

# Game Writing Samples - Helen Lam

Portfolio: [www.lastdaysofparadise.com](http://www.lastdaysofparadise.com) | [helenlam.toronto@gmail.com](mailto:helenlam.toronto@gmail.com) | [LinkedIn](#)

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## Branching Dialogue

**Game Title:** Marigold Mysteries

**Characters:** Leon, Ariadne (called Aria)

**Context:** Leon is the town guard-in-training for Marigold. He's been tasked to investigate the brutal murder of his friend and mentor, Gertrude. In his search for witnesses and suspects, he speaks to Aria. Aria is a well-known singer with an artistic temperament and a shrouded past.

**Progress:** Location is the Marigold town square. The story branch occurs after the prologue ends. After Leon learns Aria's alibi, this event unlocks further dialogue branches with Aria and with other characters. The Player discovers information that builds on Aria's motive, means, opportunity, and alibi.

### **BRANCH START**

#### **ARIANDE (ARIA)**

Leon! It's been a while. What's new?

#### **LEON**

Aria, I'm here on serious business. Can you tell me where you were three nights ago?

#### **ARIA**

Oh Leon, being serious is overrated. I was in the same place I always am, finding musical inspiration in the Marigold Commons. Did you know that nightingales' songs change with the moon?

**LEON**

*[Thought]* She's a kind woman but it's hard to get her to focus.  
I'm afraid I have some bad news - Gertrude was murdered three nights ago.

**ARIA**

By the Saints. Poor woman...

**Choice A: AriaAlibi**

**Choice B: AriaAndGertrude**

**IF Choice A: AriaAlibi**

**LEON**

Can anyone verify you were in the Commons all night?

**ARIA**

I wasn't with anyone that night. Sometimes the vocal arts require alone time. You know, for inspiration.

**THEN Choice C: WhatAriaSaw**

**IF Choice B: AriaAndGertrude**

**LEON**

Were you and Gertrude close?

**ARIA**

Well, not very. Most of my friends are other singers, you see. Gertrude was more of a brainiac. She loved her research more than anything else.

**THEN Choice A: AriaAlibi**

**Choice C: WhatAriaSaw**

**IF Choice C: WhatAriaSaw**

**LEON**

See anything strange that night?

**ARIA**

The clouds were thick like paste. Two owlcats fought in the bushes. I wrote a song about it. Well, I was trying to at least...

**THEN Choice D: Interruption?**

**Choice E: Song**

**Choice D: Interruption?**

**LEON**

What interrupted you?

**ARIA**

Negative energy, you could say. I was hanging around Marigold Potions. I heard Sara and Gertrude in a horrible spat.

**LEON**

What were they arguing about?

*[Thought] So, Gertrude may have had some trouble with the other residents. Never took her for the type to seek drama. Always seemed too wrapped up in her work.*

**ARIA**

Oh - I couldn't tell you. I ran away. I wanted to finish my composition.

**LEON**

Did anybody see you leave?

**ARIA**

I don't think so. I work alone!

**LEON**

That's all for now.

*[Thought] It worries me that no one can vouch for her alibi...*

### IF Choice E: Song

**LEON**

Tell me more about this song.

**ARIA**

You know how rainstorms sound off the cliffs of East Reinlass - splick splick splick? That kind of rhythm. But just when it was getting good in my head...

### THEN Choice D: Interruption?

**BRANCH END.**

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## Quest Design

**Quest Title:** Where is Vivian?

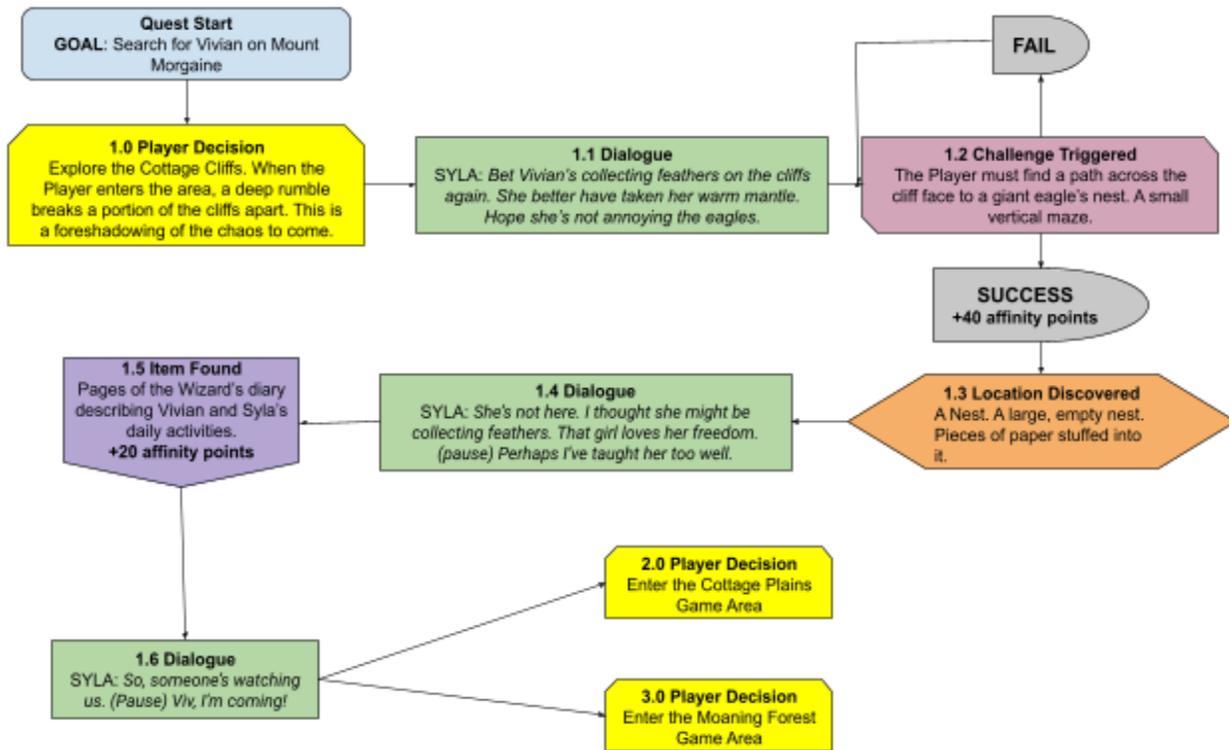
**Characters:** Syla Goddess of Chaos, Elemental NPCs, the Wizard

**Location:** The island of Mount Morgaine (game level).

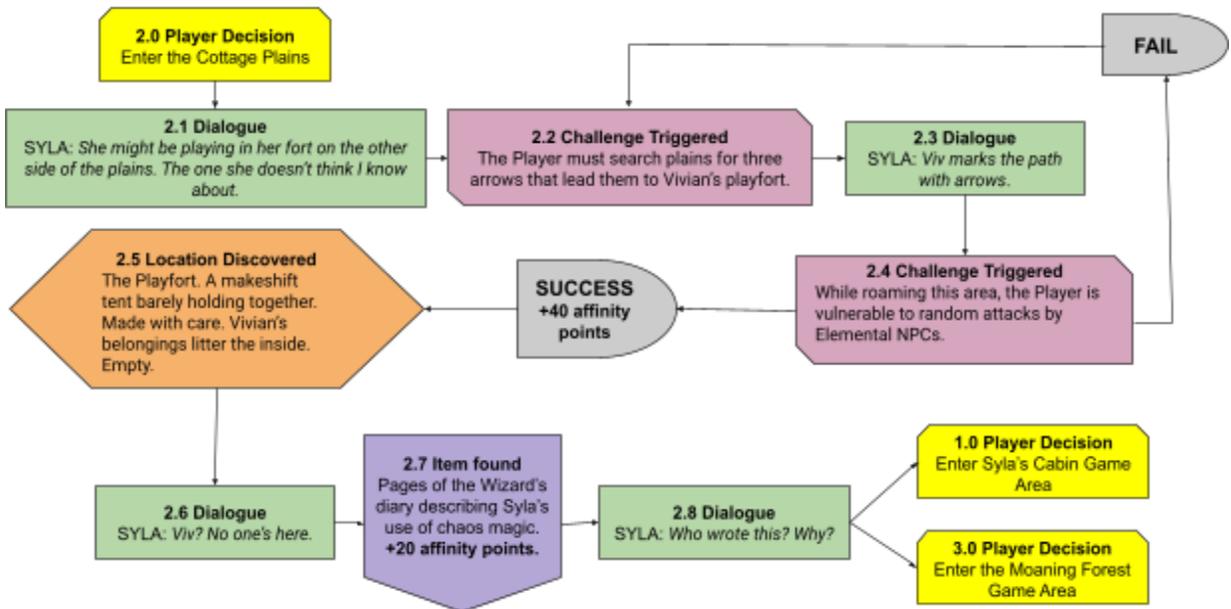
**Context:** Syla searches the game area for her missing daughter Vivian (age 10). She comes to realize that they are being watched by the Wizard. She senses danger and is increasingly fearful for Vivian.

**Reward:** Player gains pages of the Wizard's Diary and learns about Vivian's whereabouts. Player gains world affinity points.

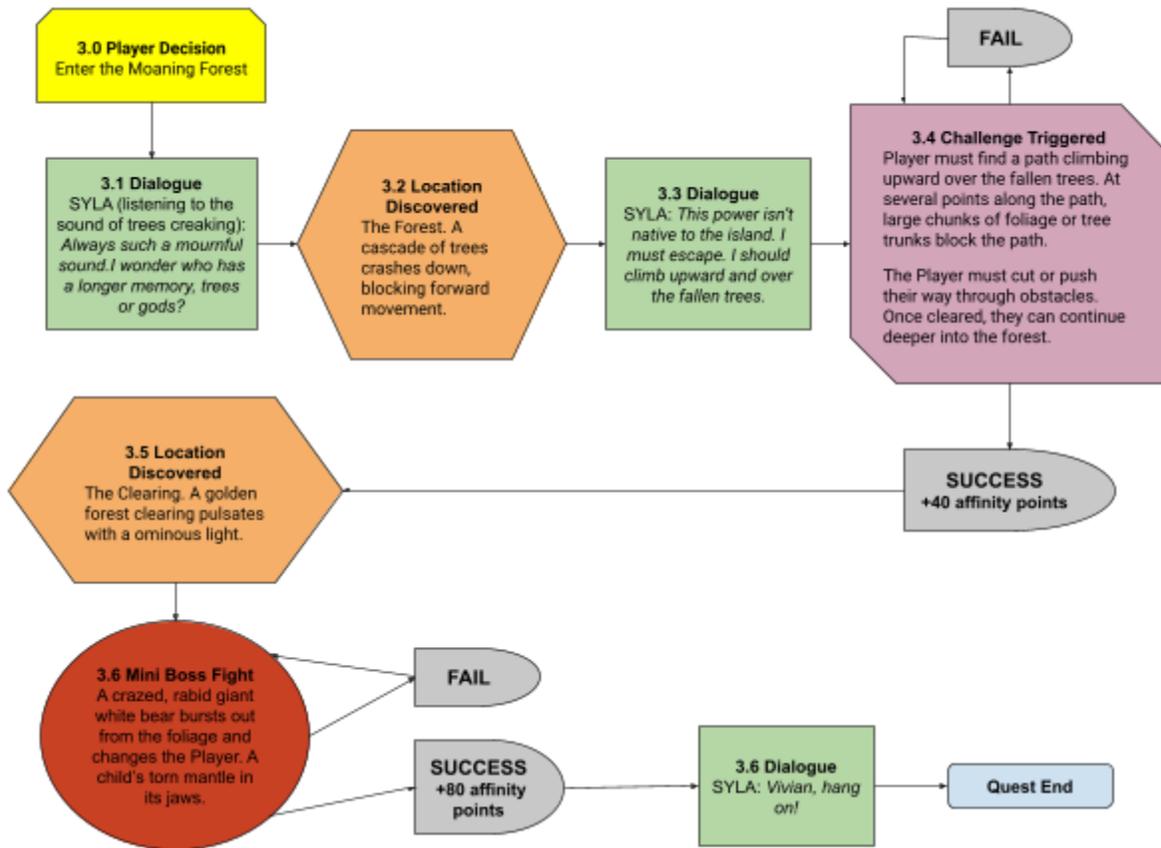
### Syla's Cabin on Mount Morgaine - Game Area



### Cottage Plains - Game Area



## Moaning Forest - Game Area



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## Barks

**Game Title:** Sylva

**Character:** Sylva (the Player)

**Context:** The warrior goddess Sylva searches the game area for her missing daughter Vivian. She becomes aware that a force has emerged on the island, bringing new danger. She is increasingly distraught at Vivian's disappearance.

Line ID	Category	Bark	Character	Game Context	Voice Over Direction
S_Lv1_01	Exploration	Gods, reveal what I'm not seeing.	Sylva, Goddess of Chaos	If Player tries to leave the area before discovering a Point of Interest.	Intense whisper
S_Lv1_02	Exploration	Nothing much here, better move on.	Sylva, Goddess of Chaos	If Player is stuck in one area.	Impatient

S_Lv1_03	In combat	Where did you come from?	Syla, Goddess of Chaos	Defeat in battle	Surprised, dismayed
S_Lv1_04	In combat	<i>Out of my way!</i>	Syla, Goddess of Chaos	Victory in battle	Joyful, exultant
S_Lv1_05	Health	It's not my time...	Syla, Goddess of Chaos	Player health is low	Desperate, despairing
S_Lv1_05	Health	Ah, crystal warmth, at last.	Syla, Goddess of Chaos	Player regains health	Relieved, comforted

**Game Title:** Last Meal Standing

**Character:** Chuck, Belle, Jambon (Playable characters)

**Context:** Sandwiches fight for supremacy in a battle royale, multiplayer setting. A satirical take on common tropes in multiplayer games, the Player's sandwich must defeat the others in the arena to be the last meal standing.

Line ID	Category	Bark	Character	Game Context	Voice Over Direction
C_Lv1_01	Combat	Stay on the plate or get whooped. It's just common sense.	Chuck the burger	Player wins	Jubilant OR <i>improvise</i>
C_Lv1_02	Combat	Beef bomb incoming!	Chuck the burger	On successful hit	All out hollering OR <i>improvise</i>
C_Lv1_03	Character selection	I got one job: clear the plate. There's no secret sauce.	Chuck the burger	Player selects character	Contented, relaxed
B_Lv2_01	Combat	That's how you clean a plate. With extreme prejudice.	Belle the avocado	Player wins	Angry, proud
B_Lv2_02	Combat	Green is mean!	Belle the avocado	On successful hit	Enraged OR <i>improvise</i>
B_Lv2_03	Character selection	There's no quit in my pit, there're no groans in my stone. I'm ready.	Belle the avocado	Player selects character	Euphoric with an edge

J_Lv3_01	Combat	Gagnant! Carnage is a hound that obeys only me.	Jambon the ham and butter sandwich	Player wins	Vicious satisfaction
J_Lv3_02	Combat	Your best before date is – now.	Jambon the ham and butter sandwich	On successful hit	Triumphant OR <i>improvise</i>
J_Lv3_03	Character selection	I'm 100% pure French croissant. Their keto diet? C'est fini.	Jambon the ham and butter sandwich	Player selects character	Seductive, silky tones

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## Item Descriptions

**Game Title:** Mage Arena

**Character:** Mage that works for the village guild (the Player)

**Context:** Rogue-like deckbuilder card game. The Player builds their deck around a specific character archetype: Occultist, Pyromancer, Icecaller, or Viper. At the end of each round, the Player can purchase upgrades that change player stats and grant new effects. The tone of the game is humorous, sardonic, and playful.

Line ID	Item Category	Item Name	Item Description	Gameplay Impact
It_H_01	Hats	Old Wizard Hat	Worn by a wizard who taught himself to levitate. He was high all the time.	Add 1 Mana to your Mana Pool
It_C_02	Cloaks	Alchemist Cloak	Worn to help mages transmute matter. A generous cloak that needs to learn about having boundaries.	Add an extra effect to one random card in your deck: when card is cast, gain gold equal to mana value.
It_W_03	Wands	Astro Wand	This wand was made from a fallen meteor. It's seen terrible things in space. Horrible, unspeakable things.	Using a card increases the damage of all other cards by 1 next turn.
It_S_04	Shoes	Mage Shoes	Handcrafted leather with a cork-bed midsole that forms to your feet over time. Has a secret sleepwalking disorder.	The highest mana card in your hand costs 1 less.
It_Set_05	Item Set	Demonologist Set – Based around sacrifice.	Outfit shows that you've given yourself over to the dark arts. Couldn't commit to guitar lessons, or even that Netflix subscription, but you can commit to harnessing the	Wearing this set does damage to you but also increases overall damage output.

			power of demons. Oh well, that's what makes you so scary. Go with it.	
It_Set_0 6	Item Set	Druid Set – Heals you when casting.	Outfit is worn by those completely in tune with nature. Nature is your teacher, your bed, your bathroom. Everyone hates you. But you're too busy blissing out and healing yourself during high stakes tournaments.	Wearing this set heals the Player when casting during rounds.

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## Character Profile

**Game Title:** Calamity Fighters

**Age:** 22, born on Marse 5, 0003

**Gender:** Male

**Origin:** A Monster Hunter from the Bonewoods

**Ethnicity:** Caucasian

**Name:** Tor the Monster Hunter, Arrow of the Bone Priestess

**Personality:** Boisterous, instinct-driven, exceptional strength and endurance, honest

### Character references

- Kratos - loves the fight but abhors politics.
- Khal Drogo - operates on pure instinct, which can get him into trouble.
- Jake the Dog (from Adventure Time) - protective, approachable older brother.

### Physical appearance

Tor is an imposing warrior. Standing tall and wide-shouldered, he always bears a ready smile and a good appetite. With his broad hands, he can hold the entire skulls of monsters in his grip. His clothes are sewn from soft monster leather, which he covers with hunter's armour made of prickly monster hide. Tor is especially proud of his adornments, such as monster bone and teeth ornaments, taken from his hunts. Despite his size, Tor does not usually provoke fear in others. His sociable nature and protective instincts give him the air of being everyone's older brother. The exception is when Tor is in the grip of fury in battle.

### Character Overview

Tor is a member of the Monster Hunter faction. He was born after the Great Calamity and grew up in the depths of the Bonewoods. Cousin to the Bone Priestess, he was conferred status above the other Hunters from his teenage years. However, political privileges never appealed to Tor. Instead, he was focused on raising his six siblings after the death of his parents. In the end, Tor never really cared for politics. From the moment he could hold an axe, he was scouring the forests for monsters. His heart yearned for freedom.

In the summer of his 22nd year, Tor received a mission from the Bone Priestess he could not ignore. Tor was to travel to a town called Bastion to be the Monster Hunters' envoy. The Hunters could no longer afford to isolate themselves in the Bonewoods. He was to build alliances with the other factions and guilds. Tor wrestled with this call to destiny. He felt there were many others more suited to the job. However, in the end he relented. No one disobeys the Priestess's vision. The warrior was especially heartbroken, because it was unusual for a Hunter to venture anywhere alone. When he set off for Bastion, Tor felt lonely for the first time in his life. But once he arrived in the city, he was amazed at the sheer variety of life outside the Bonewoods. The food and spices in particular were endlessly fascinating. Tor joined a guild so that he could continue to hunt monsters while honouring the wishes of the Priestess. When he's not on a mission from the Guildmaster, he can be found cooking and carousing.

### Example Dialogue Lines

- "Every new monster brings a new fight and even better, new ingredients to experiment with."
- "All I need to be happy is an axe, a recipe, and a hunt. Life is simple if you let it be."
- "Monster stew is my speciality. I make it up as I go but it never fails to impress. Trust me."

### Vocal Profile

- **Age:** Early to mid 20s
- **Gender:** Male
- **Accent:** American
- **Vocal qualities:** Throaty baritone. Full of life. No deception in his tone.

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## Worldbuilding

### The Blue City

#### Genre & Tone

A gritty urban cityscape with a surreal, dreamlike tone. References include Dark City (1998), Hong Kong, New York, Stockholm, Jacek Yerka's art, and Elden Ring.

#### High-Level Premise

The Blue City is a large, sprawling city state on the scale of Hong Kong. The Player is a citizen, who interacts with NPC characters, as well as features of the City itself. The City operates on dream logic, for example, the route between the new quarter and old quarter shifts according to who is walking it. Also, spontaneous gardens occasionally sprout inside buildings, forcing the City to declare it a public garden. The Blue City is a

mirror for the unconscious and resides within the mind of a never-seen character called Meng.

### **Geography and Climate**

The climate of the Blue City is similar to a city in the northern hemisphere with four seasons. The City is constructed from two major concentric circles. At the centre, the Old Quarter sits in the inner circle. Its architecture is in the neo-gothic and art nouveau style. At the heart of the Old City lies the Palace. All major holidays take place there and paths in and out of the centre change constantly. The New Quarter is the outer circle. There, eclectic buildings reflect all the trappings of modern life. It is divided into multiple zones where layers of urban density produce an organized chaos.

### **People and Culture**

The citizens reflect a modern, multicultural metropolis. They are unfazed by the surreal nature of the City. They go about their daily lives with the same concerns as any city dweller around the world. When exceptional circumstances occur, the people consider this as normal as a rainstorm or a traffic accident. For example, when Billie the painter wakes up to find he has painted himself into his bedroom wall, he simply waits for a friend to visit so they can call an ambulance. NPCs will see the player as a fellow citizen or friend. They will recount bizarre incidents without surprise, instead preferring to complain about their lives or express joy about an event or circumstance the unpredictable City has thrust on them.

### **History**

The City, a persistent reality in the mind of Meng, is a place out-of-time. Similar to other mythical cities, their look and feel are a product of the time and place of their creator. Their origins are tied to cultural narrative and not historical events.

### **Production and Implementation notes**

- **Interactive Elements** – The Player will need to navigate shifting streets, climb walls, maintain an inventory, explore, and talk with NPCs to complete quests.
- **Narrative Triggers** - Branching questlines/dialogues will be triggered by NPC encounters, found objects, points of interest in the environment, and the player's own daily agenda which they can choose.
- **Progression Systems** – The Player can unlock districts triggered by narrative and quest achievements, unlock skill trees tied to choices, encounters and inventory objects. Choices and skill trees determine game endings.
- **Scalability** - The Blue City is expandable through DLCs that will leverage the same assets but present more stories that lead to new facets of the city.

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