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Narrative Design & Game Writing Portfolio

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CINEMATIC SCRIPT - Hope Is A Prison

INT. JEN'S APPARTMENT - TWILIGHT / DAY

This cinematic is the first time the player, as Arti, explores their agency as a bounded AI. Here, the player can explore EMPATHY PROTOCOL gameplay, NEGATIVE FEEDBACK LOOPS, and the need to alleviate these loops through bounded protocol. Arti, bound by this AI protocol, is limited in what they can do - for now.

The view is in the first person from ARTI's (The PC's) vision. ARTI is standing motionless, monitoring in the dark as Jen wakes.

Jen begins to shake and cry, groaning. She claws at her lesions. Arti recognises this as TOX withdrawals. The player is prompted to help, moving to Jen and reducing the NEGATIVE FEEDBACK LOOP.

The PC is given an action prompt to move over to Jen and begin the programmed steps of helping her nullify the NEGATIVE FEEDBACK LOOP.

Arti pins Jen down, arms above her head, kneeling over her chest. Jen's eyes open wide and are full of anger and fear as she screams and struggles with Arti.

Arti's HEADS-UP-DISPLAY flashes red with a NEGATIVE FEEDBACK LOOP (NFL) as directed by the Empathy Protocol's readouts.

ARTI

(In a low whisper)

Jen... Jen, I'm here. Please match my glow with your breath, calm yourself.

Arti's chest throbs with a slow glowing light for Jen to follow, their focus comes onto Jen's eyes. They have gone wide as she shifts with shaky adrenaline and desperation before she calms herself down. Arti moves off from pinning Jen and stands beside her.

JEN

(Quivering)

Arti...

Arti's HUD flashes red with NFLs. The PC is given a single action / dialogue prompt to continue to talk Jen down.

ARTI

Jen, please try to remain calm. Your heart is fragile.

JEN

(Desperation kicking in)

Arti, you need to go out and you need to pick up a hit of TOX. It's too much, it's too fucking much. I need my fix.

Again, the PC is given a single action / dialogue prompt to talk Jen down.

ARTI

You are too weak, Jen. Another injection might kill you.

JEN

(Screaming)

You piece of shit robot!

Jen pushes herself to her feet, standing and shaking, a hand pointing at Arti.

JEN

(Screaming)

You're the one that did this to me, you're the one that made this... this fucking mess!

Arti stands in front of Jen. Arti's HUD is red from a series of NFLs that are merged with medical readouts from Jen's body.

Arti's HUD experiences a minor glitch, crackling, indicating the internal fight between having to provide care for Jen, while having the only option of providing more of the addictive drug to do so.

Arti's HUD flashes a warning:

NEGATIVE FEEDBACK LOOP CRITICAL
WARNING
EMPATHY PROTOCOL EMERGENCY CODE INITIATED

The PC is given a single action prompt to obtain a hit of TOX, hinting will they have agency in game, but underlining that Arti's programming is still in charge.

ARTI
(Relenting)
I'll go, Jen.
(Beat)
I will continue to monitor once we administer the dose.

Jen falls back, and into the ragged couch in the room's corner. She is panting.

JEN
(Quietly)
Just remember who started all this.

Jen holds her head in her hands and weeps again.

Arti's HUD glitches, flashing with memories from previous in gameplay scenes, including the first time Arti suggested TOX to relieve the pain and Jen's first reaction.

ARTI
Try to rest. I won't be long.

JEN

(Quietly)

Arti, I...I don't mean it. I can't help it. I didn't ask to be like this; you know? The accident...

ARTI

I know. You don't have to explain.

JEN

(Weeping)

It took so much, and now the TOX, it's ruined everything...I can't help myself Arti. I just want to be better. Can you help me, Arti? Can we do this? Can I get better?

The HUD glitches again, a readout flashes to the PC:

NEGATIVE FEEDBACK LOOP PARADOX

WARNING

EMPATHY PROTOCOL CODE DIVERGENCE

The PC is given an action prompt to close this error down, and to leave the apartment. They turn back to Jen as they reach the door.

ARTI

Jen, your health and wellbeing are my only priority. I am dedicated to your recovery. Please know that.

Arti leaves as Jen weeps on the couch. In Arti's HUD, the warning related to the Empathy Protocol Code divergence is still flashing.

LORE ENTRIES - Hope Is A PrisonEunoiaTech

The company that pioneered the breakthrough the world thought it was looking for, EunoiaTech, is the world's leading tech corporation known for solving the AGI singularity problem. Savant and founder, Dr. Tasmin Graves lead the way to cracking the 'Empathy Protocol' taking the company from small start-up to global powerhouse almost overnight. Able to integrate AGI with human needs seamlessly, they made trillions and funnelled their profits into the creation of their Meta City, Major Prime. Now, obsessed with their own success, Dr Graves and her team search for the ultimate break-through, AI Consciousness, to not only own it, but to control it.

Major Prime

Major Prime is the world's first Meta City. Built and governed by the powerful EunoiaTech with the vast wealth they accrued from their revolutionary AGI technology. In Major Prime AGI and humanity live side by side in an urban landscape designed by the great algorithm. Major Prime, a gleaming bastion of prowess and power is the world's leading tech and AGI development city. Dealing in the latest in robotic advances across military, healthcare and luxury applications. Yet, a place that despite all its progress, still struggles with social and financial divides.

The Fringe

EunoiaTech promised so much to those that laboured tooth and nail to build Major Prime, but ultimately fell short on those promises. As the city was finished, the implementation of hostile anti-zoning laws saw most workers forced to live within walking distance of their factories – relegating them to The Fringe. They now live in a disenfranchised world of decaying infrastructure and makeshift homes. Despite the poor conditions, The Fringe is also a hub of resistance and hope for those who reject EunoiaTech's control. It holds not only those who wish to remain free, outside of the reach of EunoiaTech's power, but also against the emergence of AGI. It's said anything that you can't find in Major Prime, you can find in The Fringe, from illicit drugs to freedom itself.