn's pupils. "There's no cops in this place?"

"A few vigilantes," you tell her. "A handful of bodyguards, thugs, and cronies." You hesitate. "Some private eyes."

You slip the oxygen mask over Mr. Lynn's face and loosen a valve. Gas hisses: his breathing steadies.

"Let me guess," the Dame says, arching an eyebrow. "You're one of those P.I.s?"

You give her a gallant smile and touch the brim of your hat. "I've got the looks for it, wouldn't you say?"

The Dame looks skeptical: "You're sure there aren't any cops?"

"Not a chance," you say with a shiver. "The Alder's rather keen of being the only source of law in these parts."

. "...Okay," the Dame says, frowning thoughtfully. "Okay. We need to get this man to the nearest hospital."

"There's no official hospital either," you explain, pursing your lips in thought. "Well, the Anarchists do run a free clinic."

"The Anarchists," the Dame repeats, her tone skeptical.

You unzip your lumpy medic bag. The Dame paws through it, tearing open foil packages to extract the bandages and splints within,

"I'm not trying to con you," you tell her. "Ms…?"

"Fausta," she clarifies as she fishes out gauze. "Fausta Orobas."

"Ms. Orobas," you echo, waving your hand around at the surrounding street. "Outside, anarchists are balaclava-wearing rioters with a molotov cocktail in one hand and a vegan smoothie in the other, yeah?"

"I'll take your word for it?" Fausta replies cautiously.

You spread your hands, gesturing at everything in the street—the apartment buildings with door-frames carved into the shape of fanged jaws, the storefronts with security runes on the windows, the trees and alleys from where glittering eyes keep watch.

"In this town," you tell them, "they're practically a pillar of the community."

Fausta tilts her head to the side. "Huh," she says at last. "I don't know what I was expecting to find here. Definitely wasn't this."

So she didn't just stumble in here by accident. But why, you wonder, would a Dame like this go looking for Cryptatown — with her little girl in tow, no less?

Mr. Lynn's coughs hoarsely beneath you. His eyes snap open. "Philip…" he wheezes, trying to rise. "Philip!"

"Sir," Fausta says, resting a hand on Mr. Lynn's shoulder. "Don't move. You've got at least three fractures!"

Mr. Lynn seizes Fausta's wrist. "Save him," he pleads. "Save my son."

Your blood runs cold. The Ogre must have taken his son, you realize. And when he tried to object…

"You need treatment now, sir," Fausta tells him. Her expression turns hard as iron: "But I promise we'll find the Ogre that took your son." You see her large, pearly-white teeth clench. "He won't get away with this," she growls.

"No!" Mr. Lynn blurts out, struggling against Fausta's hand.

Little Fortuna flinches back, wrapping her arms around her pit bull's neck for comfort.

Mr. Lynn shakes his head violently. "Don't," he moans. "Don't hurt him. He's just confused."

You look down at the white-haired man with disbelief and a growing sense of anger.

"Don't hurt the Ogre?" you exclaim. "I'm all for turning the other cheek, but c'mon, man—he took your son!"

Mr. Lynn shakes his head again. "No."

Fausta's face grows pale. Fortuna looks confused. The pit-bull whimpers and strains at their leash.

"Wait," you say, pinching your nose. "I'm completely lost. Did the Ogre kidnap Philip or not?"

You still don't understand, Dieselnoi? How amusing. Fausta understands it. The child understands it. Even the dog figured it out. Do they have to spell it out for you?

Do I have to spell it out for you, ***Ruesi****?*

…

Ah.

Ahhhhhh.

Now you get it. Now you finally see. Was it the spark of idiocy that kept you blind, Diesel? Or the memories of betrayal you wanted to forget?

"The Ogre is your son," you say to Mr. Lynn. "He's Philip."

The white-haired man shivers. "He's a good boy," he repeats desperately. "He's just in a bad place."

[EXCERPT STARTS]

Ghosts of Chicago: Night Walk

Created by Coleman Gailloreto

OVERVIEW

Play a city exploration game in the Lincoln Park area, a massive plot filled with fun public attractions, historic buildings, and garden areas teaming with prairie wildlife.

Over the course of this journey, you'll pass by museums, beautiful outdoor sculptures, and the grounds of the free Lincoln Park Zoo, while also learning about the massive 19th-century cemetery this "spooky" park was built over — thousands of bodies and countless scattered bones are still buried beneath Lincoln Park's soil...

HIGHLIGHTS

• Stop by the Chicago History Museum.

• Visit the Couch Tomb Masoleum, the only surviving grave site in Lincoln Park.

• Learn about the Cholera victims, Civil War soldiers, and paupers still buried beneath the park.

• Have spooky encounters with restless ghosts and grave-robbing ghouls.

Storyline:

You shouldn’t have swiped left on that dating app. So many warning signs in hindsight:

First, it was far too soon after your breakup. Worse, your new date looked so much like your Ex: stark cheekbones, white teeth, eyes an arctic blue.

Lastly, the place and time you two agreed to meet; the south of Lincoln Park, on All Hallows Eve...

CHECKPOINT NO 1. – *Chicago History Museum*

Directions

Circle around the Chicago History Museum to your right, heading away from the busy strets and until you get to the children's fountain

Intro:

It starts off magical. That was the worst part. Your blue-eyed date laughs at your jokes, asks about your life, buys you a candy apple.

Then, as you pass by the museum, your date stops in their tracks.

"Whoah. Did you see it?"

"See what?" You ask.

"There!" He points at the nearby fountain. "One of the cranes! I think it just moved!"

Challenge

The Children's Fountain near the Chicago History Museum, dedicated by Chicago mayor Jane Byrne in 1982, has a number of interesting features that could form the basis of a "how many" riddle. For instance:

In the children's fountain by the history museum, _____Cranes in total spread their wings.

Answer

four, 4

Outro:

You examine all four cranes in the fountain, see nothing strange. ”You pranking me?”

”No!” Your date seizes your wrist, drags you up to the fountain. ”Can’t you see it, darling?”

You feel uneasy. ”I don’t...”

”Look!” They insist, blue eyes blazing.

You sigh, lean closer to the ornamental cranes...

...and that’s when your date pushes you into hell.

Facts

The central complex of the Chicago History Musum was built in 1932 by the Works Progress Administration, a federal agency founded at the height of the Great Depression to create public jobs for the unemployed. The Chicago Historical Society's original residence and collection was destroyed during the Great Chicago Fire of 1871; the society subsequently moved between several temporary locations before establishing itself in its curent abode.

In the present day, The Chicago History Museum hosts a number of exhibits and events that recount key events from the city's history – Chicago's early days as a frontier trading post, the Great Chicago Fire, the heyday of Chicago's meatpacking industry, and so on. Notable artifacts in this museum include Abraham Lincoln's deathbed, George Washington's compass, the first locomotive to ever run through Chicago (called the "Pioneer"), and the first passenger car to operate on Chicago's elevated rails, a transit system popularly referred to as "The L."

CHECKPOINT NO 2. – *The Standing Lincoln Memorial*

Directions

Keep walking around the museum until you reach the entrance with a broad stairway and an overhang supported by four columns.Turn your back on the Chicago History Museum and walk straight ahead the path that curves left until you see a standing statue on a raised stone platform.

Intro:

You vanish beneath the water, sinking impossibly deep...

...and surface, gasping, into a Lincoln Park littered with tombstones, lit by a blood-red sky.

"What the f–"

Gaunt humanoids swarm you, drool foaming from many mouths. They drag you to a Lincoln Monument drenched in red offal. And perched on the statue's chair, looking down at you....

Challenge

The two brass balls flanking the memorial contain cool excerpts from Abraham Lincoln speeches, but those may be too hard to read. A challenge about the animal image on the back of Lincoln's seat might be more straightforward:

If the standing Lincoln needs to sit, an _____ will have his back.

Answer

eagle

Outro:

The giant, skull-faced eagle looks on pitilessly as the drooling ghouls press you onto a butcher's block.

"Help..." You wheeze. "Help!"

"No help here, darling." You look and see your blue-eyed date, smiling with mouths on their face and chest. "Just hunger."

You scream...

...and that's when the eagle seizes you with its talons and flies off.

Facts

As the namesake of Lincoln Park, the Abraham Lincoln monument to the east of the Chicago History Museum is a key cornerstone of the park's history. Formally titled "Abraham Lincoln: The Man," informally known as the "Standing Lincoln," this monument was created by the Irish-born sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens and installed in the southern half of Lincoln Park in 1887. Gaudens used plaster casts of the real Abraham Lincoln's face and hands to shape the statue's feature, and enlisted the help of Landon Morse, a very tall farmer from Vermont, to serve as the statue's model – two factors that helped the sculptor create a sculpture with a high level of realism that wound up inspiring other Abraham Lincoln statues erected across the world. Standing in the middle of a semi-circular exedra, the "Standing Lincoln" is flanked by two metal balls, each engraved with the words of his two most famous statements – "The Gettysburg Address'' and a letter he sent to Horace Greeley about emancipation.

CHECKPOINT NO 3. –

Couch Tomb

Intro:

The eagle flies with you towards a stark grey mausoleum. It drops you onto a nest of bones and trash...

...and then the roof gives way, and you fall onto a coffin, next to an ethereal ghost reading a moldy newspaper.

"What the – ?" The ghost lowers their paper and glares. "You clumsy brute! Do you know how much my family paid for this tomb?"

Directions

While standing face to face with the Lincoln sculpture, turn left and walk forward, veering towards the busy road on your right. Stop by the grey mausoleum with the metal fence.

Challenge

How many dollars did the tomb cost?

Answer

7000, seven thousand

Outro:

Bruised, rattled by the past few minutes, you wheeze your answer to the ghost's question.

The ghost's anger gives way to pity. "You're alive. Did the ghouls drag you to this Land of death?"

He taps a brick on the tomb wall, opening a secret passage. "Find a body of clean water, and you can return to the living world. Quickly now!"

You move.

Facts

The Couch Tomb, located just north of the Chicago History Museum campus, is a discrete reminder of Lincoln Park's former status as a lakefront cemetery for Chicago's dead.

Historians still aren't sure who – or whom – is still buried in this old mausoleum, first erected in 1858 to house the body of Ira Couch, a tailor turned real-estate developer and pillar of the Chicago community. Subsequent deceased members of the Couch family were interred in Rosehill Cemetary after the founding of Lincoln Park, making it unclear whether Ira Couch's body and the bodies of his kindred were ever removed from the original

mausoleum; the fifty-ton stone structure, most likely, was too heavy to be moved. Beyond the family sobriquet of "Couch," no names or dates of death adorn the exterior of this tomb.

In 1999, the Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trust funded an extensive restoration of the Couch Tomb edifice, refurbishing its masonry, adding ornamental fencing, and installing nighttime lighting.

[EXCERPT ENDS]