

**Narrative**



**And Games**

# Games & Story: An Introduction

Video Games and Storytelling



- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jdG2LHair0>

# Why Stories?

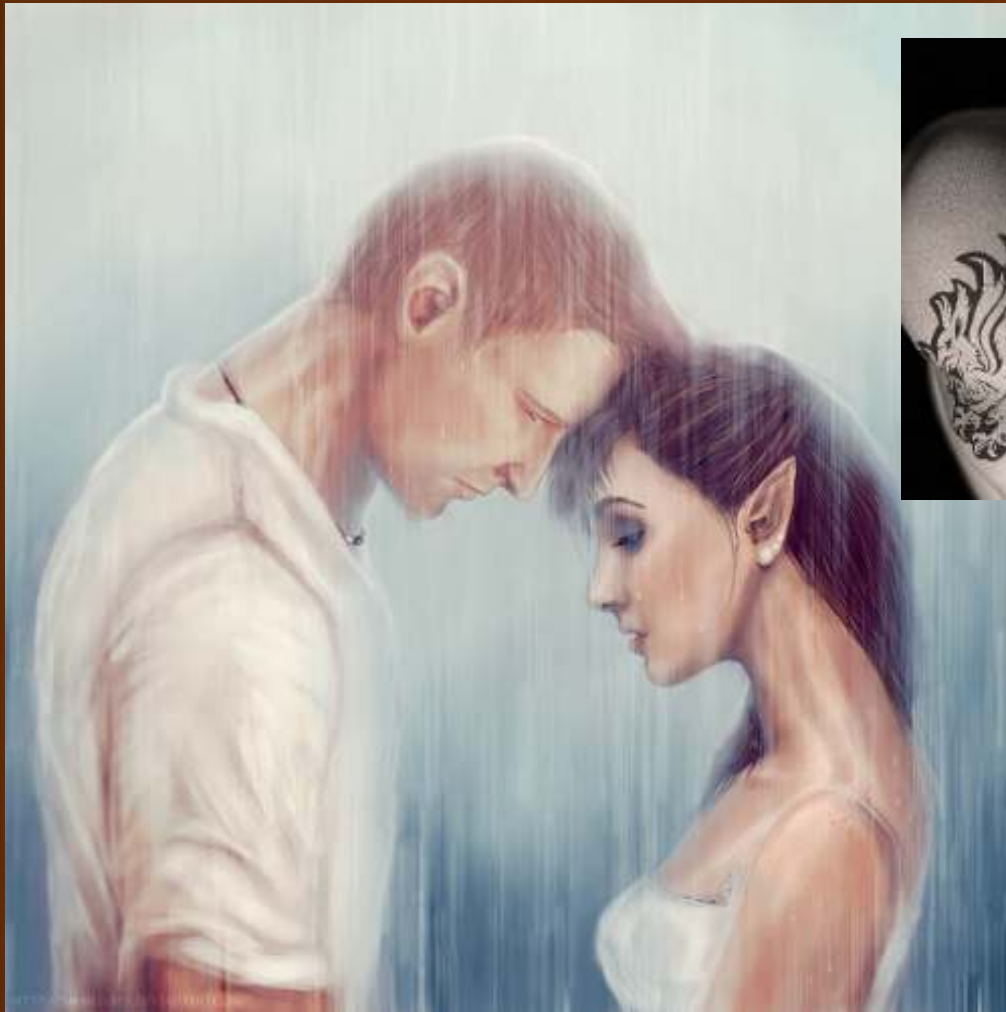
- Stories have the power to give or create meaning, they also give the reader the space to explore established meanings.
- "...we all relate to stories because our lives are stories. Every individual life contains characters, plots, scripts and a host of other ingredients found in a good story. When we forget this truth, we lose an important interpretive tool for discerning direction and creating meaning ... As psychologist Hillman (1996) points out, "We dull our lives by the way we conceive them. We have stopped imagining them with any sort of romance, any fictional flair."

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/Insight/ViewContentServlet?contentType=NonArticle&Filename=Published/NonArticle/Articles/26129dab.002.html>

The slides from my lecture "The power of Stories" can be accessed at <http://www.mythicalcreature.net/>, in the Downloads Section

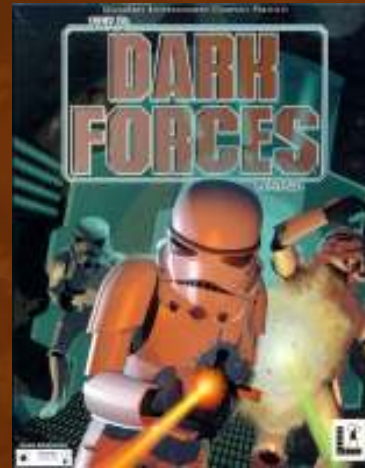


# A Personal Relationship

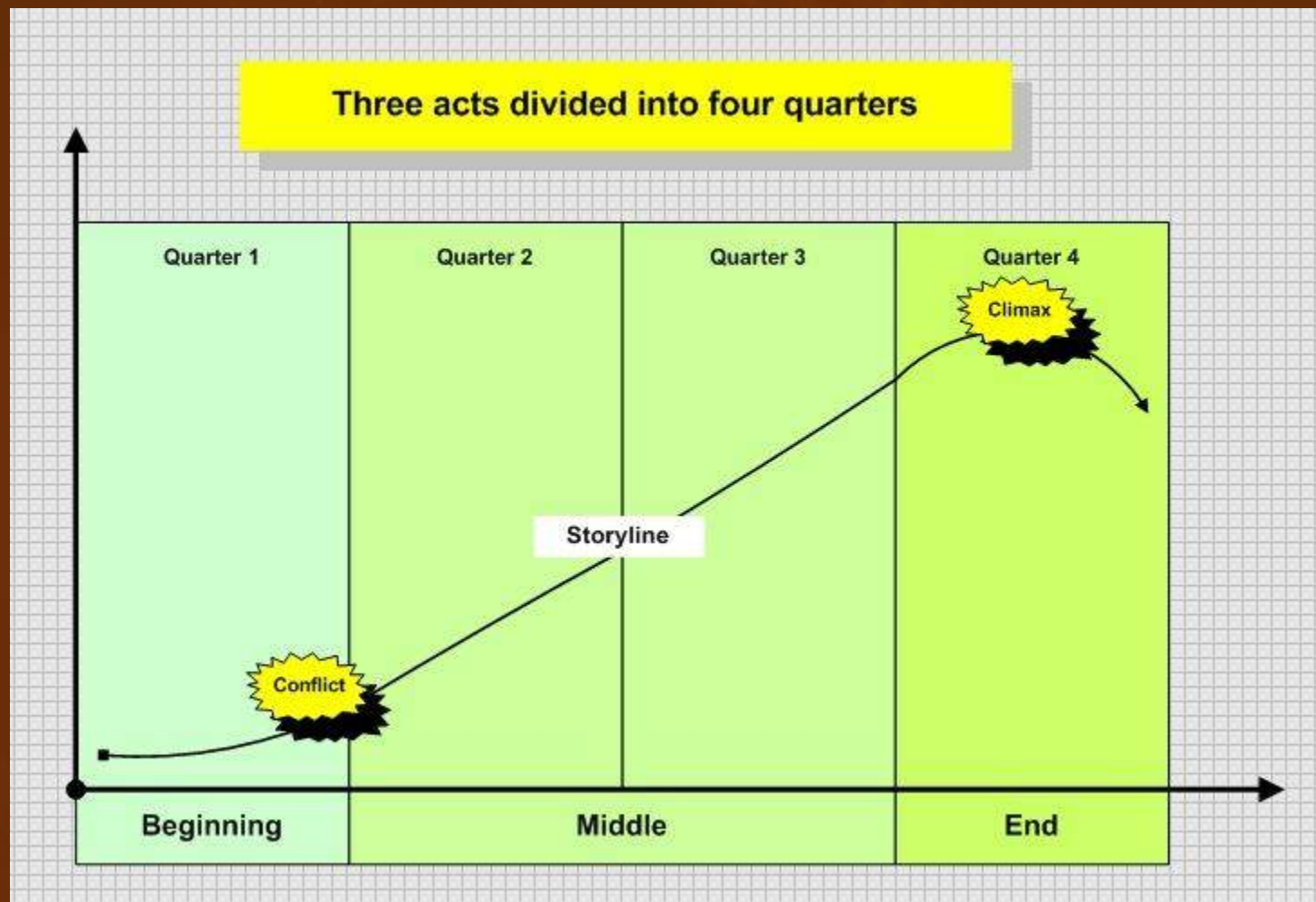


# Story in Games: Traditional

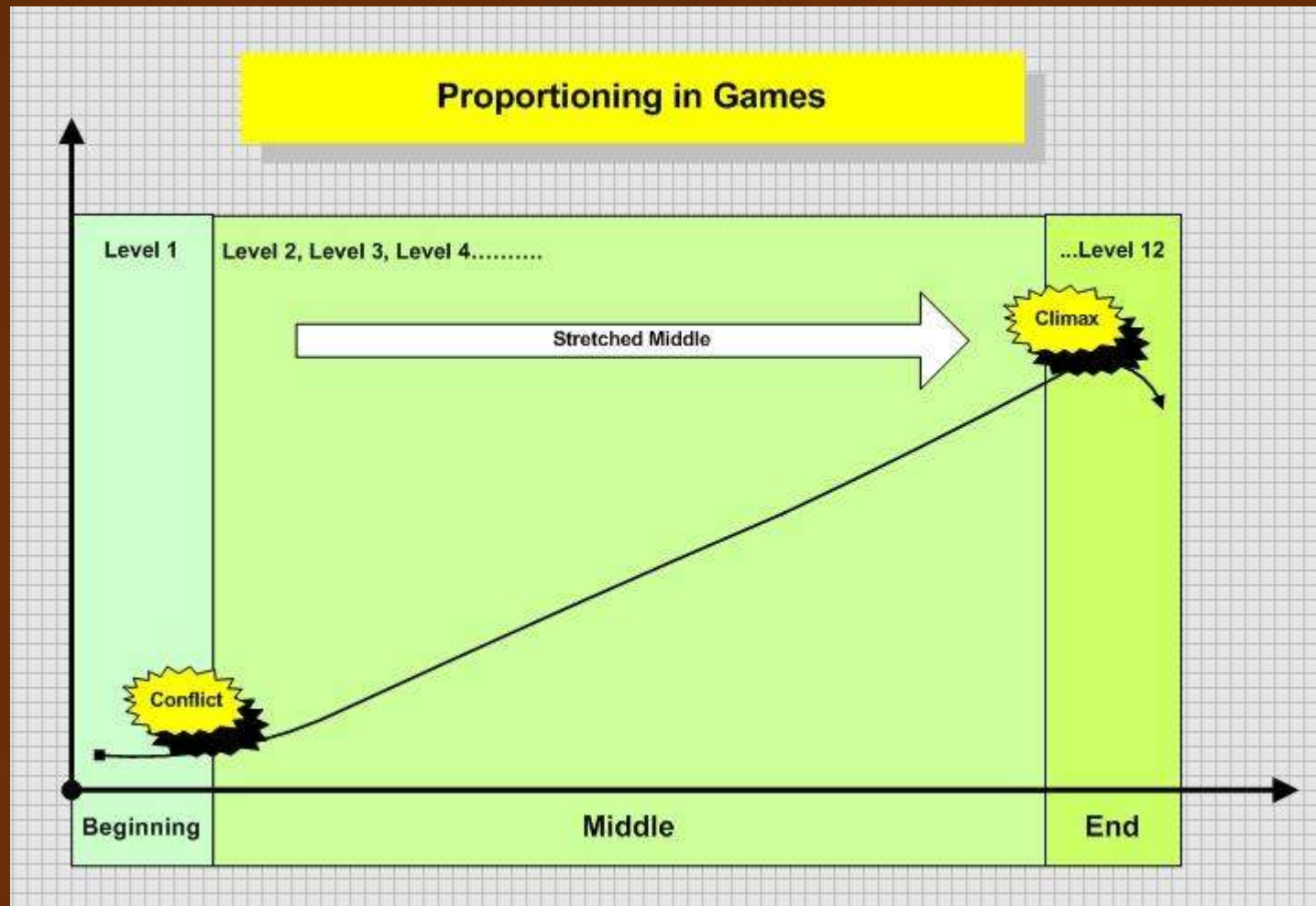
- The push to develop story in games has a long history from the early text based games to the plethora of modern games and game types.
- A game's main story line serves as the lynch-pin for the game, controlling the number of possible outcomes by restraining the player to a linear story line
- Most common story based games are RPGs, though many FPSs and RTSs use a linear story technique, particularly in single player modes.



# The Three Act Story



# The Three Act Story



# Story in Games: Different Styles of Story





# What is Narrative?

- “A set of events, within a linguistic framework, that involves a character or set of characters and their relationships.”
- In games the term actor may be better than character as actors are the instigators of events.



# Why Narrative not Story

- Games are meant to be played
- Stories are generally told
- Narratives lean towards being thought of as expressed, shown, told and explored.
- The way designers approach the various aspects of a game's development is vital to the game's eventual form



# Narrative in Games: Creating Fictional Worlds



“Tolkien's references to places, people, events (often of long ago) that are not part of the immediate story: these give the reader a conviction of the reality of the immediate scene — because it is shown to be part of a much greater landscape, a long history, a whole world of which it is only a glimpse.”

Ursula K. LeGuin, *Plausibility in Fantasy*

# Game Narrative: Show don't tell

- Game play
- Graphics: 2D or 3D e.g. textures, models, colours, bump maps, particle effects: the total visual style.
- Sound effects, music and voice
- Character dialogue, quest documentation, supporting documentation: in-game books, notes etc
- Character behavior: AI and game logic
- HUD (Heads up Display) & Menus
- And much much more.....



# Expanding Narrative: Creating Fictional Worlds

- A world in which the player plays
- Allowing the player to create their own meta-narratives
- What does that mean for the traditional role of stories?
- Is there a way to combine the interactive narrative world with the purposeful exploration of meaning?

# AI and the Evolution of Narrative

- Currently much of the limitations on true interactive narratives are created by the current limits of AI.
- A true interactive narrative would evolve and grow changing with the players actions, and inactions.
- However how far should we go with this, do players play some types of games to have a certain amount of linear story?

# A Fictional World...

- Here is a bit of an exercise let's start planning a game. It will be an RPG style game for Play Station 3, the theme is "the end of the world as we know it". Remember to think about:
  - Game play, audience
  - Platform
  - Graphic style, textures and visual themes
  - HUD & Menus
  - Music, sound effects and voice etc...

The Guild - Do You Wanna Date My Avatar



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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urNyg1ftMIU>