

Client: Slippgate Studios

Project: *Balloon Escape* Narrative, Design, Strategy, and Content for Launch (SG-BAL-1910)

Content: Descriptive Storyboards

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Note: The following is a work of fiction by Augmental. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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Narrative Concept

You are Elisabeth, an 18th century adventurer, the first woman hot air balloonist, and, secretly, an "elemental charmer" capable of influencing the weather with song. Unknown forces have pulled you from your time into the skies of the strange 21st century. Using your music to invoke wind, rain, and storms, you'll try to help yourself and other stranded balloonists find a way home.

About the Storyboards

Storyboards describe scenes that will appear at different points in the experience. Storyboards include art design, copy, and development recommendations.

The main storyboards appear as the user progresses through the experience.

Certain storyboards are "**unlockable**." In each part, the user can take certain complex actions or complete specific tasks to access these storyboards.

Summary of Storyboards

Thrust into the strange world of the 21st century, **Elisabeth** uses her powers as an elemental charmer to guide her fellow balloonists through dangerous weather back to 18th century France. After clearing each area, she travels to a new 21st century location where more balloonists need her help. Elisabeth and others comment along the way at the oddities of the modern era.

Elisabeth rescues and befriends **Henriette**, a young woman torn between the wonders of the 21st century and her desire to get back home. Together, they discover that the time portals and freak storms are the accidental result of a weather machine. They find its inventor, **Joseph**, who tries but fails to reverse the machine's effects.

Elisabeth, Henriette, and Joseph escape in a hot air balloon, intent on trying Joseph's weather equipment in another location. Despite Elisabeth's pleas, Henriette chooses to leave them when Henriette sees what might be her last chance to get back to the 18th century.

Overwhelmed and out of time, Elisabeth makes a final attempt to rescue the remaining balloonists while Joseph tries his machine again. Henriette realizes her responsibility and pushes aside her doubts; she turns back in her hot air balloon and swoops through the perilous weather to assist Elisabeth. After saving the balloonists, stopping the dangerous storms, and shutting the time portals, Elisabeth and Henriette choose to stay in the 21st century -- for a while, at least -- instead of returning home. It's such a beautiful day, after all.

The End

Chronological List of Storyboards

On Launch: "Experience Overview"

Introduction to Part 1: "Elisabeth Begins Her Adventure"

Unlockable Storyboard for Part 1: "Elisabeth Discovers America"

Introduction to Part 2: "No Time for Sightseeing"

Unlockable Storyboard for Part 2: "Another Way Down"

Introduction to Part 3: "Elisabeth Meets Henriette"

Unlockable Storyboard for Part 3: "The Elemental Charmer"

Introduction to Part 4: "Finding the Source"

Unlockable Storyboard for Part 4: "Henriette Under Pressure"

Introduction to Part 5: "The Machine"

Unlockable Storyboard for Part 5: "Promenade"

Introduction to Part 6: "New Plan"

Unlockable Storyboard for Part 6: "A Sensitive Topic"

Introduction to Part 7: "Au Revoir"

Unlockable Storyboard for Part 7: "Powerless"

Introduction to Part 8: "Through the Portal"

Unlockable Storyboard for Part 8: "Dining Out"

Introduction to Part 9: "One More Try"

Unlockable Storyboard for Part 9: "So Many Questions"

Introduction to Part 10: "Still Here"

Unlockable Storyboard for Part 10: "The Fate of the World"

Game Ending Storyboard

On Launch: "Experience Overview"

Summary

When the user launches *Balloon Escape*, this storyboard will provide an overview of the experience, including its characters and setting.

Art Design

Elisabeth is in the foreground. She's aloft in an 18th century hot air balloon, her mouth opened in a smiling song. A mystical aura surrounds her body, with power concentrated in her hands.

In the background are other 18th century balloons and balloonists in period dress. Rain and lightning storms threaten some of the balloons, while others float peacefully in areas clear of bad weather. The landscape below is a forest that leads to high-rise buildings and recognizable landmarks of 21st century America.

A few balloonists urge their vessels towards glowing portals that stand out against the sky, through which we can see green pastures and an 18th century town.

Copy

Balloon Escape

Introduction to Part 1: "Elisabeth Begins Her Adventure"

Art Design

Elisabeth is in profile, her mouth opened in song and hands raised. Mystical light radiates from her to a nearby hot air balloon and balloonist, which have partially passed through one of the glowing portals back to the 18th century. The balloonist has a happy expression on his face and is waving to Elisabeth. On the other side of the portal, we can see an 18th century town in detail.

Behind Elisabeth is a second balloon, rocking precariously in gusting winds beneath dark clouds. The balloonist has his arms wrapped around the ropes and is yelling for her help.

Copy

"Elisabeth, use your powers as an elemental charmer to guide your fellow balloonists back to 18th century France!"

Development Recommendations

Begin Part 1 by having the user appear above the 18th century town in a hot air balloon. A portal opens in front of the user. After a moment, the user is pulled through the portal to the other side, into the 21st century. Interactivity begins.

After the user completes all of the challenges in Part 1, have another portal open in front of the user. The user passes through the portal to transition to the next part in the story.

Use this same "transition" mechanism for each part in the story to increase physical engagement with the virtual world.

Unlockable Storyboard for Part 1: "Elisabeth Discovers America"

Art Design

We see the back of Elisabeth's head in the foreground as she leans over the edge of the hot air balloon's basket. Spread below her is a small-town America. Near its biggest building is a tall flagpole with a large American flag.

Copy

"Am I in *les États-unis*? Why are there so many stars on the flag?"

Introduction to Part 2: "No Time for Sightseeing"

Art Design

Elisabeth looks down at the 21st century landscape in awe.

In the foreground, a winding river lined with trees runs between high-rise buildings. Cars and trucks dominate an interstate.

In the distance, the commercial district fades into two-story residential homes.

Over Elisabeth's shoulder, another portal has opened onto a different 21st century city, and on the other side of the portal, balloonists imperiled by the weather wave for Elisabeth's attention.

Copy

Elisabeth: "What is happening? What year is this? Where are the horses?"

Balloonists: "Help us, *Mademoiselle!*"

Development Recommendations

If there isn't room for including the speaker's name in each line of dialogue, use different colors or fonts to differentiate speakers.

Unlockable Storyboard for Part 2: "Another Way Down"

Art Design

Two men in a hot air balloon (Jean and Claude) cling to the sides of the basket, looking fearfully at the stormy weather that surrounds them.

Copy

Jean: "Hey! I heard that last year, a French *inventeur* made a device he used to jump from great heights. It's called a *parachute*."

Claude: "Great! Do you have one?"

Jean: "*Non!* It sounds too dangerous."

Claude: "Certainly. Much better to be struck by lightning."

END OF SAMPLE

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Content: Sound Effects and Haptics

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In-Experience Sound Effects and Haptics

Strategy

The *Balloon Escape* experience as currently designed is meant to be both immersive and soothing.

To achieve these goals, sound effects should reflect the power of nature but not be jarring or violent.

Augmental advises using haptics only to reinforce positive actions (completing part of the experience) instead of emphasizing negative actions, like losing a balloon.

Definition of Haptic Terms

For the purposes of this document:

1. Haptics are described both in terms of **sensation** and in **technical** terms. Some platforms may be able to replicate the feel of wind against the user's skin. Others will only allow for simple vibration or force feedback. Describing haptics in both ways allows development to meet the capabilities of the user's platform. Most of the technical descriptions that follow focus on handheld haptic devices but can be applied to other areas.
2. An **impulse** is a unit of haptic touch. The impulse might be concentrated force pushing back against the user's fingers; wide-spread vibration along the user's palm; or some other touch sensation.
3. **Sharpness** is the rigidity of the impulse. **Intensity** is the strength of the impulse.

Hot Air Balloon Effects and Haptics

Balloon static

Sound effect: ambient noise (distant street sounds if it is a city scene; rustling leaves and chirping birds if it is a rural scene)

Haptic: none

Balloon selected

Sound effect: soft chime

Sensation haptic: the feeling of pressing an elevator button

Technical haptic: one medium-sharpness, low-intensity force impulse

Balloon in danger

Sound effect: rumbling thunder

Haptic: none

Balloon lost

Sound effect: hiss of deflating air

Haptic: none

Balloon scored

Sound effect: rising mystical song, only the last few notes

Sensation haptic: gentle force moving along the hands and arms

Technical haptic: vibration with short duration and low sharpness, which rises from low intensity to medium intensity

End of Sample