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ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Fine and Applied Arts
in Candidacy for the Degree of
MASTER OF FINE ARTS**

SAM

By

Frances Grau

May 19, 1992

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Chapter I —Introduction—

Children are a very important part of this unstable world. Many children are introduced to the world of drugs daily. I believe that the best way to avoid the drug abuse among children is through education. There is only one problem, many children do not like education as much as they like to play. It is my believe that by combining education with pleasure it will be easier for a child to learn while having fun.

The purpose of the thesis is to create a psychological video game for children between the ages of ten and twelve. All my life I have wanted to work with children. Now I have the opportunity to create, through animation, a game that could teach children the difference between a healthy life and a dangerous life.

Video games are something that have always attracted the attention of children. If children are taught in a way that they believe they are playing instead of learning, they will pay more attention. The video game that I intend to create has one beginning and three endings. It will be the story of a girl (she will have no race, and her name will be Sam) who has just started high school. Throughout the game, the child will make his/her own choices depending on his/her interests. As I said before, the game will have three endings. The child will be faced with the problem of peer pressure and drugs. He/she can either avoid all the problems or can get involved with drugs. If the child chooses drugs he/she could either end up dead or in jail. Throughout the game the child will always have the opportunity to change her mind, go back, and rectify



what she has done.

For this project I intend to use Swivel 3-D to create the child figure. The animation will be done in Macro Mind Director. Although I do not know much about psychological tests for children, I will get more information through research.

Chapter II—Sam's Story—

“Qualitative changes in child-child interaction continue beyond the preschool years. With school entrance, children increase their contacts with other children and begin to recognize that other individuals have ideas and points of view that are different from their own.”¹

The character in my story (Sam) is a regular high school freshman girl who wants to make friends at school and be popular among her friends. Sam will face the problems of drugs and peer pressure in high school. The story itself is simple but concise. The first day at school she is invited to two parties. One is a party with the freshman class and the other is a party with the most popular sophomores, juniors, and seniors at school.

1. Mussen, Paul H. Handbook of Child Psychology (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1983), 117

If Sam decides to go to the freshman party she will have a great time but she will also be tempted by other classmates to leave this party and go to the other party. If she decides to go to the party with the sophomores, juniors, and seniors, she will be offered to try drugs in order to fit in and be popular. She will have three choices; say no and go back to the freshman party, say no and stay, or say yes since she really wants to be popular. Independent of what decision the child makes, the program will take the user directly to a different day at school. This next day will be different depending on the decision the child had made before.

If the child went to the freshman party or went to the senior party but decided to go back to the freshman party and stayed there all night, she will have new friends who will invite her to different parties and activities. In each one of these parties she will be tempted by older kids to use drugs in order to be popular and fit in. If the child went to the senior party and did not consume any drugs, she will be rejected by the older kids. At the same time she will still be invited to other activities with the freshman class where she will still be tempted by other kids to consume drugs.

If the child consumes drugs at any party, she will be invited to more parties with the "cool" kids at school in which she will always be faced with the temptation of using drugs to be "cool". At this point the real test begins. There is a series of activities in which the child is offered drugs. In every party the child will have the opportunity to finally say no and avoid a life with drugs.

After a few parties the child will be faced with the opportunity to



make money by selling drugs. At this point the child will have the last opportunity to say no and get a new drug free life. If the child decides to sell drugs, to make a lot of money, she will have two choices. One is to sell drugs to a man that is willing to pay double the money for the drugs. This drug transaction will take place in a very bad neighborhood. The other choice is to go to a less dangerous neighborhood and sell the drugs for what they are worth.

If the child decides to go for the first choice, she will be selling drugs to a very powerful and dangerous drug dealer who will kill her. If the child decides to go for the second choice, she will be selling drugs to an undercover police officer and will go to jail. Independent of the child's decision, the game will be over and the child has failed the test.

Although these two endings to the story are very dramatic, it will be strong enough to scare the child and make her understand the consequences of dealing with drugs. If the child never consumes drugs or changes her mind about drugs, she passes the test satisfactory. Sam's life will be different depending on the decision that the child makes throughout the game.

Chapter III—Mr. Javier Irrizarry—

On January 4, 1992, I had the opportunity to interview Mr. Javier Irrizarry, the director of Hogar Crea. Hogar Crea is a chain of rehabilitation centers across Puerto Rico. Mr. Irrizarry is not only the director of Hogar Crea but a recovering drug addict. The story of his

drug addiction helped me to have a broader understanding of drug related problems.

I would like to share with you part of Mr. Irrizarry's interview :

"Most kids use drugs not because they like it, but because they feel rejected either by their peers or by their parents, or they are insecure. Because of these insecurities most children join any group at school who will accept them. If this crowd uses drugs, the kid will identify with them and may want to imitate them. In most cases there is no pressure from drug users toward children who want to use drugs. That is why most drugs users say that they use drugs only because they want to and not because someone is pressuring them to use drugs. Although psychologically they are pressuring themselves with their insecurities.

Our philosophy is that we had problems with our education at home, because we need to develop self confidence and that is learned during childhood. Children have to trust their parents, but if kids feel that their parents do not love them and do not pay enough attention to them they will try to get attention from other people who may not be the best role models." (Irrizarry, 1992)

After five years of alcoholism, Javier's father, a security guard at a state penitentiary, returned to his faith and became a practicing Christian, forcing Javier to go to church along with the family. Javier started noticing how his parents preferred talking and playing with his brother rather than with him. Due to this, Javier began to create feelings of rancour and hatred toward his parents. Although he was a child living at home, for many years Javier had almost no communication with his

parents. His parents made him feel like they knew everything and he knew nothing. Javier became insecure since he thought nobody loved him. As a result of this, his self esteem decreased.

Javier's brother started smoking marijuana before him. When Javier found out he also wanted to smoke since he thought that by imitating his brother, his parents would love him as much as they loved his brother. When his parents found out that Javier and his brother were using drugs, they immediately thought that it was Javier who had gotten his brother involved in drugs.

Being a confused teenager, Javier did not have the mental capacity to deal with small problems like keeping a steady relationship with a friend. This made things worse for him and Javier started using cocaine and later heroin. After getting in trouble with the police, Javier was sent by the court to Hogar Crea. Through education and therapy, Javier and his parents learned how to communicate better with each other. Javier has been sober for three years and is currently working in Hogar Crea helping other people overcome alcoholism and drug addiction.

Chapter IV—Peer Pressure—

One of the most common problems that adolescents face in high school is peer pressure.

“Peer groups are a source of information about society,



educational aspirations, and group activities. Peers set standards for adolescents; they sometimes praise, sometimes cajole, and constantly pressure one another to conform to behavioral standards, including dress styles, social interaction, and forms of rebellion like drug taking or shoplifting. Most important they influence the adolescent's developing self-concept."²

Children have to be taught to avoid peer pressure by first learning the consequences of their acts. A child has to understand that drugs are not toys and that dealing with drugs can be very harmful and even deadly. Children tend to socialize with other children who share their same interests. This applies also to drug users. Friends can be a great influence on each-other. It is very difficult for a child to say no to drugs when most of his/her peers are using drugs. "Thus, drinkers, marijuana users, or cocaine users might associate with one another, and at the same time, reject others not similarly inclined. This limits the ability of peers to 'say no' and influence non-like-minded, adolescents." (Lefton 1991, 345)

Parents are a big influence in a child's life. Children can learn from their parents as much as they can learn from their peers. Bad communication between parents and their children can make a big difference in their lives. "There is no question that adolescents are

2. Lefton, Lester A. Psychology (South Carolina: Allyn & Bacon, 1991), 344-345



responsive to parental influence. If their views are sharply different from their parents' they put up serious resistance only in life-altering decisions (Schener and Reppucci, 1988)." (Lefton 1991, 344) Adults have to learn to listen to adolescents as much as adolescents have to learn to listen to adults.

V. Conclusion—Problems Encountered and People's Reaction to the Thesis—

Two problems were encountered during the production of the thesis. The 3-Dimensional Sam did not work for the animation. Sam as a 3-D character looked too different from the other characters, especially from her parents. To solve this problem, Sam and her parents are regular looking people with gray skin. I chose gray for their skin color so they could be a neutral race.

Incorporating sound into the animations was a hard problem to solve. The script which was supposed to be recorded and brought to the animations as a sound cast, occupied too much memory and therefore, would not fit into the animations. The script can be seen and read on the monitor as the animations take place.

Thesis Show was a wonderful experience. The positive reaction of the people who had the opportunity to play the game was excellent. It was great to see adults as well as children enjoy the game and comment about the danger involved in the use of drugs.

The best comments came from parents. Most of them, if not all of



them, thought that the game was an excellent idea that teaches children a great lesson about drug abuse. I am very pleased with the results of this thesis as well as proud.

VI. Appendix

A. Script

Introduction

This is Sam and through this game you will have the opportunity to be her. Sam is a 14 year old girl who is about to start High School. Sam has a mother and a father; her mom is a doctor and her dad is a lawyer. Although Sam loves her parents very much, they live very busy lives and she hardly ever sees them.

To start the game simply click start. Throughout the game, for every question you are asked there will be two buttons similar to the start button on the screen, those buttons are the answers to the questions. You have to click on one of them, but only one, to continue the story and play the game. Good Luck!

1st Kitchen Scene

— Mother and father do not pay too much attention—

Father- Ready for your 1st day of class Sam?

Sam- Not really.

Mother- Oh you will do fine!

Sam- But...



Father- Wow! I am running late; see you.

Sam- See you dad!

Mother- Good luck Sam! I've got to go.

Sam- See you mom!

1st Scene at School

Susan- Hi, my name is Susan!

Sam- Hi, I am Sam!

Susan- Listen Sam, this Saturday there will be a party for the freshman class at my house. Here is the invitation and a map on how to get there.

Sam- Thank you, that will be great!

Susan- Ok, see you there!

Brenda- Hey kid! Are you new here?

Sam- Yes I am. Why?

Brenda- I am Brenda, I am a senior. I am having a party this Saturday with all the cool kids at school. Maybe you want to join us.

Sam- Well, I would like to go but there is a freshman party the same day.

Brenda- That is a party for wimps. Our party is a party for the coolest kids at school and you can become one of us.

Sam- Thanks for the invitation. I will try to go.

Brenda- Well it is up to you!

1st Freshman Party

Mark- Hi, I am Mark!



Sam- Hi, I am Sam!

Mark- Are you having a good time?

Sam- Well I just got here but it looks like fun.

Mark- I heard that there is a party for the seniors at Brenda's house.

Sam- Yes, she invited me too!

Mark- Do you want to go and check it out? The coolest kids at school will be there and we can meet them. Who knows maybe we can hang out with them!

Sam- I do not know, will it be ok if we just leave?

Mark- Yes! No one will notice. What do you say, should we go or not?

If Sam Stays at the Freshman Party

Sam stayed at the freshman party and had a wonderful time. She made many friends and is looking forward for the next party with her new friends.

1st Senior Party

Brenda- Well, I see you decided to come after all.

Sam- Yes, we decided to check out the party and meet some of the seniors.

Mark- This is a very cool place Brenda.

Charlie- Hey Brenda! Who are your friends?

Brenda- This is Sam and this is Mark.

Charlie- Hi, I am Charlie!

Sam and Mark- Hi Charlie!

Charlie- Do you like our party?

Mark- Oh yea! It is great!

Sam- This is a very cool place

Charlie- So you like being cool, huh!

Sam- Well, doesn't everyone?

Brenda- If you want to visit a very cool place, you should pay a visit to the bathroom.

Mark- Why? What is so cool about the bathroom?

Charlie- This!

Sam- Is that cocaine?

Brenda- Of course it is! You want to be cool, don't you?

Sam- Well yes, but...

Charlie- Listen, there is nothing wrong with doing a little cocaine. It is not like we are addicts or something.

Brenda- Hey you can either be cool like us or be a wimp and get out!

Mark- Sam I don't know about you but these kids look ok to me. That stuff can not be that bad besides this is our only chance to belong to this crowd. I mean it is not like we are going to do it all the time. It is just today. I am going for it. What about you?

Sam- Well...

Mark- Come on!

1st Scene Bathroom

—Sam using drugs—

Brenda and Charlie- All right!



If Sam Goes Back to Freshman Party

Sam went back to the freshman party and had a wonderful time. She made many friends and is looking forward for the next party with her new friends.

2nd Kitchen Scene

— Mother and father do not pay too much attention—

Father- Ready for school Sam?

Sam- No I really need to talk to you.

Father- Not now Sam I am late for work. We will talk tomorrow.

Sam- But you said that yesterday!

Father- Sam I've really got to go. See you Sam.

Sam- See you dad.

Sam- Mom?

Mother- I've got to go Sam. See you.

Sam- See you mom!

2nd Scene Lockers

—If Sam stayed at the freshman party—

Susan- Hi Sam! How are you?

Sam- Oh, I am fine Susan!

Susan- Did you have a good time at the party on Saturday?

Sam- Oh yes, I had a wonderful time!

Susan- We are having another party this Saturday. Do you want to come?

Sam- Sure Susan, I will try to go.



Susan- Well, see you there!

Sam- Ok!

Brenda- Hey Sam! I am going to give you another opportunity to join the cool crowd. We are having another party on Saturday. I hope you decide to come to our party and stop hanging out with those wimps.

Sam- Thanks for inviting me again Brenda. I will try to go.

Brenda- Well as I said before, it is up to you. You either want to be cool or keep being a simple freshman. See you!

Sam- See you Brenda.

2nd Scene Lockers

—If Sam stayed at the senior party—

Susan- Hi Sam! How come you did not go to the party on Saturday?

Sam- Hi Susan! I went to the senior party on Saturday.

Susan- Oh! Did you have a good time?

Sam- Yes, I had a great time!

Susan- I just want to let you know that there is going to be another party at my house this Saturday. Maybe you will like to come.

Sam- Thanks for the invitation Susan. I will try to go.

Susan- Ok, hope to see you there!

Sam- Ok, see you!

Brenda- Hi Sam! How are you?

Sam- I am doing great!

Brenda- Well, I am having another party this Saturday. You should come.



We will have a lot more fun this time.

Sam- Ok, I will try to go!

Brenda- Ok, Sam see you!

Sam- See you Brenda!

Sam- What do you think, should I go to Brenda's party or should I check out Susan's party and try to meet other freshmen.

2nd Freshman Party

—If Sam goes to Brenda's party and decided to leave—

Mark- Hi Sam! How are you?

Sam- Oh I am fine! Did you have a good time at Brenda's party last Saturday?

Mark- I had a great time! We had so much fun. Those guys are so funny. You should have been there with us.

Sam- Well I just don't like the Idea of using cocaine.

Mark- But Sam, there is nothing wrong about it. On the contrary, after using it you just forget about everything bad and start having fun.

Sam- But cocaine is bad for you!

Mark- Nothing that makes you feel so good can be bad for you.

Sam- I don't know Mark.

Mark- Come on Sam! I came here to get you and take you to Brenda's party. We are going to have a great time. What do you say?



If Sam Stays at the Freshman Party

Congratulations, I am very proud of you. You passed the test.

2nd Freshman Party II

—If Sam went to Susan's party—

Mark- Hi Sam! How are you?

Sam- Oh I am doing fine. Did you have a good time at Brenda's party last Saturday?

Mark- I had a great time! We had so much fun. Those guys are so funny. You should have been there with us.

Sam- I heard that you were all doing cocaine at the party. and I just don't like the idea of using cocaine.

Mark- But Sam, there is nothing wrong about it. On the contrary, after using it you just forget about everything bad and start having fun.

Sam- But cocaine is bad for you!

Mark- Nothing that makes you feel so good can be bad for you.

Sam- I don't know Mark.

Mark- Come on Sam! I came here to get you and take you to Brenda's party. We are going to have a great time. What do you say?

2nd Freshman Party III

—If Sam went to Brenda's party and stay—

Mark- Hi Sam! How are you?

Sam- Hi Mark! I am doing fine.

Mark- Did you come to check out the party?

Sam- Yes, I did.

Mark- So did I, but I would rather go to Brenda's party. After all we had a great time last time with Brenda, Charlie, and all their friends.

Those guys are so funny! Are you coming?

Sam- I would like to go but I am not really sure about the cocaine. Isn't it bad for you?

Mark- Sam there is nothing bad about it. On the contrary after using it you just forget about everything bad and start having a good time. Besides nothing that makes you feel so good can be bad for you.

Sam- I don't know Mark.

Mark- Come on Sam! I came here to get you and take you to Brenda's party we are going to have a great time. Come on what do you say?

2nd Senior Party

—If Sam went to 1st senior party and stayed—

Charlie- Hi Sam! Hi Mark!

Mark and Sam- Hi Charlie! Hi Brenda!

Brenda- Are you up for a good time!

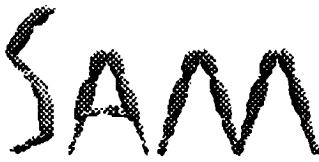
Mark- Oh yes!

Charlie- Are you coming Sam?

3rd Scene lockers

—If Sam went to Susan's party—

Susan- Hi Sam! Did you have a good time on Saturday?



Sam- Hi Susan! Yes I had a wonderful time.

Susan- Well I just wanted to let you know that there will be another party this Saturday. Do you want to come?

Sam- Sure Susan. I will try to go. Thanks for inviting me.

Susan- Ok Sam, see you there!

Sam- See you Susan!

Brenda- Hi Sam! How are you?

Sam- I am fine Brenda.

Brenda- Sam I am giving you one more chance to stop hanging out with those freshmen. I am having another party this Saturday. You should really come and start making friends with the cool kids at school.

Sam- Thanks for the invitation Brenda. I will try to go.

Brenda- Well as I already said, It is up to you. You either want to be cool or you rather be a wimp.

Sam- See you Brenda!

Sam- What should I do?

Scene lockers Joe and Snake

Charlie- You know Sam we are friends and all, but by now you owe me a lot of money. Since I am a reasonable guy, I will forget about it if you just do me a favor.

Sam- Sure Charlie! What do you want me to do?

Charlie- You see, I need to deliver some merchandise to Joe at school and also to Snake in Downtown. I would like you to deliver one of



them for me.

Sam- What is that Charlie?

Charlie- Oh, just some grass! So, will you deliver it or not? Remember
Sam you owe me!

If yes!

Sam- Ok Charlie I will do it! Which one do you want me to deliver?

Charlie- Which ever you want, but let me tell you Snake will pay more for
the merchandise than Joe, and whatever extra you make you
can keep!

If no!

Sam- I don't know Charlie. I don't want to be involved in selling drugs.

Charlie- You owe me, and you owe me a lot. Where do you think you are
going to get the money, from your daddy!

If Joe

Sam- Are you Joe?

Joe- Are you Charlie's friend?

Sam- Yes, I am.

Joe- Well then I am Joe!

Sam- Here is your merchandise. Where is the money?

Joe- Surprise! There is no money, but you are under arrest!



If Snake

Sam- Are you Snake?

Snake- Are you Charlie's friend?

Sam- Yes, I am.

Snake- So, Charlie decided not to come after all!

Sam- What do you mean?

Snake-This! (shot)

Snake- Thanks for the merchandise!

If Dad

Rehabilitation Center

Congratulations! You made the right choice. I am very proud of you!

B. Figures

1. F.G.C. Presents
2. Start
3. Kitchen Scene
4. Kitchen Scene (go to school)
5. Lockers Scene (freshman party invitation)
6. Lockers Scene (senior party invitation)
7. Lockers Scene (decision)
8. Freshman Party
9. Freshman Party (stay or leave)
10. Freshman Party (If stay)
11. Senior Party
12. Senior Party (yes or leave)
13. Senior Party (cocaine scene)
14. Senior Party (If leave)
15. Bathroom Scene
16. Locker Scene Joe/Snake
17. Locker Scene Joe/Snake (yes or no)



18. Locker Scene Joe/Snake (if yes/Joe or Snake)
19. If Joe
20. If Joe (arrest)
21. If Joe (jail/game over)
22. If Snake
23. If Snake (gun)
24. If Snake (death/game over)
25. Locker Scene Joe/Snake (if no/dad or sell)
26. If Dad (Rehabilitation Center)

FEL

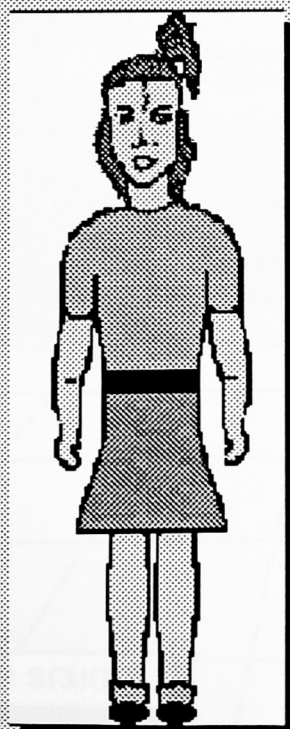
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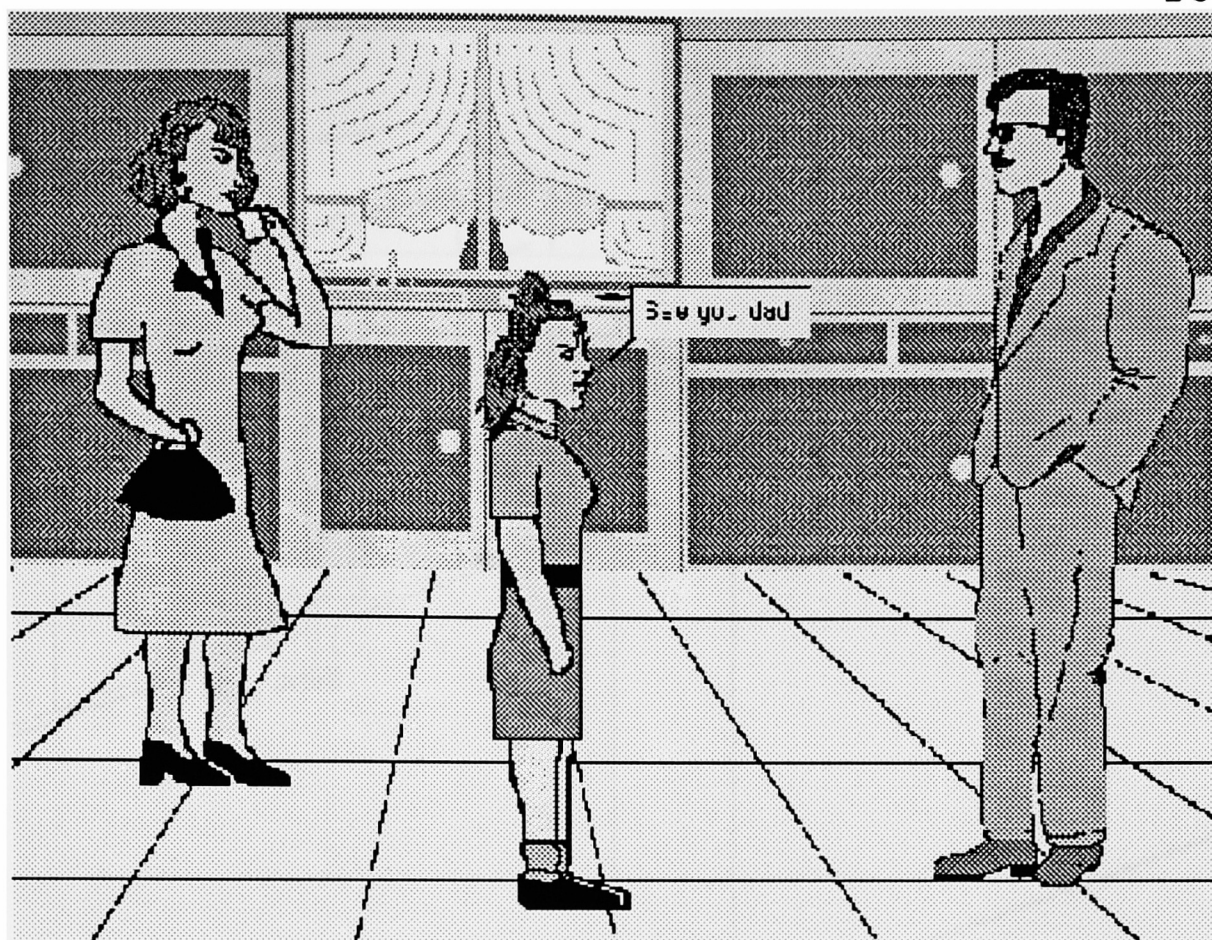
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SAM

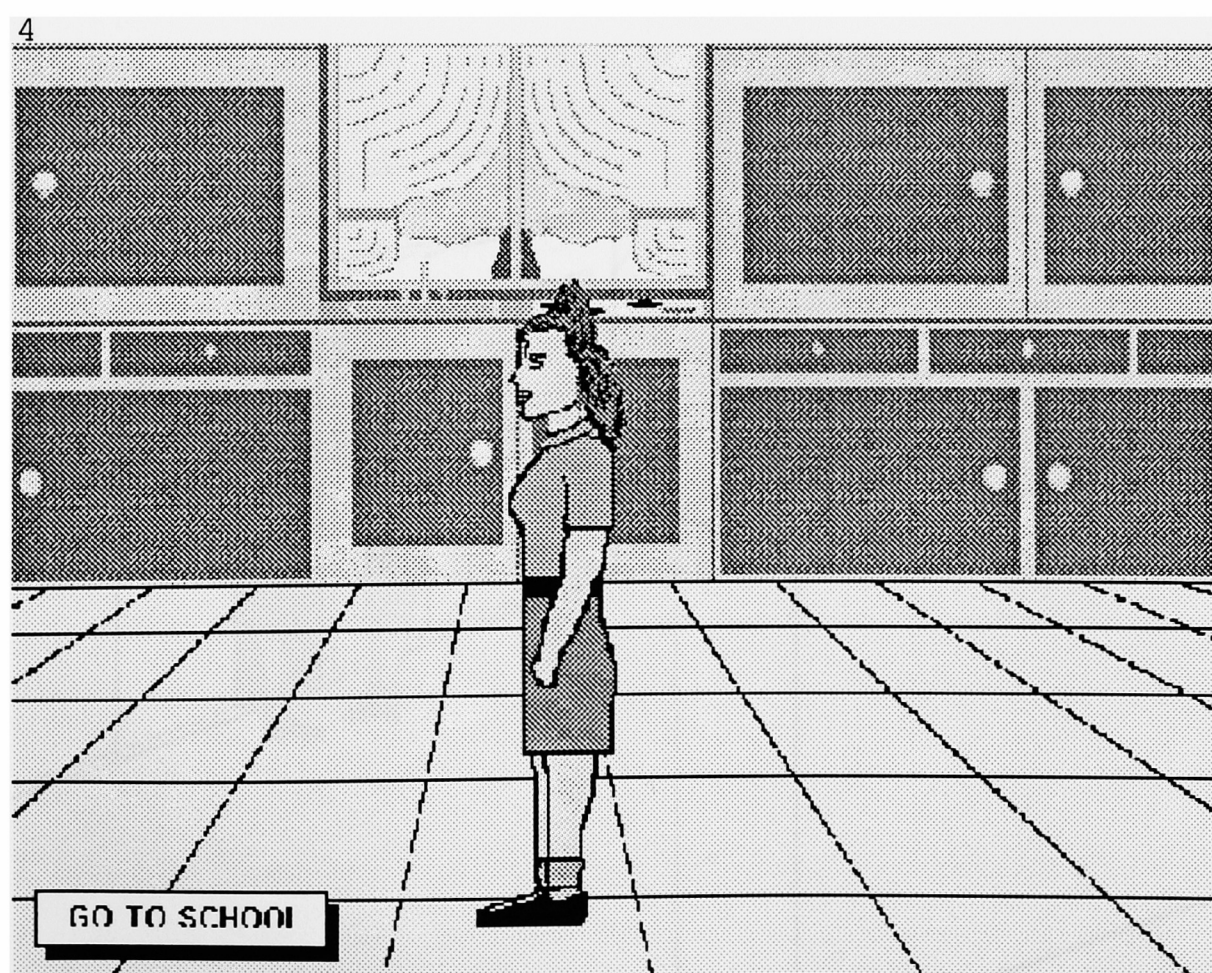
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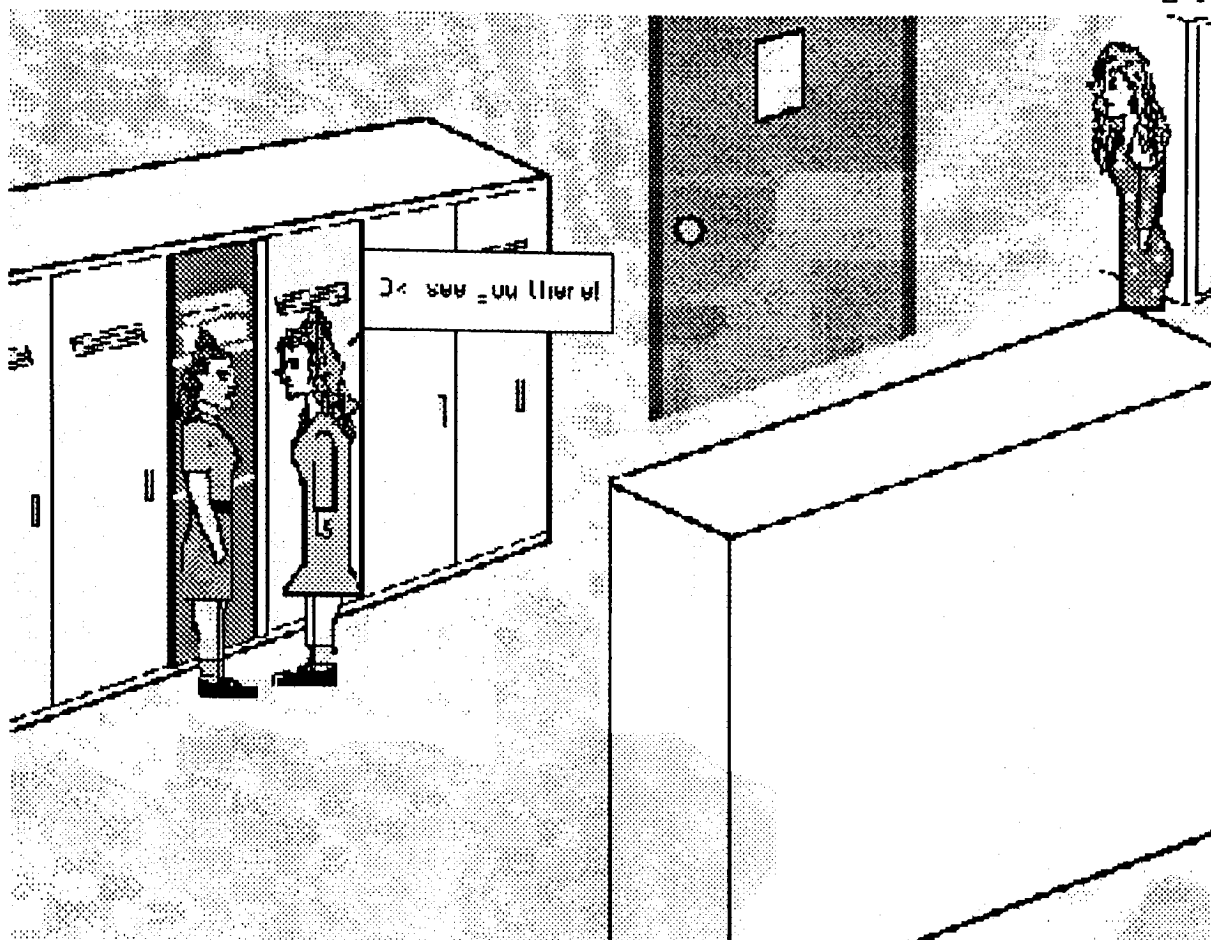
To **START** the game simply click: **START** throughout the game for every question you are asked there will be two buttons similar to the **START** button on screen these buttons are the answer to the question. You have to click on one of them, but only one, to continue the story and enjoy the game
GOOD LUCK !!



3

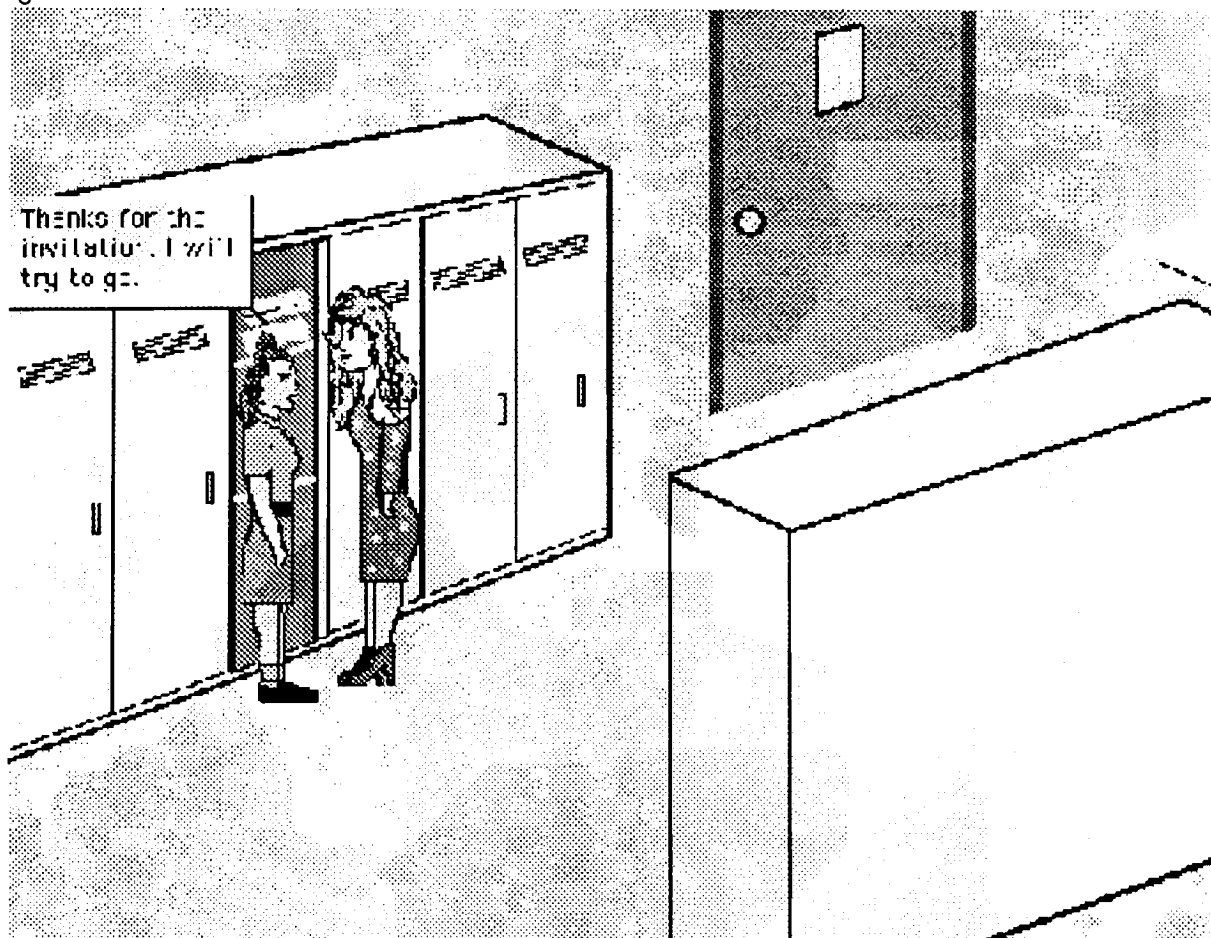


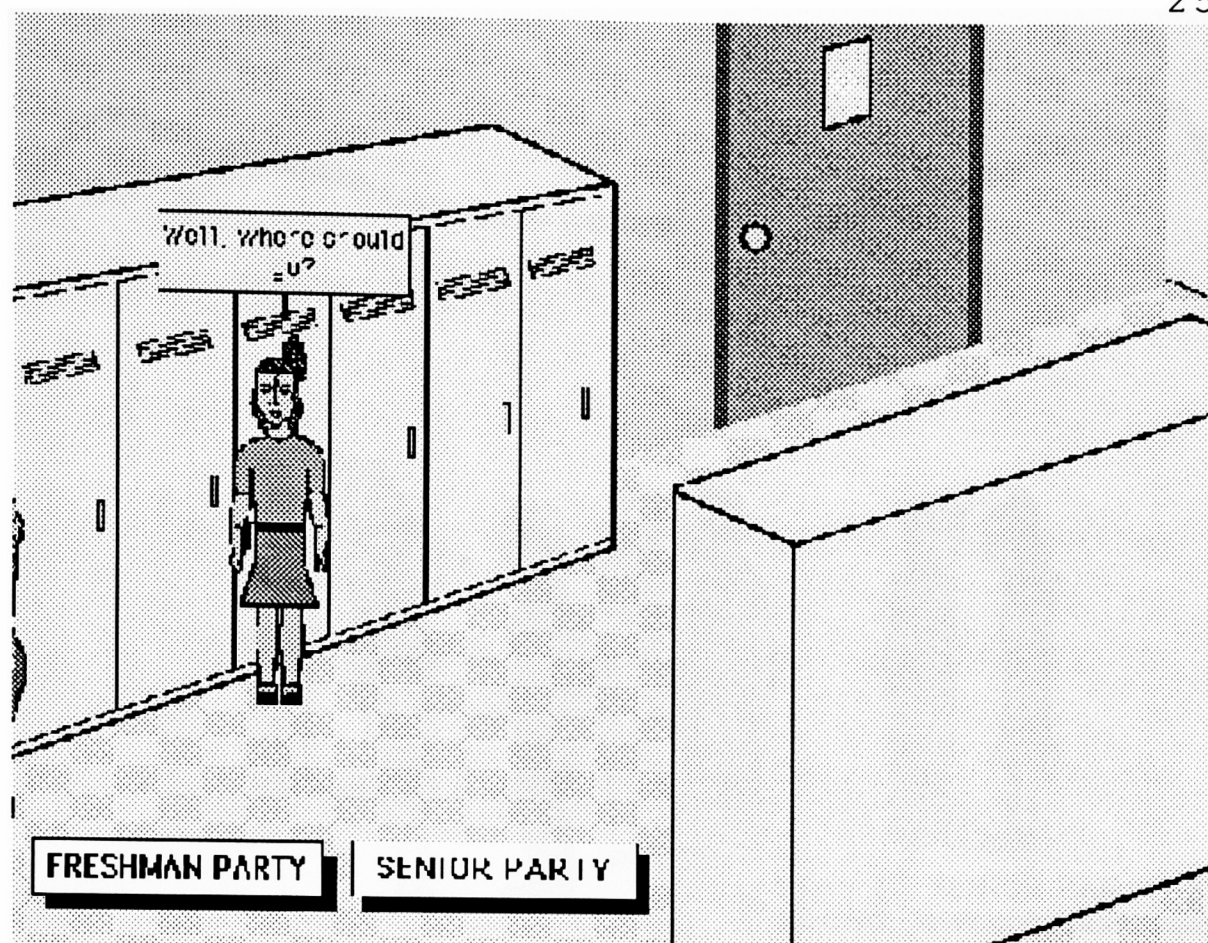
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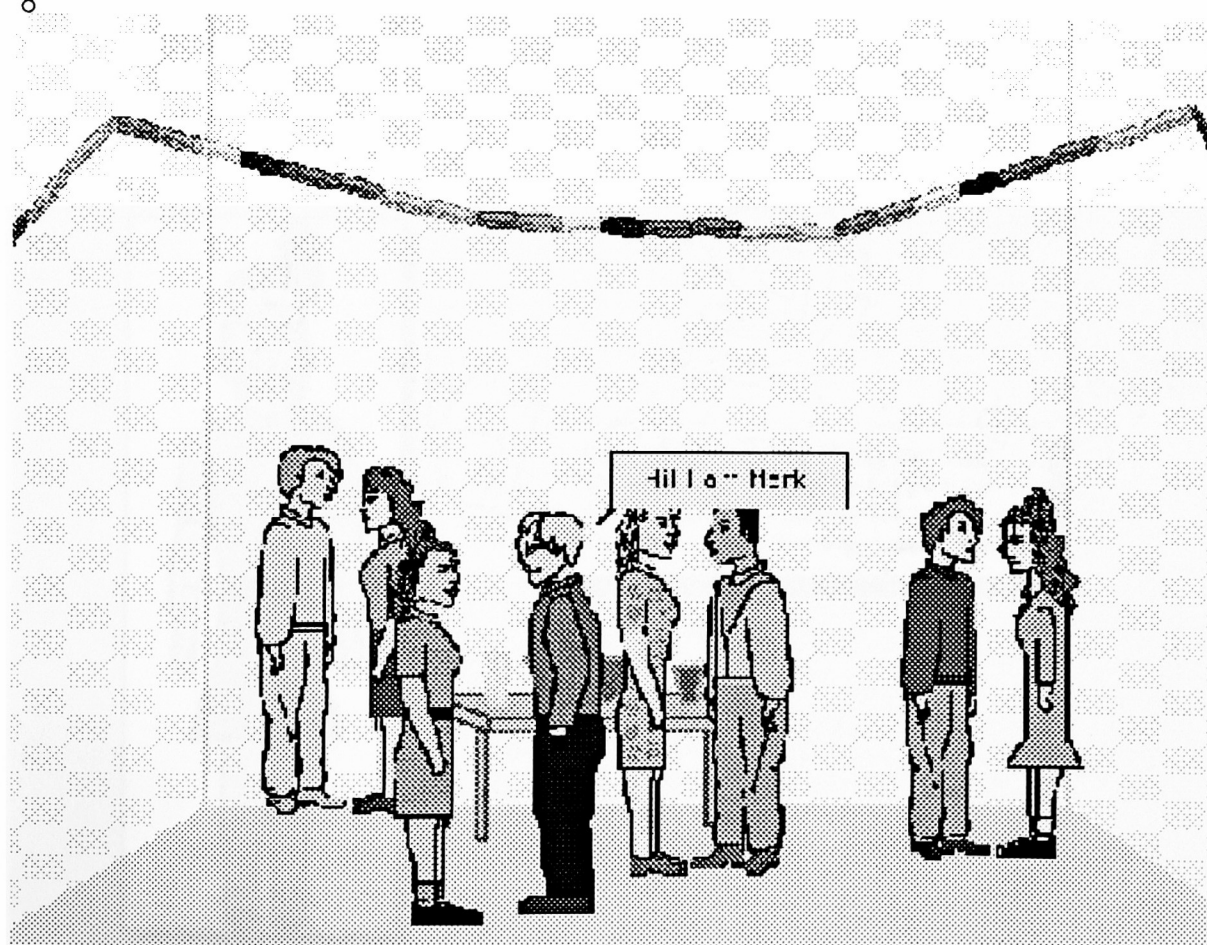
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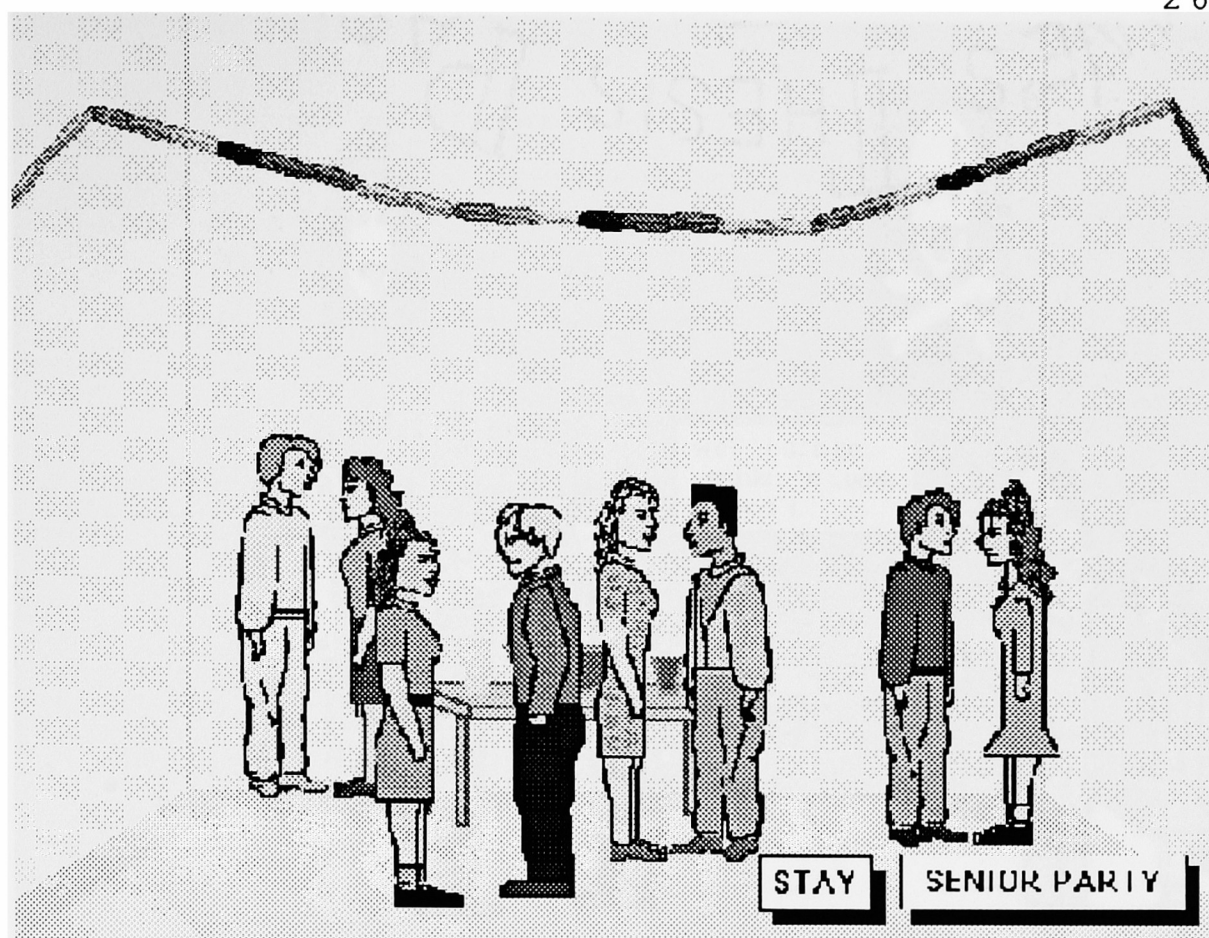




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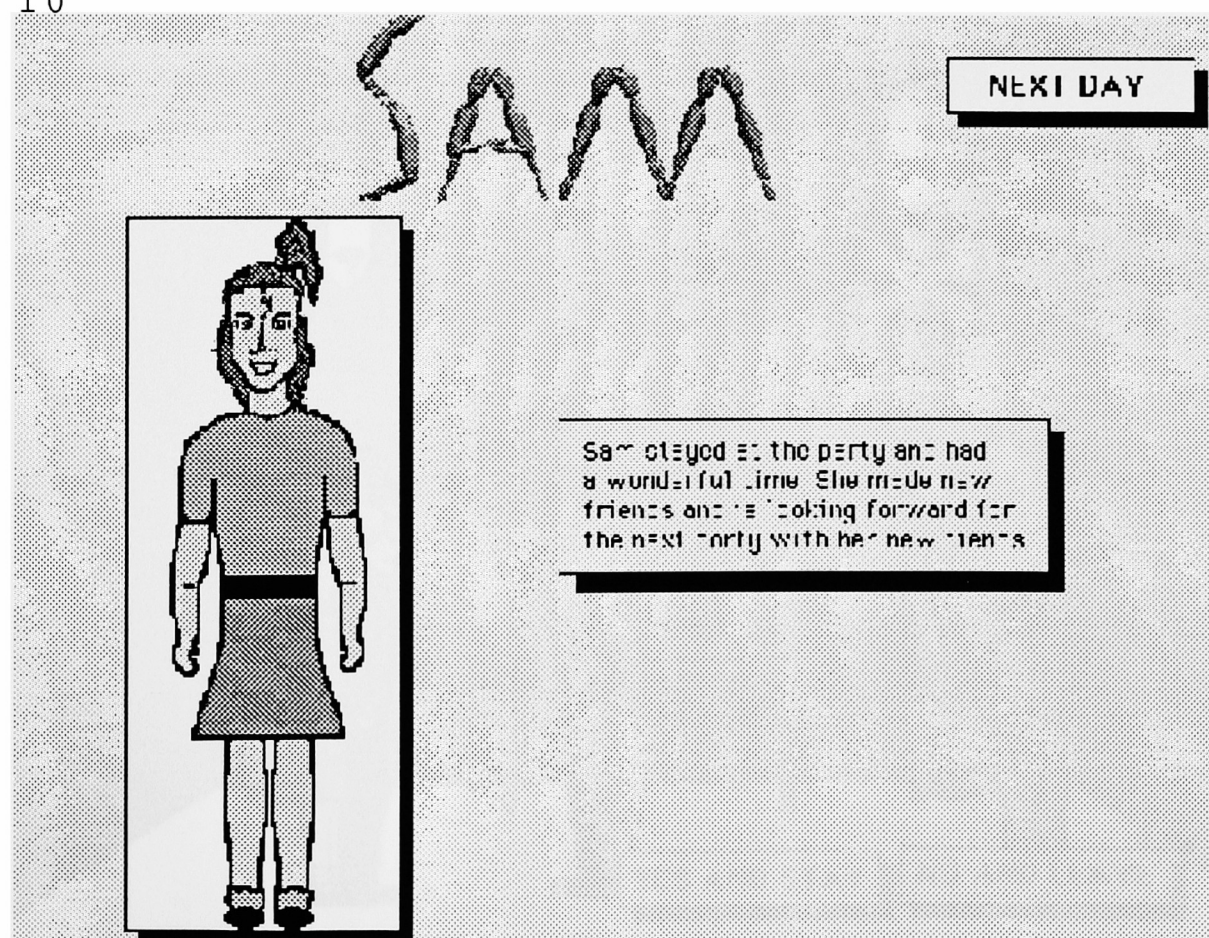
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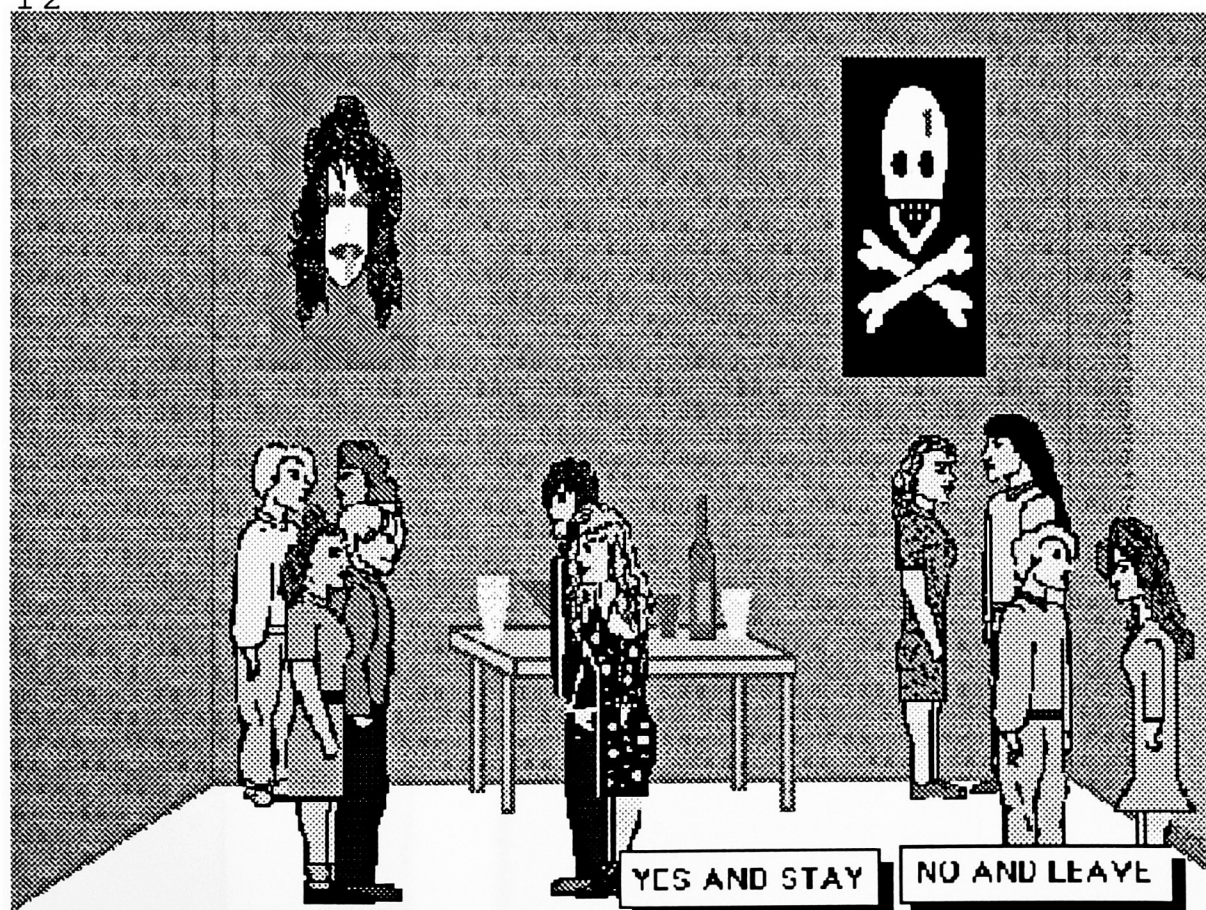
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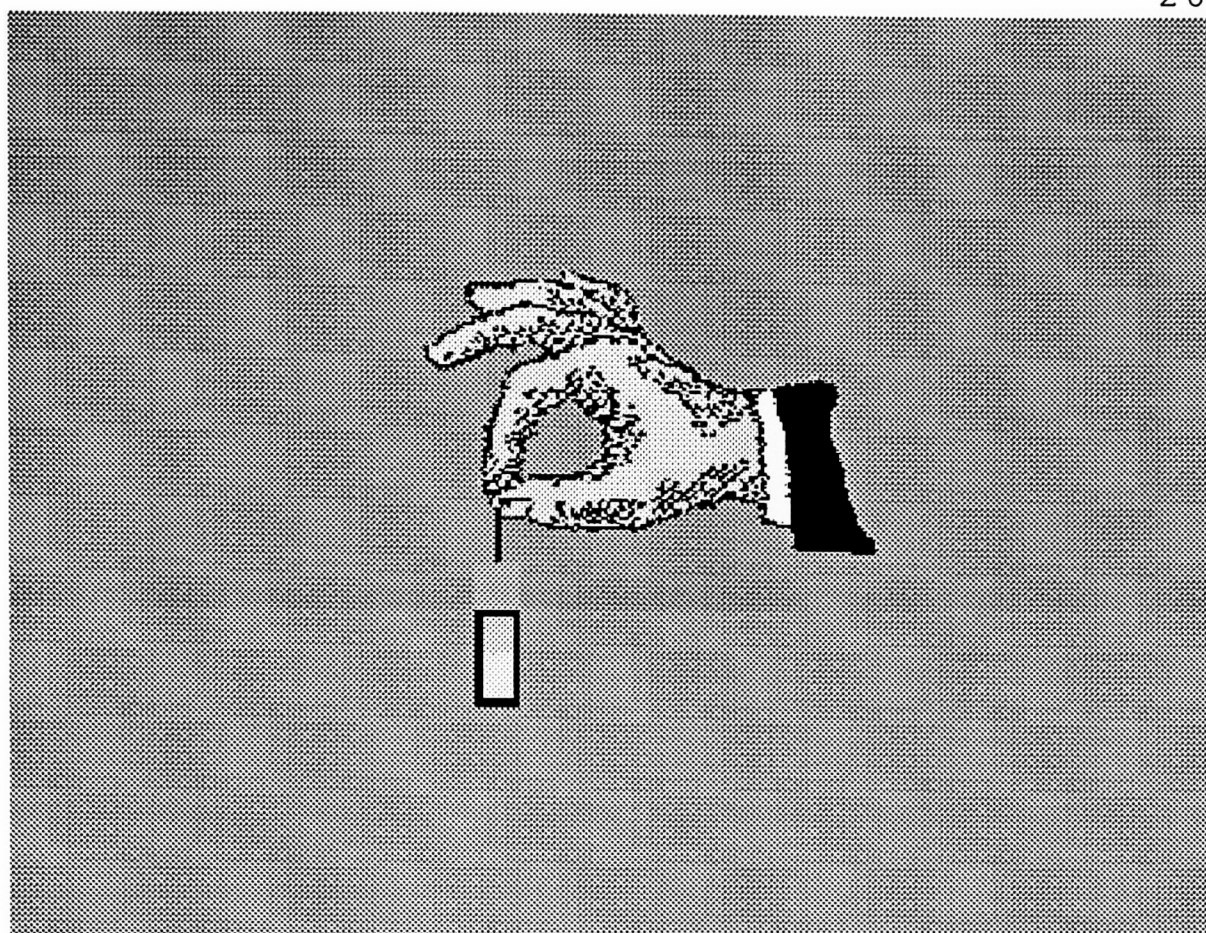




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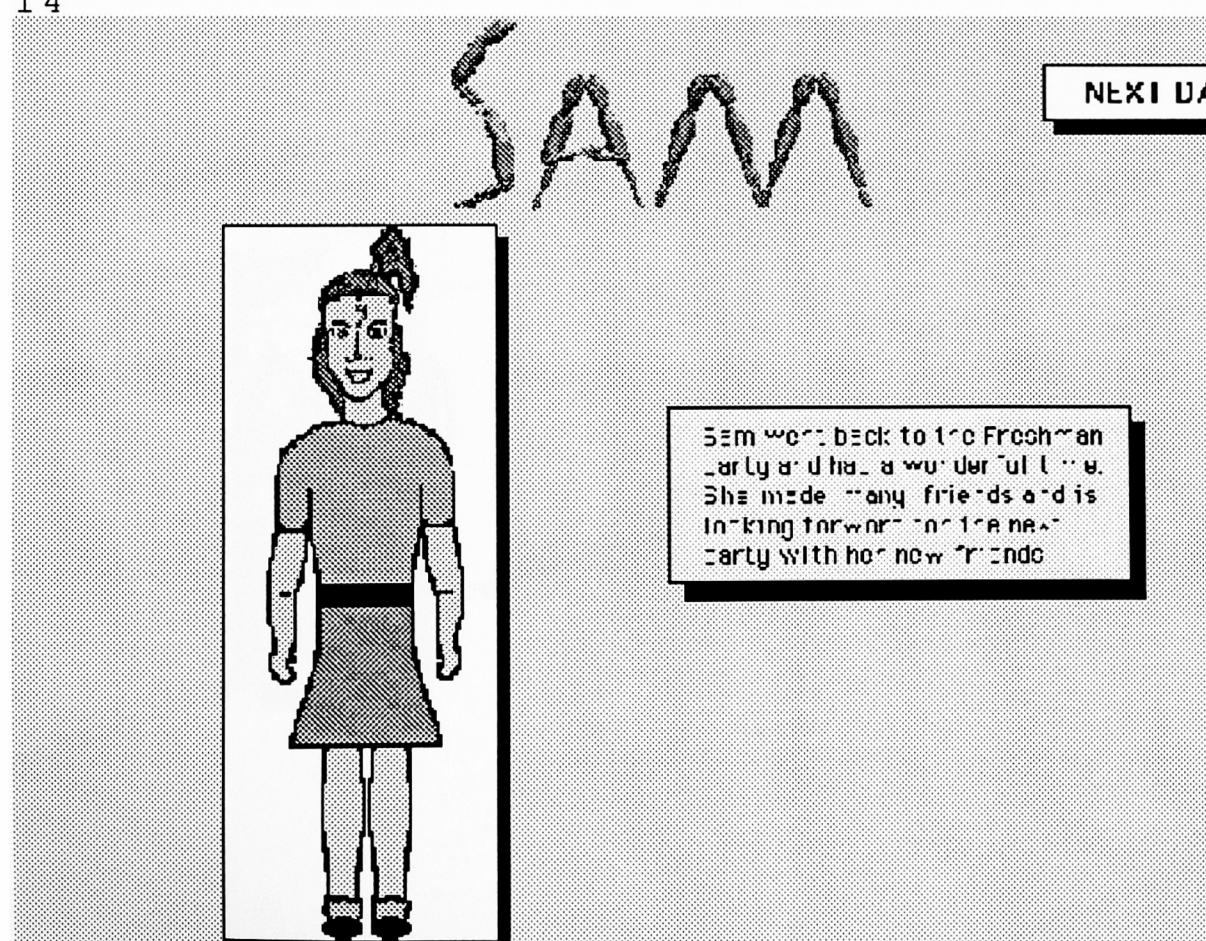
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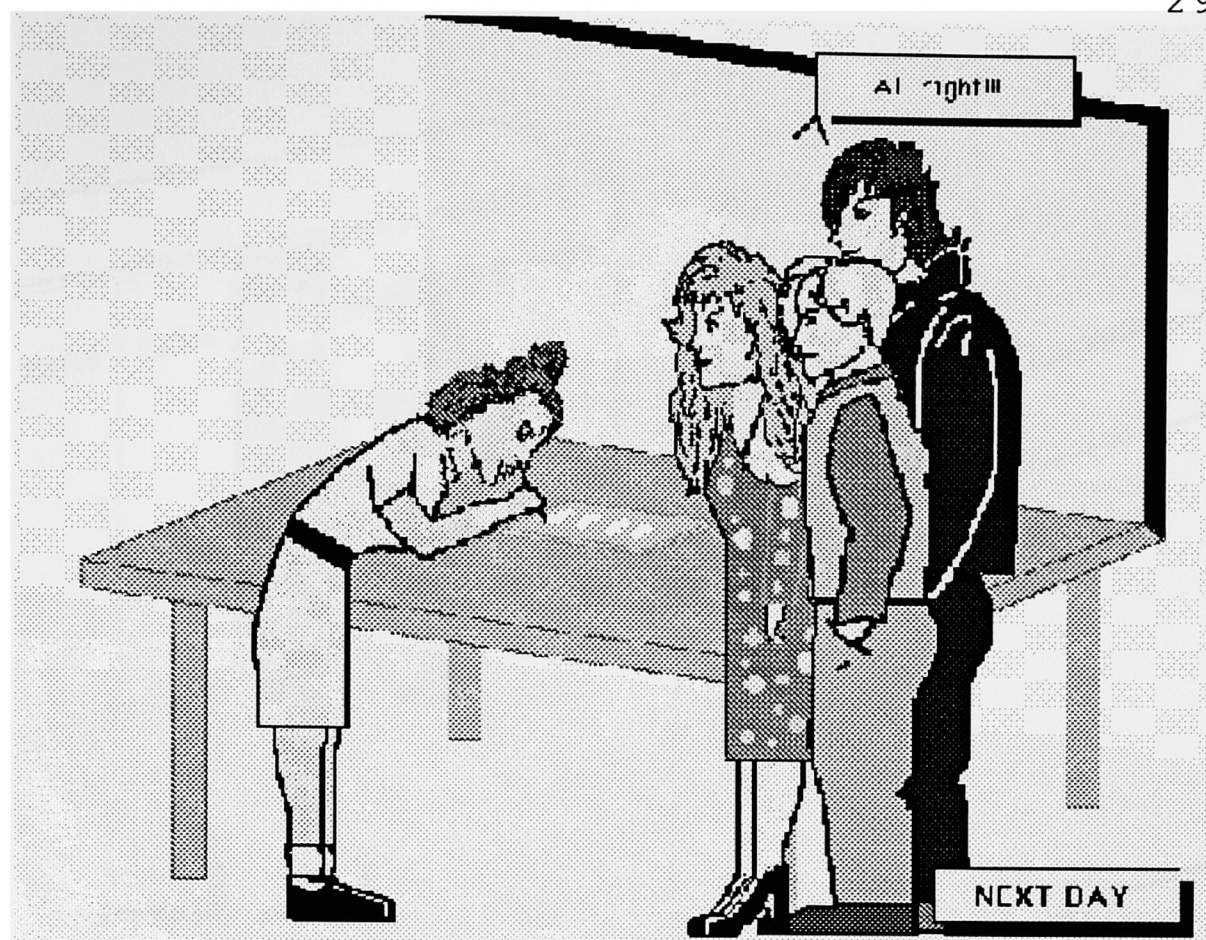




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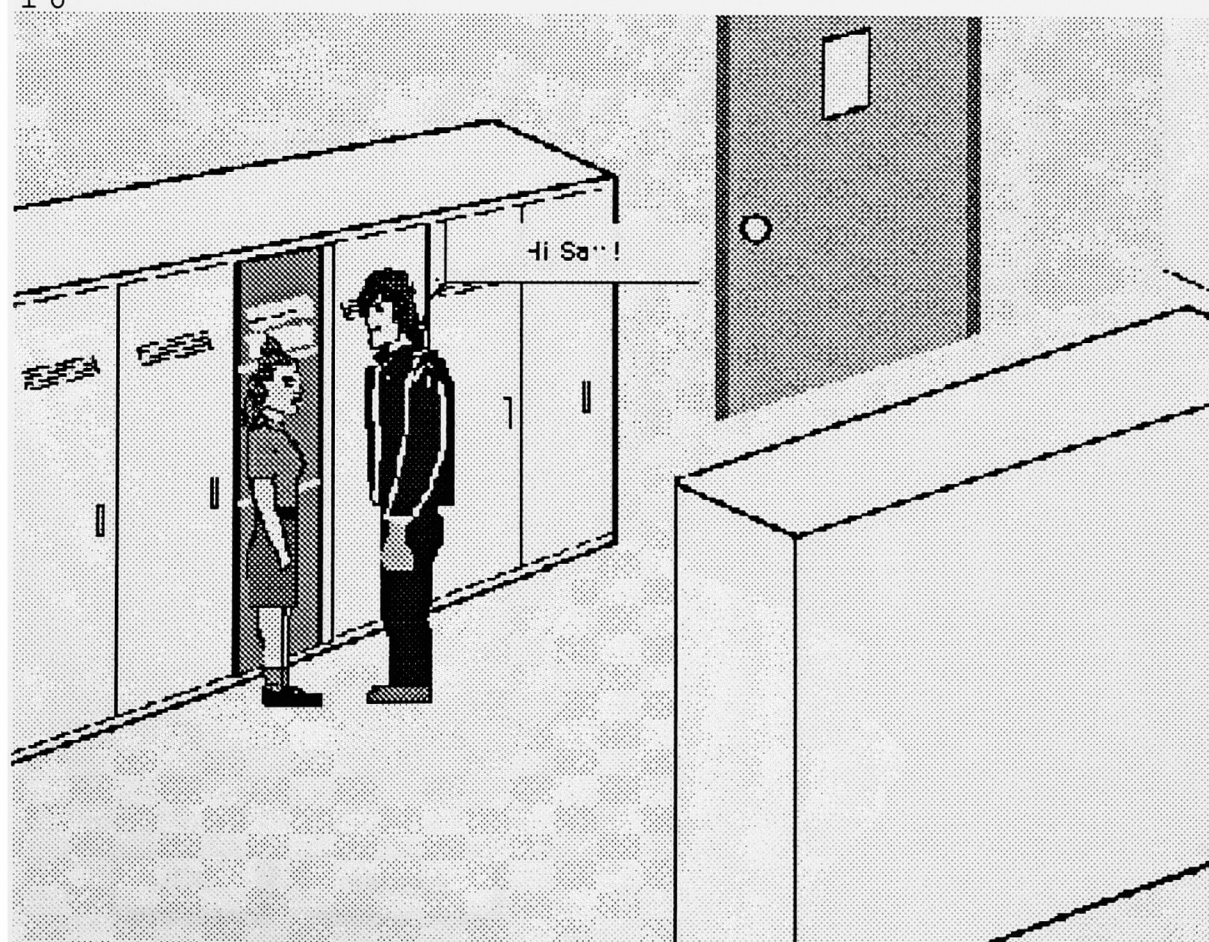
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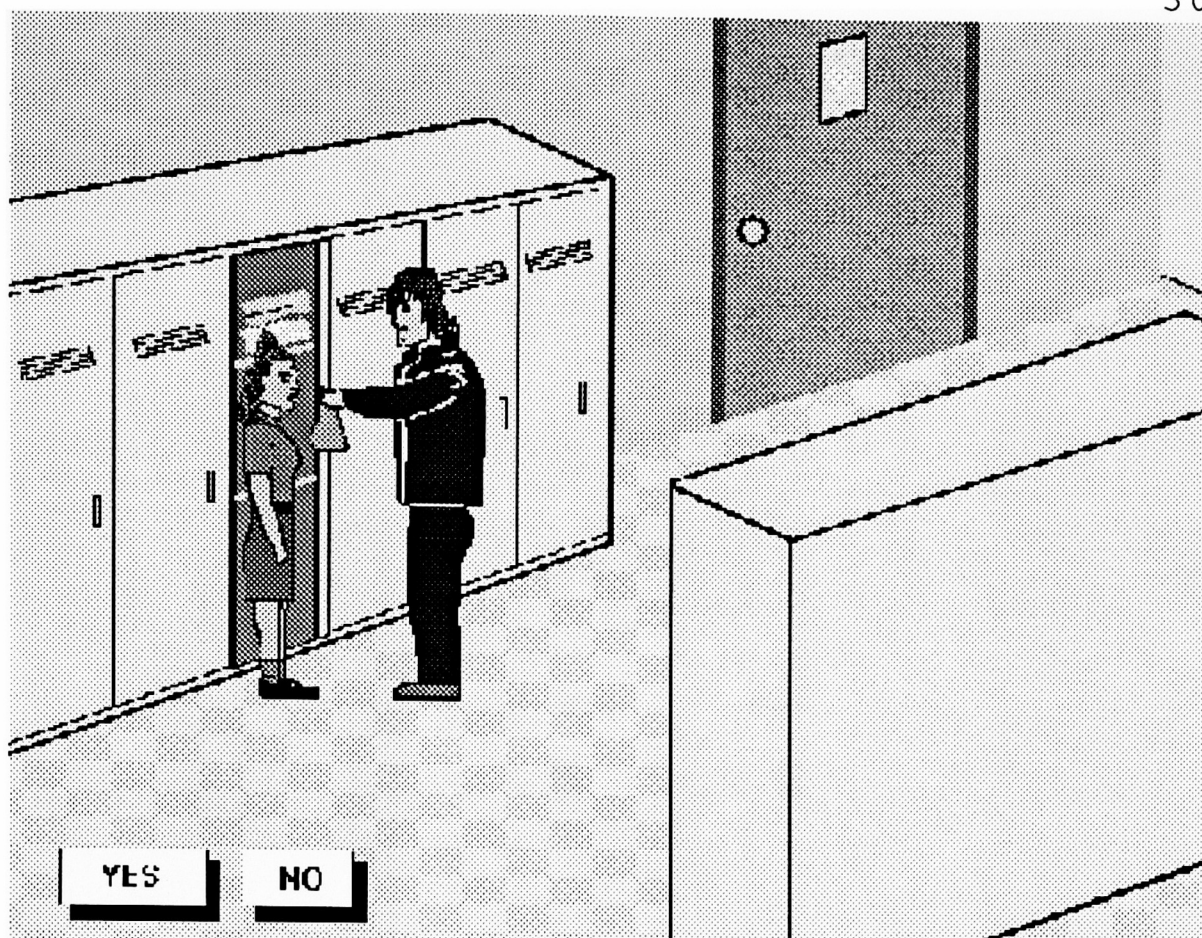




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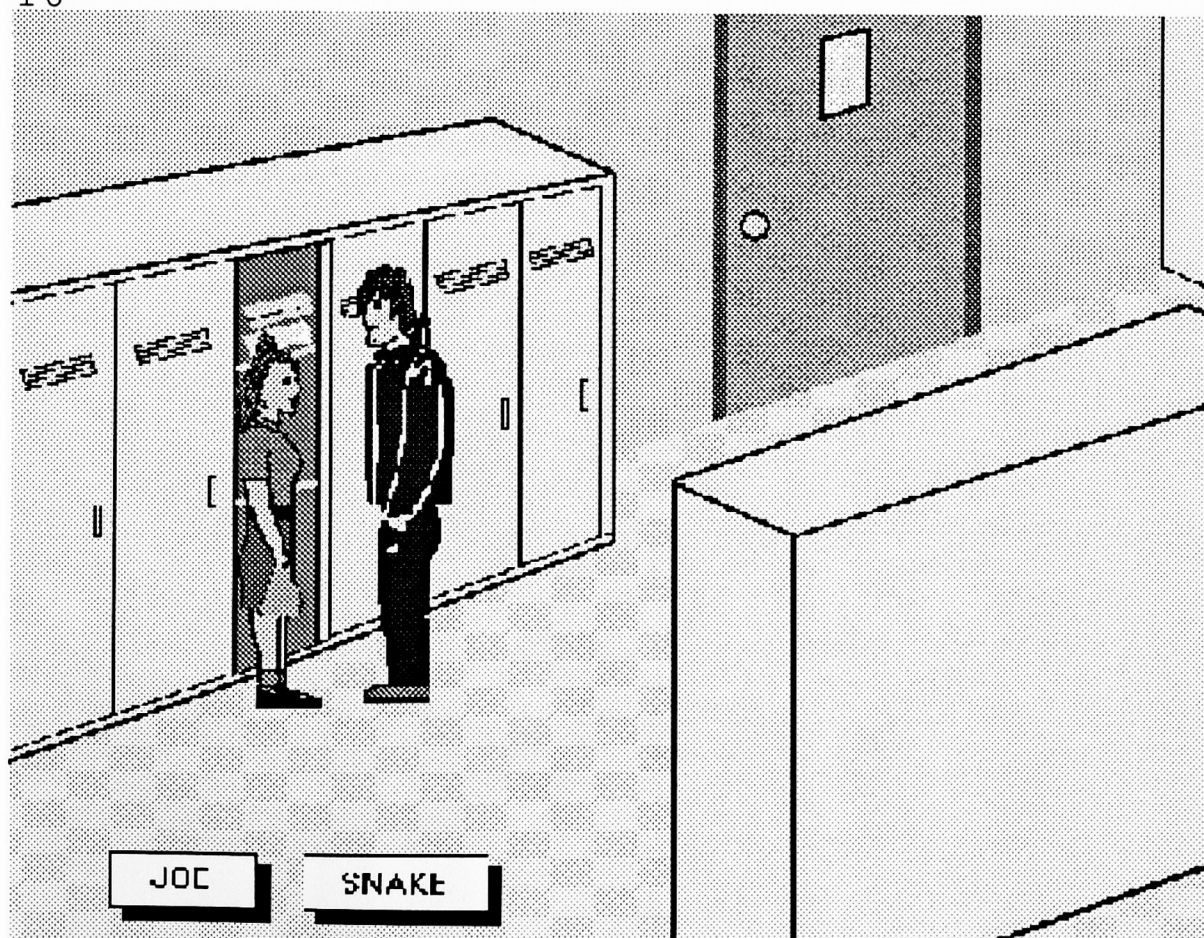
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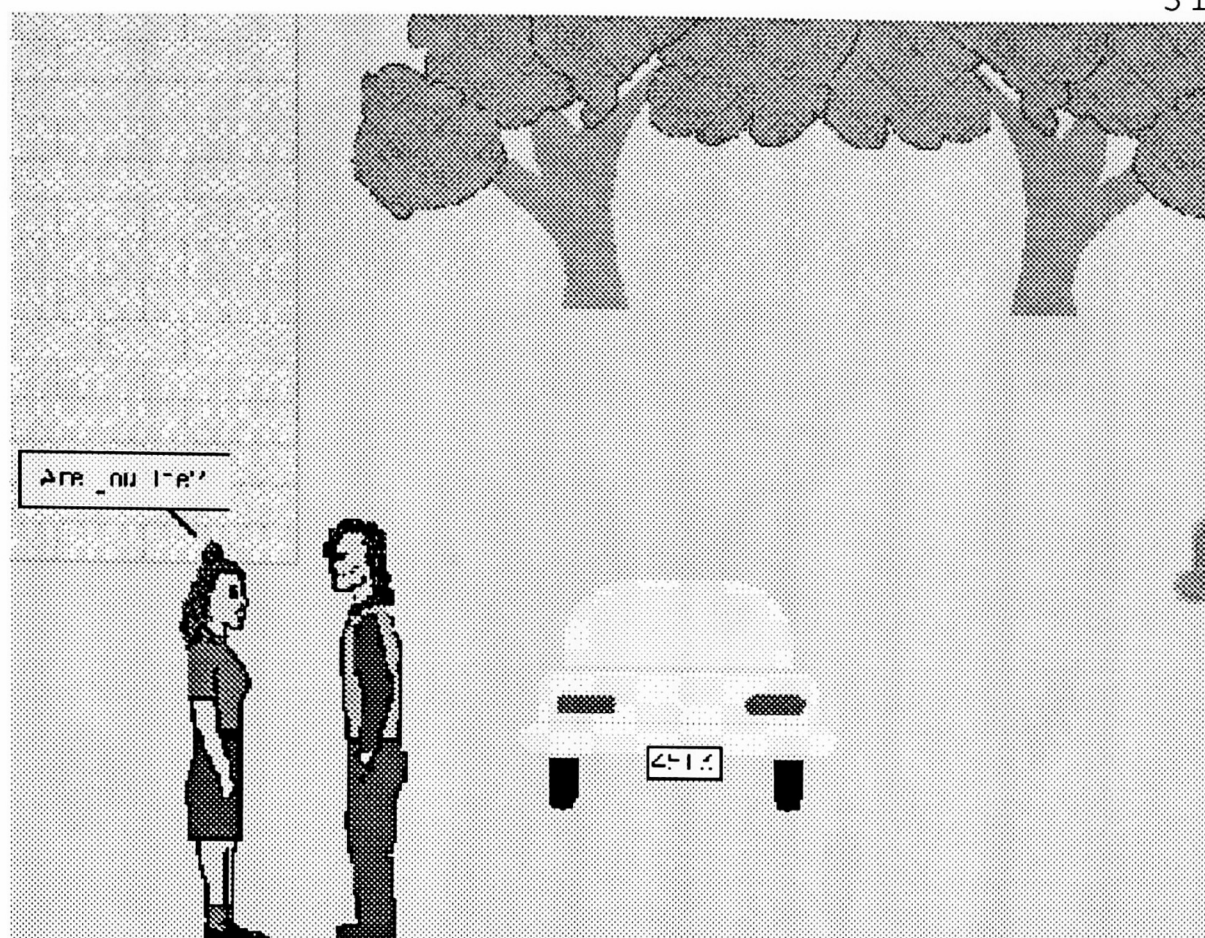




17

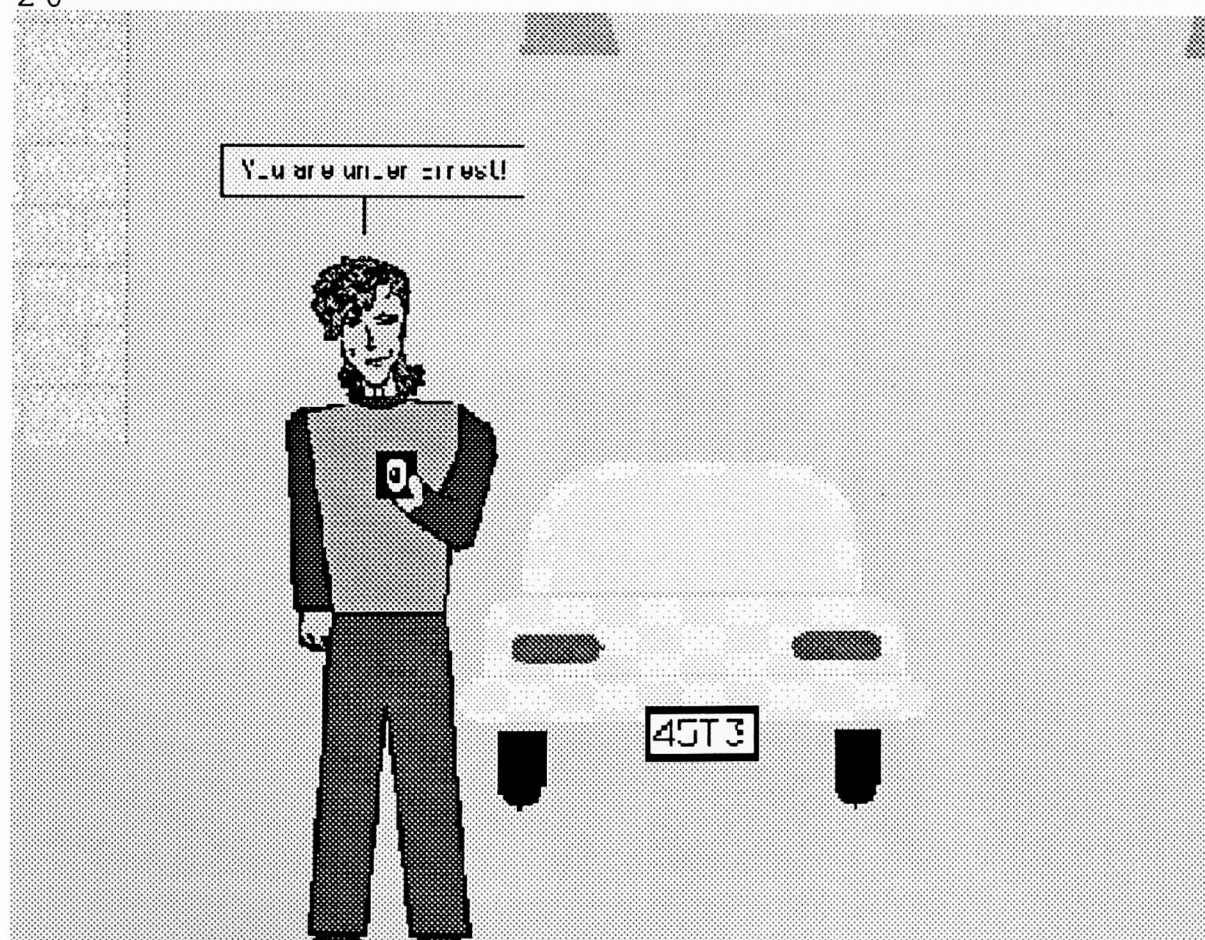
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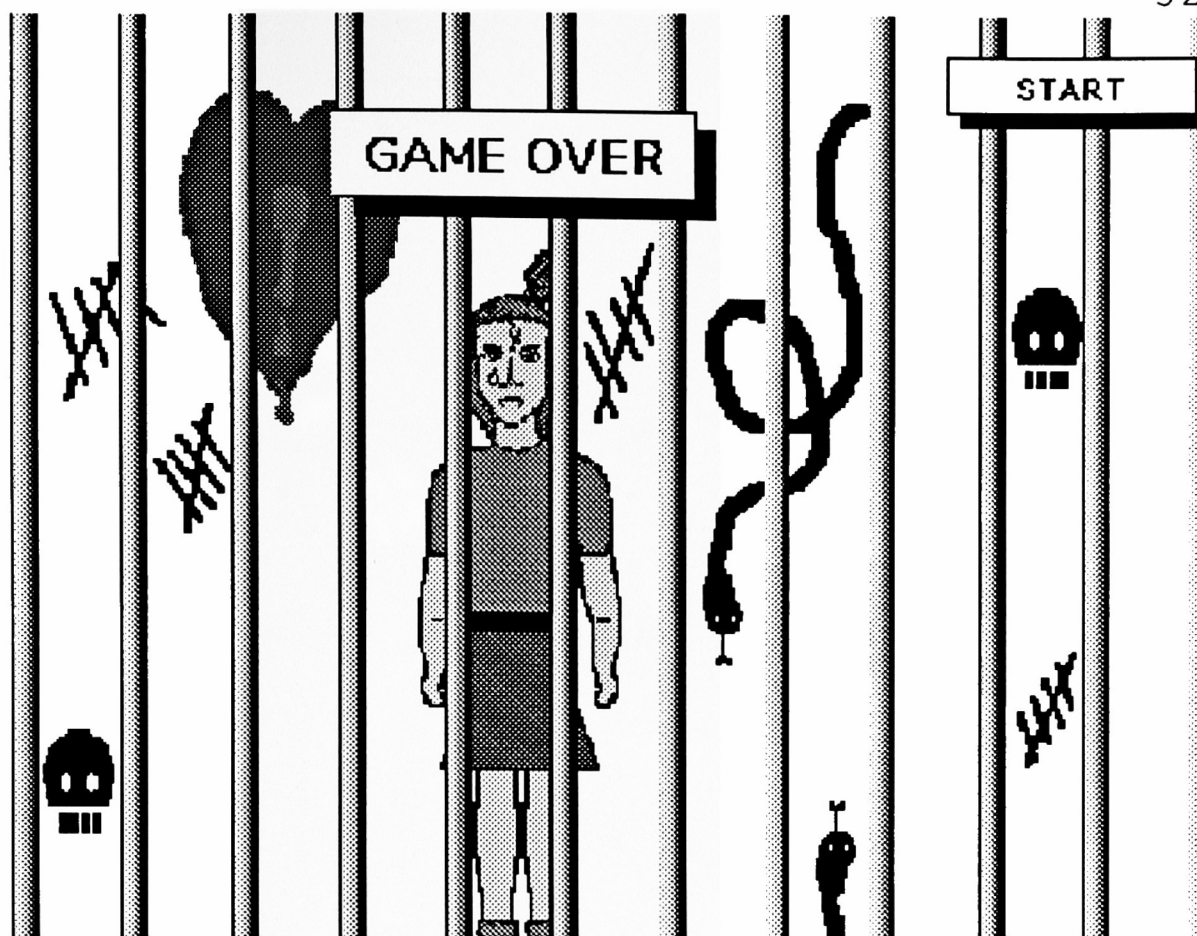




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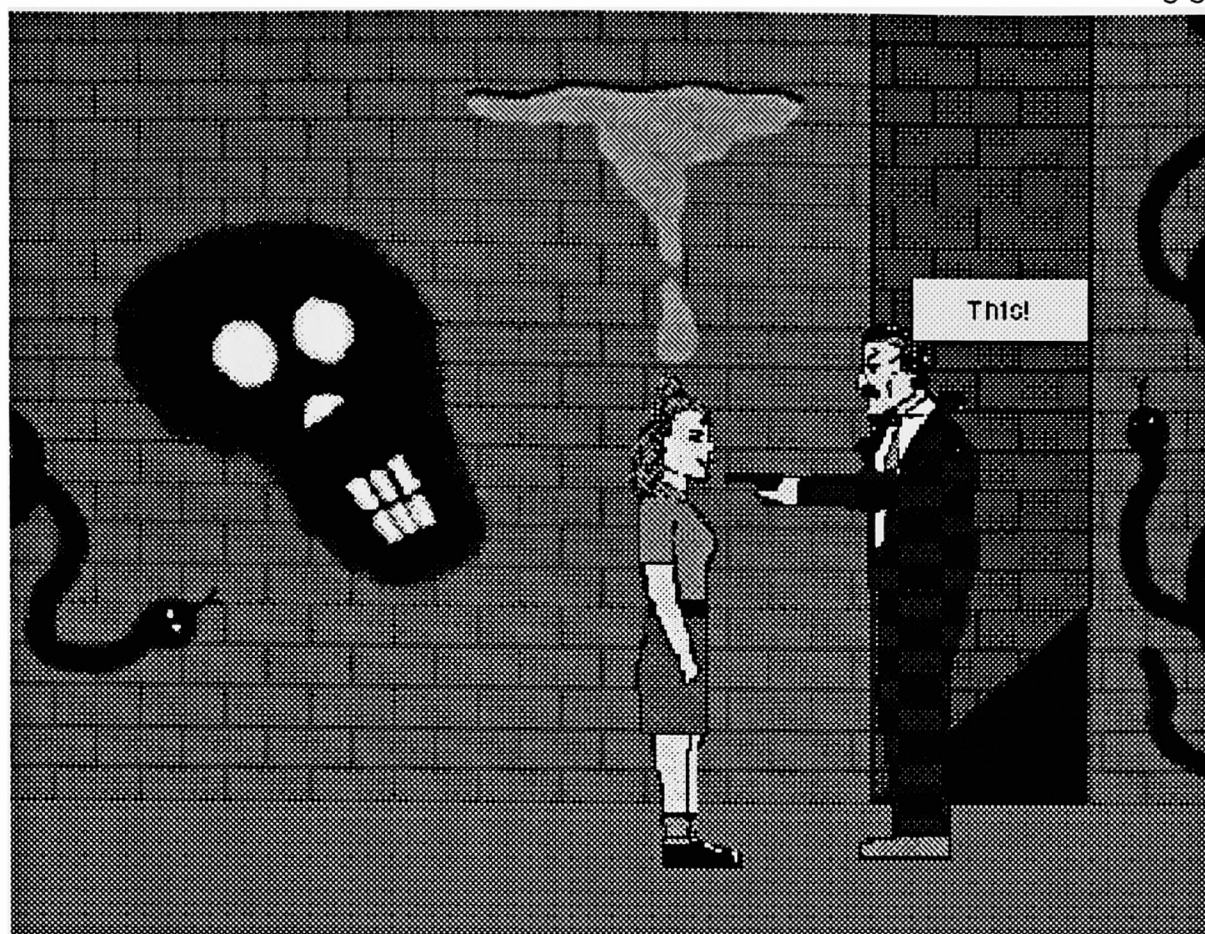




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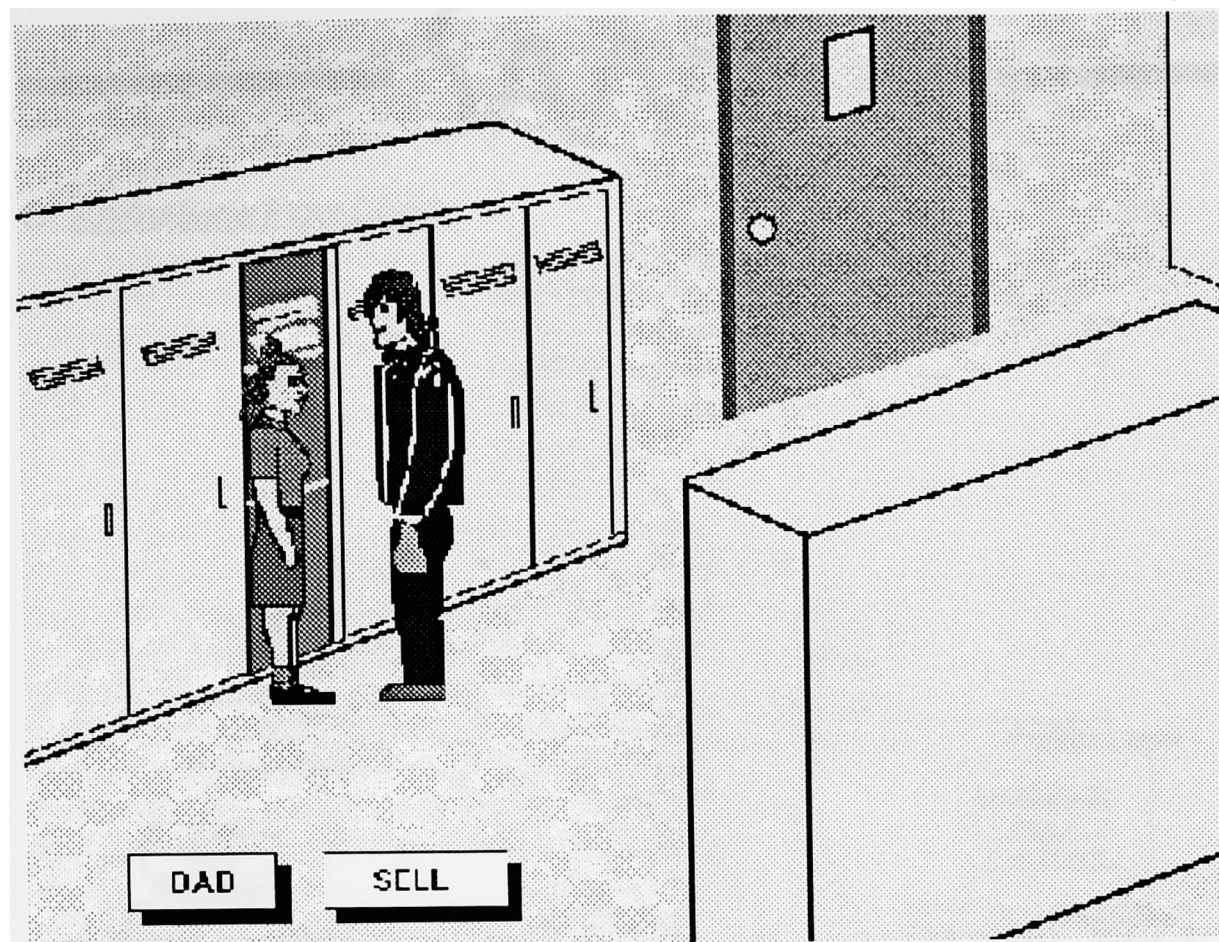




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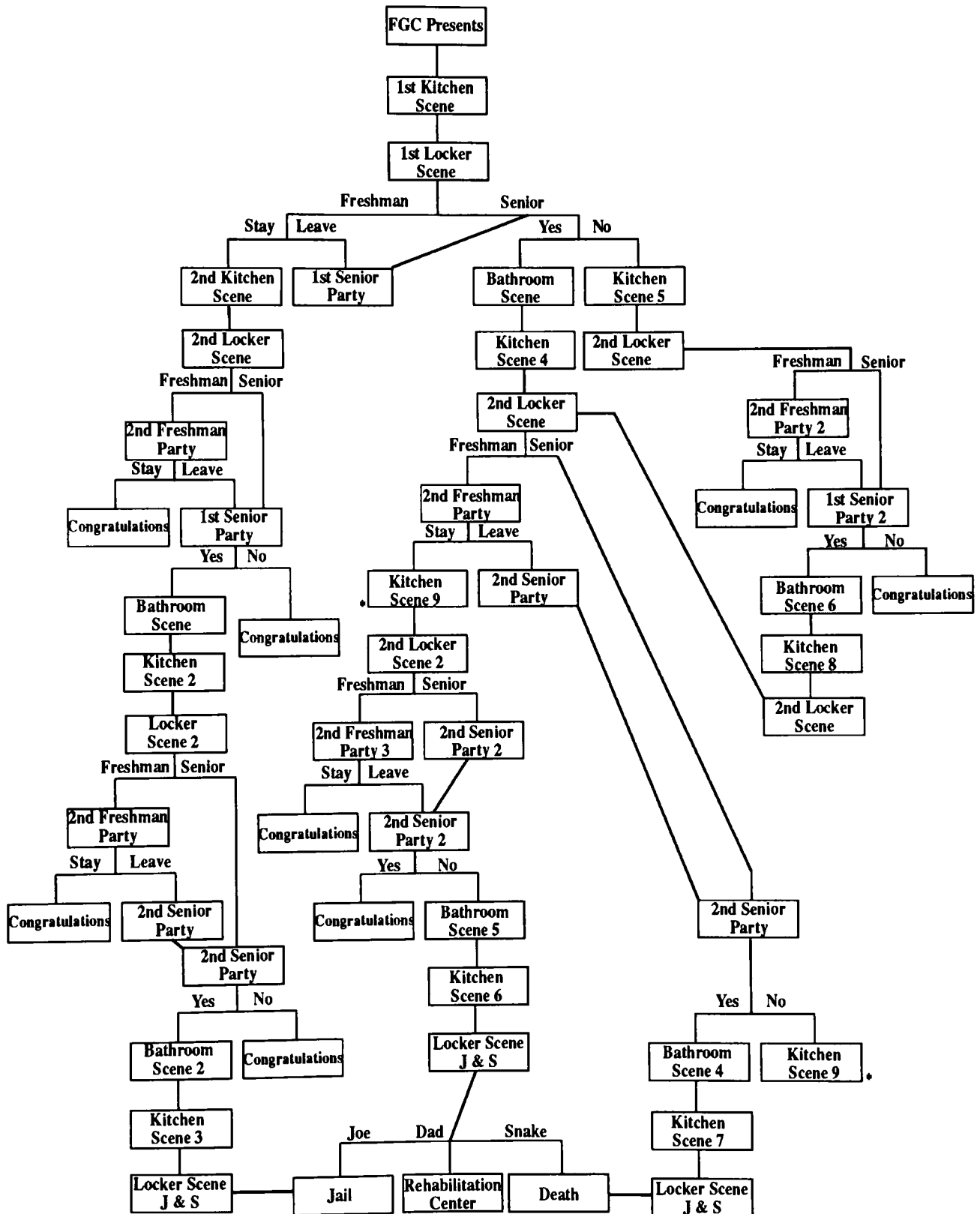


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C. Animations Flow Chart



VII. Bibliography

Footnotes

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