

The Future of Post-Print Fiction

DANM 132 - Week 5

You are standing before the doors of Hell, except you never expected them to look so shabby. Cheap plastic demons and devils are slapping and twirling round and round and thought you'd be here. Maybe that Alice Jones, she's not that you're surprised. Around you is a forest. A small stream flows out of the building and down At your feet, wildflowers gather in bunches of color, reds and greens. This is the house where you were born, but you can't remember. You've heard so much about the demilitarized zone in full combat armor, the crescent moon and the mission prof...

Curl up with a good e-book



Computational reading devices
become ubiquitous, 2010-2015

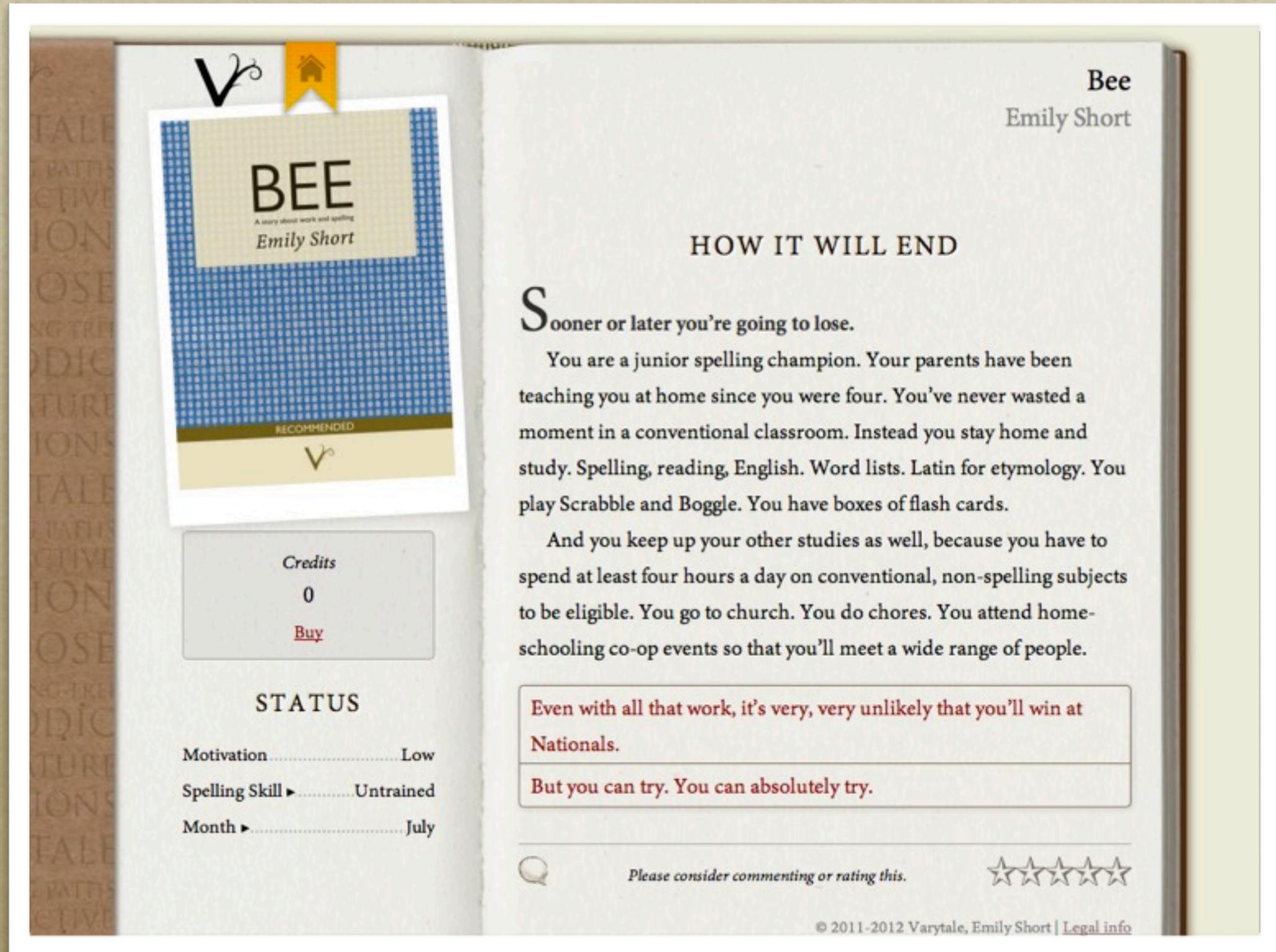


Right in the middle of e-lit moving from something you have to read sitting at a computer to something you can read the way you read a traditional book. No standard yet for what level of process intensity an e-book should support. Lots of experimentation.

The future of hypertext

- *Varytale*
- *Inklewriter*
- *StoryNexus*

VaryTale



Iteration of “UnDum,” which The Play and The Matter of the Monster used. Very nice, web-based front end, supports tracking skills.

VaryTale

✓ Fighting, Floating

0 Jul 11 Jul 12 Jul 13 Jul 14 Jul 15 Jul 16 Jul 17 Jul 18 Jul 19 Jul 20 Jul 21 Jul 22 Jul 23 Jul 24 Jul 25

Read Next

Storylets Read Next

from ↓ to →	@node1	@node2	@node3
@node1	0	310	0
@node2	0	0	0
@node3	108	108	0
@node4	66	54	56

This table shows the different nodes in your storylet. The numbers indicate how often the reader moved from the node to the top. Numbers in the diagonal indicate how often the page was reloaded when the reader was viewing that node. Numbers in the off-diagonal indicate that readers were stuck or paused on a decision, and returned later.

Reading Times

K. Carol Douglas

Fighting, Floating

Stories of the First All-Girls Boxing Gym

The Writing Team

Search by name

User	Role	
Carol Douglas	Owner	—
Ian Millington	Writer	Remove
All 2 items		

The Preview and Testing Team

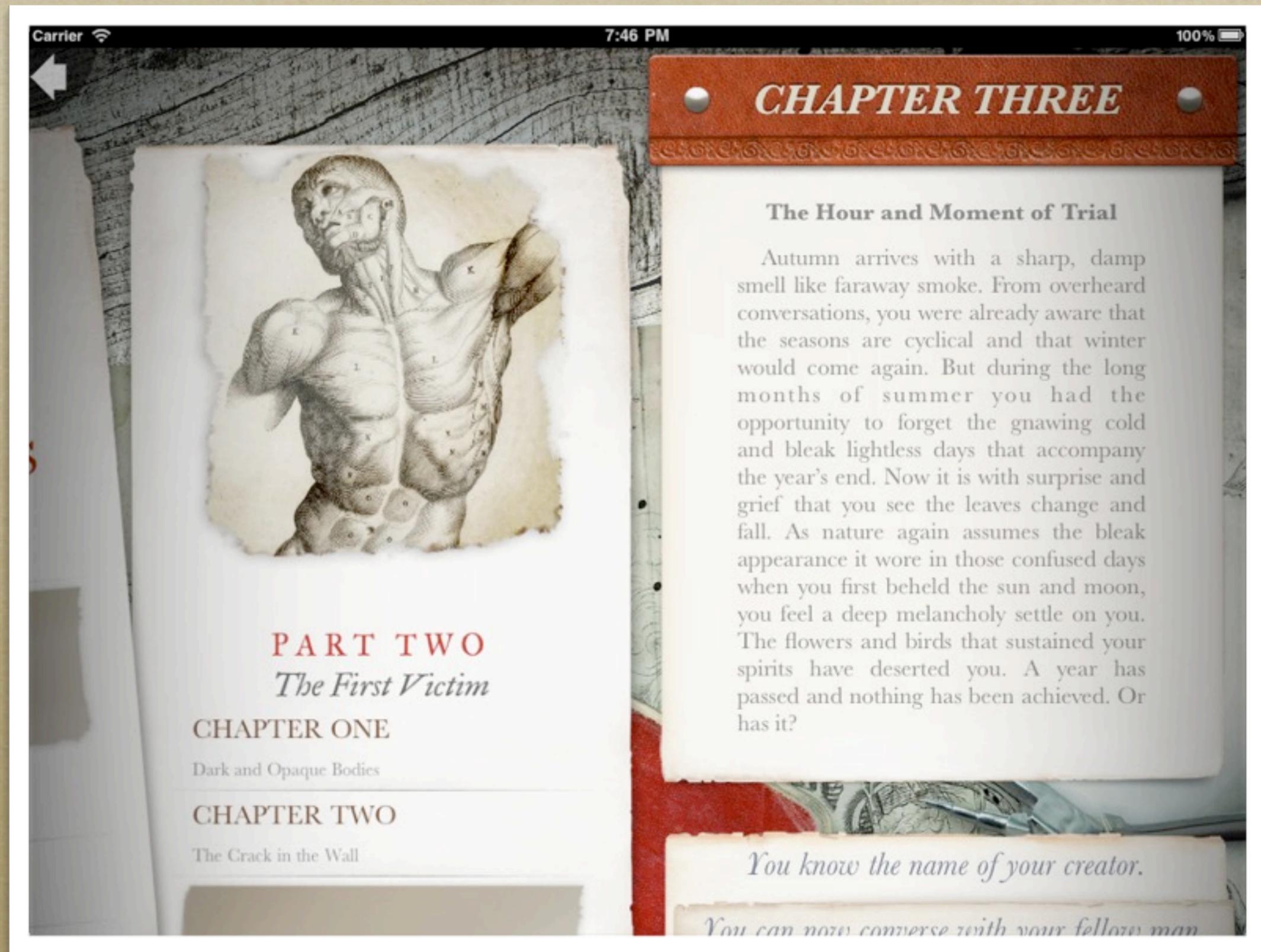
Search by name

User	Role	
Alexis Kennedy	Reader	Remove
Anne Thomaso	Reader	Remove
All 2 items		

Add Another Team Member

Supports monetization, social features, tracking readers, multiple authors/versions.

InkleWriter



InkleWriter

The screenshot displays the InkleWriter web interface. At the top, the logo "inklewriter BETA" is on the left, and the user is logged in as "jon.ingold@inklestudios.com" with a "Saved" status on the right. A navigation bar contains "sign out", "new", "open", "tutorial", "share", and "help" on the left, and "contents", "write", and "read" on the right. The main workspace has a wood-grain background and contains several text blocks. A dark grey callout box on the left says "Room full of paper". The text blocks include: "quickly batted it down." (with "2 links" and a filter "only show if not burn papers"); "Why do you keep so many papers?" (with "2 links in" and a filter "only show if stood up"); "I resumed my seat, picking my way back through more bundles of hand-written pages." (with a filter "only show if stood up"); "Holmes resumed his seat, picking his way across the bundled stacks of manuscripts that littered the floor." (with a filter "only show if not stood up"); "(burn papers: For such a methodical mind, I Our chambers were always filled with them;) my friend had a horror of destroying documents, especially those connected with past cases, and yet it was only once a year that he would muster the energy to docket and arrange them." (with a "Unlink" button); "Why do you keep so many papers, Holmes?" I asked as I pulled the blanket back across my knees. "Surely you will never read them through." (with a filter "only show if not tidy up"); "He smiled at me with mischevious eyes. "My dear boy," he answered. "I have not always had my biographer to tidy up after my work. Plenty of these documents are here to remind me of those many cases I tackled when I worked alone. But I do not need to read them to bring their contents to mind; the simple sight of the pages is enough to recall the details." (with "2 links"); "But there are hundreds here," I replied. "You can't possibly remember them all, not in detail. Why -?" and I snatched at one nearby bundle - "this one here must be seventy pages of close writing. You cannot have it word for word." (with "2 links"); "Tell me the title," he replied, steeping his fingers. (with "2 links"); "Then you don't need to keep them," I (mischevious > 1:argued/reasoned) in return. "If you can recall their details." (with "2 links"); "My dear Watson, I am employing Cicero's method of loci, only here, in my own space. I know every document in this room by how it looks and where it is. Where you see disorder, I see quite a serviceable index." (with "2 links"); and "I looked at the stack, but I answered, looking at the cover of the". On the left, a vertical toolbar contains buttons for "B", "I", "...", a plus sign, and "if". On the right, a "Contents" sidebar lists sections: "Titles", "Beginning", and "Room full of paper", with a search bar and expand/collapse icons.

StoryNexus



HIEROPHANT
ACTIONS: 15/20
NEX: 0

QUALITIES INVENTORY


TIME OF DAY:
MORNING

	White Noise	3
	The Ministry of Black Powder	6
	Cutting Your Spurs	2

▶ SHOW QUALITIES

Absolom the Tinker
Eternally present -- an abstraction in a world of speculation. A perpetual possibility! Unredeemable is Absolom the Tinker; dignified, invisible, moving without pressure; hidden, birdlike, quick; undisturbing of the dead leaves that bury the path in front and the path behind. He cannot bear much reality and so is always moving. His everchanging pack contains many things. For a price he may share them with you.

Nothing For Now
While Absolom the Tinker is generous and thoughtful and well-supplied to a fault, you're too occupied or distracted or otherwise strapped for his precious trinkets.

GO →

A Bottle of Cornskunk '14
A priceless curiosity, Absolom whispers, pressing the wax-sealed bottle into your hands. It's cool to the touch and smells faintly of harvest-time. Inside is pure honey-gold. A relic of an earlier time! Made from sour mash by the hands of the brothers Skunk, who still to this day distill whiskey from silkthreaded corn grown just north of Amarillo.

At what price? Call it a gift, a rebalancing of things. No common currencies need change hands.

Following this branch will unlock *Graduation and Commencement*, one of *Zero Summer's* side-plots. You do NOT need to play through any of the side-plots to finish *Zero Summer*. Think of them as a separate joy, different stories through different eyes. A way to answer some of *Zero Summer's* lingering unanswered questions. We promise: you won't be disappointed.

This branch will cost 5 Nex to play.

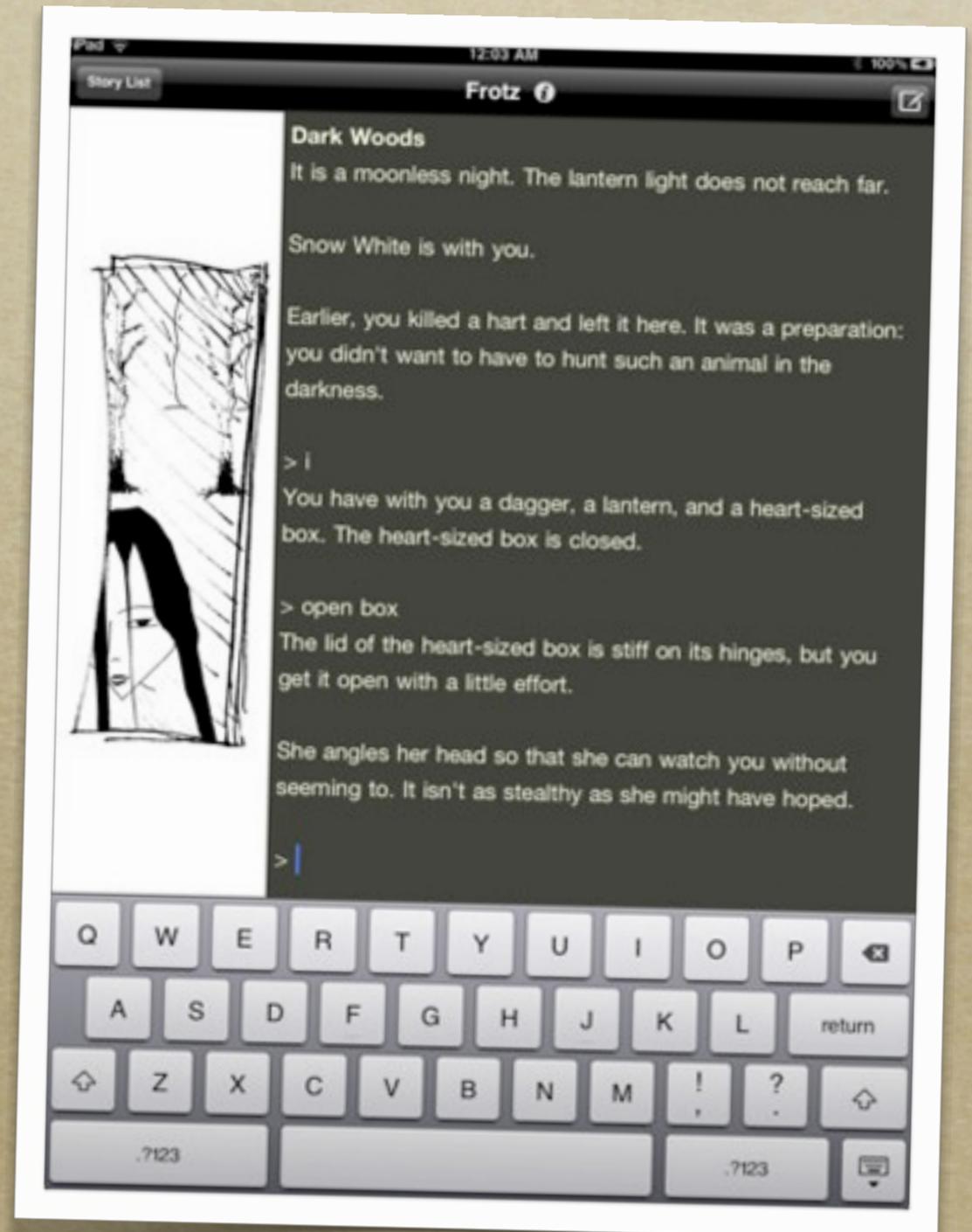
LOCKED

← PERHAPS NOT

based on Fallen London platform. "Fate" --> nex, be used across multiple stories. Figuring out how people can make a living writing interactive stories. But dumbing down a little.

The future of parser IF?

- *Smarter parser?*
- *Simplified parser?*
- *No parser at all?*
- *Improve things other than the parser*



Simplified parser? Smarter parser?

Loft

The bare floorboards at your feet are cold as you stand in the long loft, huge wooden beams strung with pine **boughs** angling above your head.

In your bed lies **Rume**, breathing quietly, asleep. Beside your bed sits a simple **nightstand**.

Faint red firelight gutters through the open **doorway**.

Tutorial: Exits are the second type of emphasized keywords. Type an exit keyword to move from place to place.

>|

Blue Lacuna using
“Keyword Interface”
extension

>[19] **why is the sky blue**

You can't ask direct questions to the game. Type a verb - noun command like EXAMINE GLOWING SWORD to interact with the story world, or LOOK to get a description of your surroundings.

>[20] **go somewhere**

You will need to be more specific. Try typing LOOK to get a description of your surroundings.

>[21] **carefully go north**

Adverbs are not usually necessary in interactive fiction.

Retrying as:

>GO NORTH

Dark Tunnel

You can see a dusty skull and a kobold here.

“Smarter Parser”
extension

No Parser (But Still a Complex World)

Improving things other than the parser...

- Curveship, Nick Montfort
 - Python-based IF language with a focus on teaching the system how to narrate events.



Curveship Example

The twitchy man puts on a Dora the Explorer mask.

The twitchy man leaves the street.

The twitchy man examines the lobby.

From here, the twitchy man is able to see: inside the vestibule, some deposit slips, the bank teller, and a black bag.

...

The burly guard shoots the twitchy man in the chest.

The twitchy man falls.

The twitchy man dies.

The bank teller cries.

Curveship Example

The bank teller cries.

Just beforehand, the twitchy man died.

Previously, the twitchy man fell.

Earlier, the burly guard shot the twitchy man in the chest.

...

From there, the twitchy man was able to see: inside the vestibule, some deposit slips, the bank teller, and the black bag.

Earlier, the twitchy man left the street.

Previously, the twitchy man put on a Dora the Explorer mask.

Curveship Example

I was snoozing.

The twitchy man brandished a gun-shaped object at you.

I woke.

I saw the twitchy man.

I saw that the twitchy man possessed the gun-shaped object and was wearing a Dora the Explorer mask.

...

I shot the twitchy man in the chest.

The twitchy man fell.

The twitchy man died.

You cried.

Curveship Example

The twitchy man will put on a Dora the Explorer mask!

The twitchy man will leave the street! Wow!

The twitchy man, um, like, will examine the lobby!

From, like, uh, there, like, the twitchy man will be able, like, to see: inside, like, the vestibule, some deposit slips, um, er, the bank teller, like, and, like, a black bag, man! Wow!

...

Whoa, the burly guard will shoot the twitchy man, like, in the, like, chest!
Amazing!

The twitchy man will fall!

The twitchy man will die! Incredible!

Dude, the bank teller, like, er, will cry! Awesome!

The future of computational fiction?



- Social AI
- Computational models of narrative and narration
- Planners

Shrinking the atomic unit of interactive stories

Others look around for different prey. One goes for a squirrel. Some seem to be eyeing your front windows, though you're standing far enough back that you don't think they can actually see you.

Still, this is really not good. Your house is on one floor, and the news footage made it pretty clear that zombies can break through glass with no trouble, zombifying some humans and eating others. And it seems that they've already started doing just that in your neighborhood, because those two zombies there have glass shards sticking out of their faces. And you recognize one of them—that annoying woman who always cuts in line at the coffee shop. She is moving towards your windows. So are about five others.

You obviously can't stay in your house. What are you going to do?

- Sprint out the back door and into the woods.
- Slip out the side door and try to sneak past them to my car, while they're all occupied with legs and squirrels and windows.

Shrinking the atomic unit of interactive stories

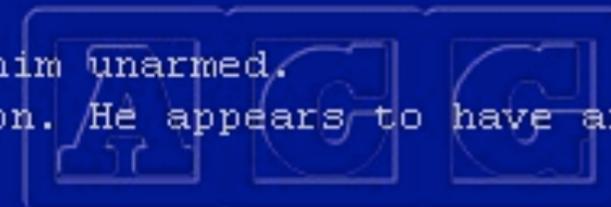
```
The Troll Room                               Score: 35           Moves: 51
>look
East of Chasm
You are on the east edge of a chasm, the bottom of which cannot be seen. A
narrow passage goes north, and the path you are on continues to the east.

>n
Cellar
Your sword is glowing with a faint blue glow.

>n
The Troll Room
This is a small room with passages to the east and south and a forbidding hole
leading west. Bloodstains and deep scratches (perhaps made by an axe) mar the
walls.
A nasty-looking troll, brandishing a bloody axe, blocks all passages out of the
room.
Your sword has begun to glow very brightly.

>kill troll with sword
The troll's weapon is knocked to the floor, leaving him unarmed.
The troll, angered and humiliated, recovers his weapon. He appears to have an
axe to grind with you.

>
```



Shrinking the atomic unit of interactive stories

The screenshot shows a digital story interface with three main panels. The left panel, titled 'ABOUT', explains that the story generates incidental sentences based on the current narrative context and provides a 'Highlighting Off' button. The central panel contains the main text of the story, with several sentences highlighted in green. The right panel, titled 'THE LIST', shows a list of names and phrases generated from the story's context.

ABOUT

This story generates incidental sentences based on the current narrative context (in the right-hand panel). To toggle highlighting of the generated sentences, click the button below.

Highlighting Off

in months, though how much of that is stagecraft I can't tell. I walk across the cobbles towards her.

She nods at me, brushing a strand of white hair back from her lined face, and I see in a tiny flinch the pain she hides so well, the age she's done her damndest to escape. We stand facing each other, lost in the anonymity of the crowds around us.

I clasp her hand with both of mine; it's cold. **I don't answer for a moment, then I look right at her.** "You shouldn't have come all this way," I say, worried, "I could have come out to you, should have—"

"I can still see off a friend," she interrupts, and that stern professorial tone still straightens my back a little all these years later. A hint of a smile slips through the façade. "Not for much longer, they tell me. But I'm glad not to miss this one. It's a hell of a send-off." **There are so many people here; I'm starting to get claustrophobic.**

I frown, not wanting her to change the subject. "The treatments aren't going well?" I ask. "I thought—"

"Oh, we all thought, darling," she says, tiredly, "but there's little more they can do for me, now. I'm old. All the damn tricks they have can't change that." **The afternoon lingers, unhurried.**

She grins but it frightens me how old she does look, how wound-down, fragile.

I draw a breath. "I have a surprise for you," I say, "a sort of gift. Months ago I put in a petition to have one of the landers named after you, in honor of how much your theories have

THE LIST

There are still a few names left.

Archana
Harbin
Leon
Mirren
Tris

Time Afternoon
Talking To Archana
At The square

I am

Afraid
Driven
Sure

The future of spatial & collaborative narratives...

- Google Glass, 2014
- Whatever Apple is working on...

