

# Coherent Emergent Stories

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Sam (the player character) is initially selfish and disagreeable. Sam dreams of running a huge farm with the help of twin animal-controlling talismans. This may indirectly benefit many villagers, but Sam does not care about that.

Taylor, a kind but practical person, grew up in a rural village that is threatened by dangerous animals. Taylor hopes to use the talismans to help the village, and is willing to deceive to achieve this goal.

Alex uses the stolen talisman to 'save' a poor family's cow from captivity

In Taylor's village, wolves have eaten the chickens in the roost leaving behind messy carnage

Sam envisions overseeing a massively productive and successful farm

Alex is hunched over a workbench, trying to draw the power out of the talisman

A man who has been recently attacked by a bear stumbles by

Sam is kidnapped but quickly released after deemed insufferable by the captor

Sam is bringing the second of the twin talismans to a vault when all of his belongings are stolen.

Sam encounters Alex for the first time and learns of Alex's love of animals.

Sam attempts to confront Alex but fails because Alex has stolen one of Sam's two animal-controlling talismans.

Sam and Taylor steal back the talisman and discover Alex's intentions of raising an army of animals.

Sam and Taylor defeat Alex and must decide who will get to use the talismans to fulfil their goals.

Sam meets a person of romantic interest, Taylor, who also wants the talisman for conflicting reasons.

Wolves menacingly encroach on Taylor's village

A horse rescues a pig from a stream with a steep embankment

A cat is taking care of a mouse-like creature in a mothering sort of way

Kids are playing with puppies; they all act similarly

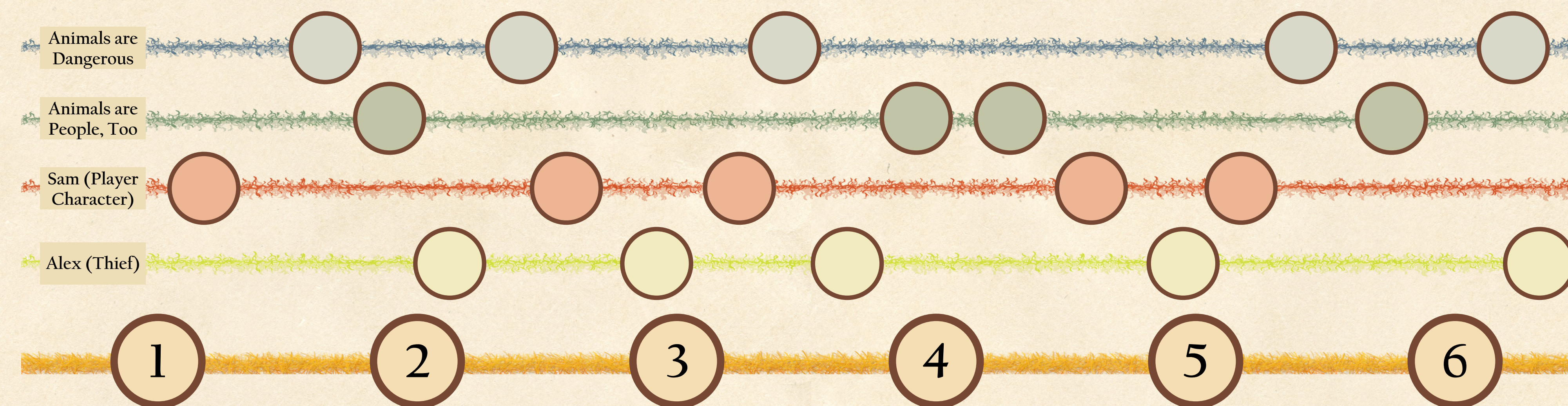
Sam sends back plates of food deemed unsatisfactory in a high end public house

Alex's sister is pushed to the ground as Alex tries to save a snail from being stepped on

## Problem

Craft a satisfying videogame narrative while preserving player freedom.

Some games provide a story on rails, where everything is predetermined and players have little to no choice with respect to the story. Others offer a substantial amount of freedom, resulting in a disjointed story with an unsatisfactory lack of direction. We cannot reliably create games whose stories react to gameplay while maintaining an appropriate level of structure and player guidance.



## Solution

Flexible satellites made available according to the player's actions.

A story graph with kernel nodes (core plot points all players see) and satellite nodes (optional scenes that surround kernels) is defined. Satellites further the story's themes or character development, always reinforcing the central story. These satellites potentially alter the player's understanding of the story without changing the events themselves.