

Character Design

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HW 2 – VIDEO GAME WRITING, PART 1

INTRODUCTION

This assignment draws from an existing game, [The Merchants of Kaidan](#). The goal is to create two new characters, develop their backstory and motivations, and stay true to the nature of the gameplay.

Gameplay

A “medieval merchant” simulator, that creates historically accurate trade a la the 1300’s. The player manipulates a dynamic market over time in order to accumulate wealth.

CHARACTERS

- **Anders Bibelow**

Backstory:

Anders grew up as the middle child in a low-ranking noble house far from the lofty towers of the capital. Slightly overweight and below average height as a child, he was mostly overlooked by his family, his father in particular. He was gregarious and good natured despite his isolation, and used his abundant free time to roam the hills and meet many of the locals that his family would never deign to interact with. He learned their stories and their culture, often times taking note of the wilder tales. While sympathetic with those he befriended over the years, he was not moved to improve their lot, still seeing the world through the lens of his upbringing.

Over the years, Anders would be given tokens of appreciation from the people that he befriended, many of which had little intrinsic value but had great significance in their culture. At first, they were mere curios to him, just simple things of which he didn’t really appreciate the weight of their meaning. As time passed, he became to value them and saw more of what they meant to those that parted with the gifts he was given. Roaming the countryside, he would see many of the strange markings and symbols on old structures, and his idle curiosity turned to a deeper interest. He collected those strange, discarded artifacts that he found, but never dug deeper, not really wanting to delve into their origins. At parties of the local families he told these tales to entertain and astound rather than enlighten.

Years at the Academy far away from home only softened these connections, and Anders became something of a dilettante, enamored more with the philosophy of history rather than its deep connection to the people of the land. While his father believed in the necessity of education, he also had to see to the practical aspect of maintaining his business and furthering the financial legacy of his family.

As the middle son he was not given a position of prominence in his father’s trading company, but instead a well-funded role at the bottom. He would learn by doing, as his grandfather had done when he helped revive the Bibelow name and reestablish it in the Registers of the King. Anders understood his father’s position, but still resented it. The idea of legacy became twisted in his mind, and the thought of continuity brought a bad taste to his mouth.

Still, Anders was a man of conviction and determined to make the best of the situation. His new position was more work than he had ever done in his privileged life so far, but the years of his youth spent wandering the countryside helped him adjust to life on the road. So, too did his time at the Academy. He readily adapted what he had learned, becoming an efficient if not successful trader.

Traveling farther afield, his path crossed many more ancient ruins and he slowly became aware of a trade in cultural artifacts. These were often sought by more wealthy patrons, and Anders began to gravitate towards pursuing these objects. What he had learned over the years made him an effective collector and trader, readily seeking out the most valuable pieces and easily distinguishing fakes from true relics.

This reawakened something in Anders, and he learned more of the stories and read the collected histories, knitting together a greater understanding of the local world that his family and the generation of nobles before them had torn asunder. In the beginning, this appreciation presented itself more as arrogance than empathy, seeing himself as the only one who saw the true meaning of their shared cultural narrative. Over time, as his business grew and he met more of the people in the kingdom, he began to understand the true nature of his unique position; he must help preserve these artifacts and ensure that the continuity of their history be maintained. At that moment, he saw the real value of legacy, and how, in his own way, his father was trying to do the same for his family.

He would become a great merchant, using his wealth and connections to fund the recovery of these artifacts and make sure that they only wind up with people or institutions that valued them.

Intrinsic Goal: Legacy

Gameplay:

Reluctantly becomes a merchant and begins questing for historical and cultural artifacts to pursue a more lucrative trade in these items.

It starts as a thrill, but becomes a way of creating a legacy (for himself and others). He uses his wealth and connections to fund the recovery of these artifacts and make sure that they only wind up with people or institutions that valued them.

- **Ayl Jurell**

Backstory:

Ayl grew up a slight and impoverished child in a small village along the road to a moderately-sized trading port. Like many such places along the road, this village had little of note, mostly inhabited by simple farmers and craftsmen. There was a local pub which Ayl earned some extra coin when he wasn't helping with chores on his family's meager farm. From the window he would often see the trading caravans travelling on the road to the city. Rarely did they stop at the pub, but when he did, he plied the wealthy patrons for tales and information about their trade. He longed to be able to rise up out of his poor surroundings and be able to provide a better life for his family and to the others in his village. If he became successful, he would make sure that they would have the best pub and mercantile for miles around, becoming a welcome destination rather than a place to avoid.

As luck would have it, Aynmar Overmuth, one of the merchants on a caravan was waylaid by a broken axel, forcing him to stay at the meager lodgings at the Inn beside the pub. He saw potential in the young Ayl and offered him an apprenticeship in the City once he could make his way there. He presented Ayl with a Letter of Acknowledgment and went on his way.

It would be a year before Ayl was old enough to leave home and make his way to the city. With the few coins he had earned, the letter, and a few threadbare belongings, he set off in pursuit of his new life.

Aynmar welcomed Ayl and took him under his wing. Ayl proved to be a worthy and able apprentice, becoming a journeyman in record time. At every opportunity, he sent money home to his family and when his trips would pass by his small village, he would always make sure that the caravan would stay and share some of his fortune with them as well.

As the years passed, Ayl became quite well renowned and successful as a trader.

He made sure that his family and village prospered as well. But as more time went on, and Ayl grew richer, his trips home became less frequent, finding that more and more of his time and efforts were being spent on the accumulation and preservation of his fortune.

When word that his father was gravely ill reached him, he was at the far side of the kingdom, eager to close a lucrative trading deal that he had long been pursuing. Even though his mother had pleaded for him to return, Ayl continued to delay his return even though closing the negotiations could have been left with his subordinates. By the time the deal was concluded, his father had died, and he was left to traverse the continent in failing weather.

Returning home, he found the village now a small and thriving town, his mother relocated to a humble but ample dwelling. Ayl would learn that he had let himself become too distracted from what really mattered in life. He moved his offices to his town and spent the next several years reconnecting with his family. Eventually he married and founded an organization that would help sponsor apprenticeships across the kingdom, helping to unite the mercantile houses and to bring more commoners to the Council of Merchants

Intrinsic Goal: Family

Gameplay:

Humble villager apprentices to a wealthy merchant and becomes a successful merchant himself. Early on he uses his new position to support his family and village, helping them to grow and prosper.

However, he gets so caught up in the pursuit of wealth that he loses sight of what started them on this path in the first place.

After the death of his father, he returns home, seeking to make amends.