SAME NIGHT.
SAME TOWN.
DIFFERENT TRUTHS.

I KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE

GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

NARRATIVE THRILLER
TIME LOOP
INVESTIGATION
RELATIONSHIPS
MORAL CHOICES

READER’S GUIDE

Project & contents

A recurring night. A buried crime. A truth no one wants to face.

SINGLE PLAYER / NARRATIVE INVESTIGATION / PC

PROJECT & AUTHORSHIP

Personal game concept by Nathanaël Deslances. Game design, narrative systems and level-design intent. Planned engine: Unreal Engine 5.5.

PROJECT STATUS

A design concept, not an implemented game. This edition details core systems and ten planned chapters. Open prototype variables and unresolved narrative staging remain explicit.

READING ORDER

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DESIGNER SPOILERS

This complete GDD reveals the assault backstory, concealed identities and both tragic endings. Generated concept illustrations communicate the intended art direction. They are not gameplay screenshots.

Game overview

HIGH CONCEPT

Darrell Price joins Elijah and Trey for a drive to celebrate his engagement. The player can guide the route to pick up Jakobe or continue without him. A fuel stop becomes a fatal confrontation with a helmeted stranger. Darrell wakes in his apartment hall at the beginning of the same night. Only he remembers; the next attempt begins with new questions.

PLAYER FANTASY & AUDIENCE

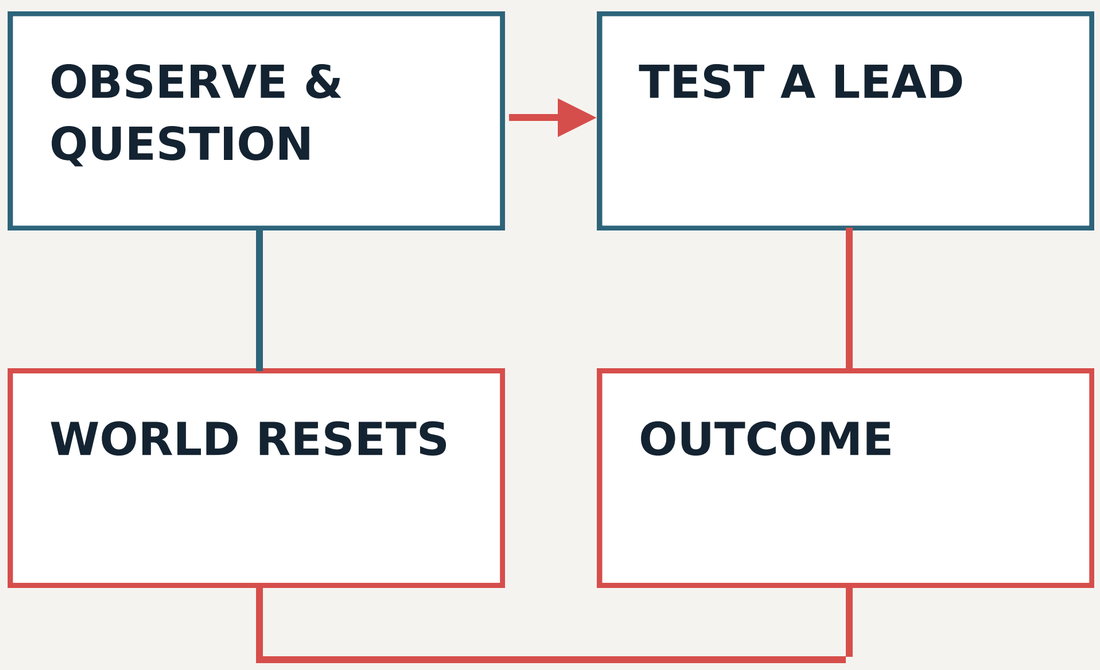
Become a social investigator inside an intimate thriller: read reactions, compare testimony and turn familiar exchanges into new leads. Designed for players who enjoy dialogue, environmental observation and narrative deductions. Progress depends on understanding people and testing information under pressure rather than combat proficiency.

DESIGN PROMISE & SCOPE

One recurring night, a small authored location network and ten knowledge-led chapters create depth through reinterpretation. The car is the main social space; the phone connects it to people elsewhere. This is a personal game concept intended for a single-player PC experience in Unreal Engine 5.5. Implementation and balancing remain future prototype work.

THREE DESIGN PILLARS

INVESTIGATE — Observe environments, inspect evidence, read SMS and probe contradictions through dialogue and FOCUS.
REMEMBER — Carry learned facts across resets. Familiar objects and conversations gain a different meaning after each discovery.
CONFRONT — Use knowledge to secure admissions and challenge loyalties. The final choice concerns responsibility and its consequences, not collecting a perfect moral score.



CORE EXPERIENCE LOOP

Begin in the hall → choose a route → observe and question → test a lead at the confrontation → face the outcome → retain knowledge → return with a changed approach. Within one attempt: target → inspect or question → interpret feedback → unlock a follow-up → decide where to spend the remaining time.

The car as an investigation space

ONE EXCHANGE, SEVERAL SOURCES

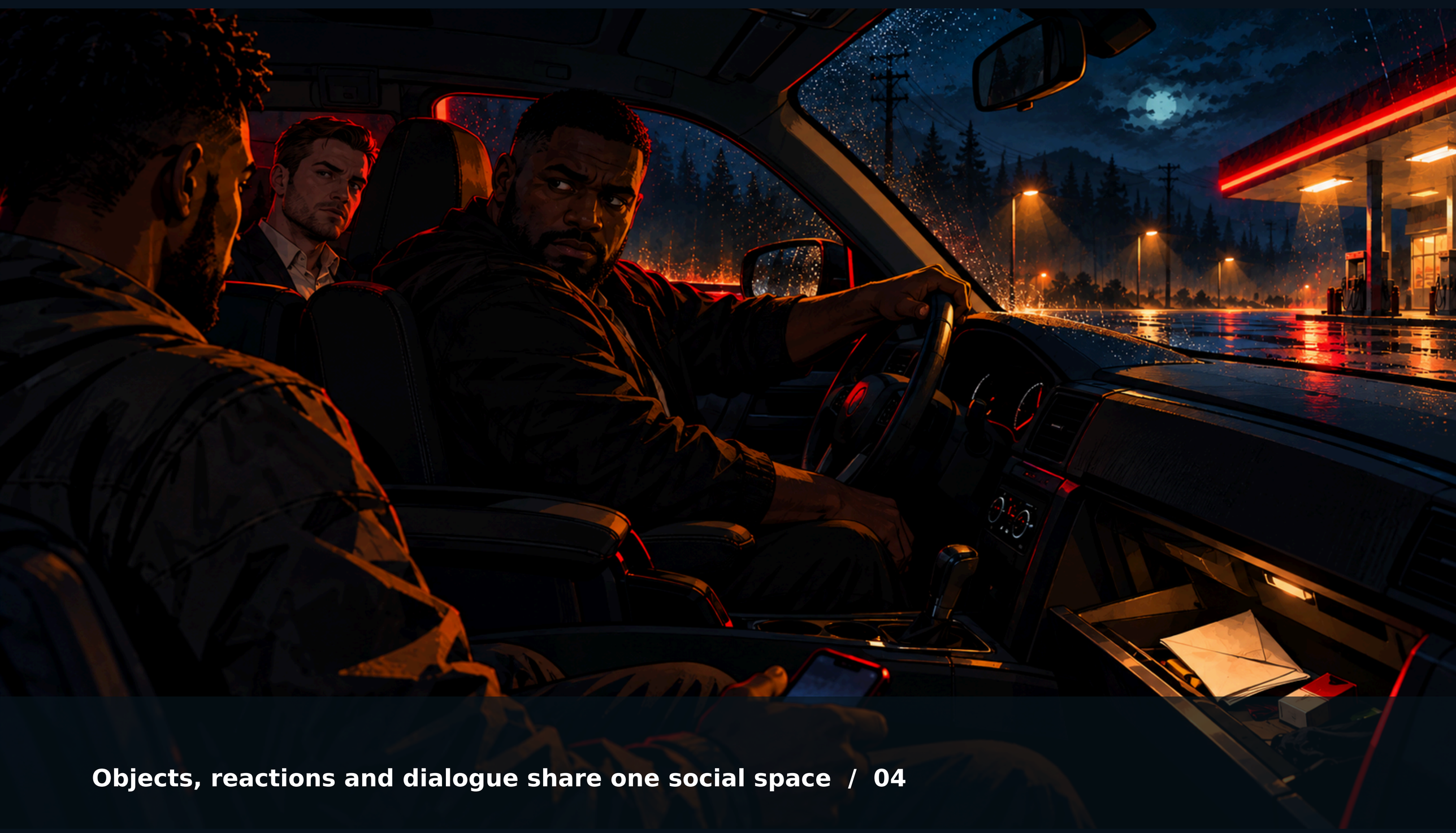
Elijah asks for cigarettes. The glove box reveals a letter. His reluctance to discuss it and Trey's visible reaction create different leads. Inspect the letter, question a passenger or contact someone outside the car. Jakobe's admission, if present, changes how the group can be challenged.

THE DESIGN VALUE

Objects, faces, dialogue and the phone share one readable space. A small environment produces branching opportunities as understanding changes. Route choices determine who is present and which opportunities can be reached during the night.

MASTERY ON THE NEXT ATTEMPT

The world restores the hidden letter, but Darrell remembers its contents. A validated shortcut can let him raise it directly. The next attempt tests a better question instead of repeating the complete discovery chain.



Narrative & characters

One crime. Different stories. A single night to expose them.

PREMISE & NARRATIVE CONTRACT

Twelve years ago, members of the group sexually assaulted a young woman. Darrell kept watch without understanding the full circumstances. The survivor changed her identity; threatening letters now reopen the past. The investigation separates testimony, denial and verified facts. The crime is addressed through its consequences and the survivor's voice, without graphic reenactment. Character codenames remain authoring labels.

HERO — DARRELL PRICE

A 29-year-old Black American man, engaged to Melisha and stepfather to Ayden. Caring, logical and initially trusting; his psychological insight informs FOCUS. His delinquent past and lookout role compromise his self-image. He alone remembers each reset. The player must uncover his involvement as carefully as that of his friends; lack of initial knowledge does not settle his responsibility.

EVIL — ELIJAH CLAY / DRIVER

A 32-year-old Black American man, charismatic group leader, violent and evasive about the assault. His affection for Darrell is sincere, making protection and concealment coexist. He hides the letter in the glove box and keeps a gun in the trunk. He does not recognize BIKER, know Melisha's former identity or know that Ayden is his biological son.

DUMBSON — TREY JR. WHITLEY / PASSENGER

A 32-year-old white American publicist and senator's son. Privileged, impulsive and dependent on Elijah's approval. He participated in the assault, received a letter and denies it. His visible reaction to Elijah's letter contradicts his words. The player must distinguish loyalty, fear of exposure and deliberate deception.

BUDDY — JAKOBE HOWARD / OPTIONAL PASSENGER

A 31-year-old Black American bartender with a drug-dealing past and a daughter, Deliza. He supplied the drugs used in the assault and carries guilt. His remorse makes him more willing to admit receiving a letter. Picking him up changes testimony and the first station killing; leaving him behind changes the encounter without removing the threat to Darrell.

The hidden connections

Designer spoilers · names, motives and information boundaries

WIFE — MELISHA SUTTON / DESIGNER SPOILER

Darrell's fiancée and Ayden's mother; formerly Keeara Reed, the survivor of the assault. A 28-year-old Black American woman who rebuilt her life under a new name. She commissioned BIKER without knowing the targets were Darrell's friends. Her messages establish intimacy; evidence connects her former identity to the contract. She is pregnant; the warehouse confrontation reveals this additional stake.

BIKER — THE CLEANER / EXTERNAL THREAT

A helmeted contract killer hired by Keeara. He values the contract and money over personal loyalty; Elijah and Trey have never met him. His unfinished “on behalf of…” at the first death opens the investigation. Naming the survivor later makes him react and discuss the contract. Knowing who hired him is not enough, by itself, to make him abandon it.

BOY — AYDEN SUTTON / DESIGNER SPOILER

Melisha's 12-year-old son and Darrell's stepson; Elijah is his biological father. Isolated and bullied, he seeks safety and hopes Darrell will adopt him. The original concept includes access to a weapon and severe distress, making his late arrival consequential. His family relationship and emotional trajectory need foreshadowing before the ending.

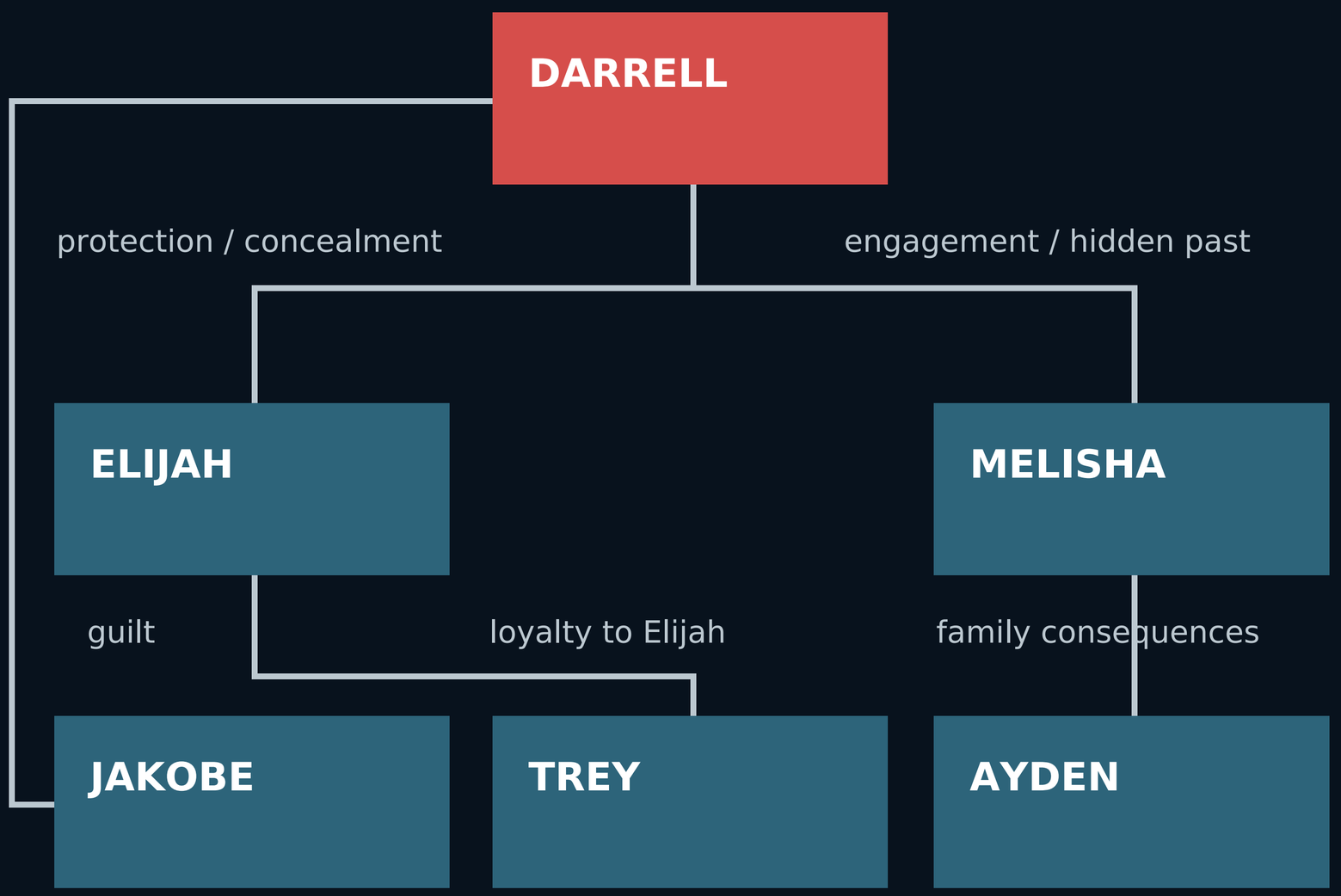
RELATIONSHIP LOGIC

Elijah protects Darrell while concealing the past. Trey seeks Elijah's approval. Jakobe fears losing his daughter and struggles with guilt. Darrell's love for Melisha collides with his attachment to the group. Melisha protects Ayden while seeking accountability. BIKER applies external pressure; he is not an old acquaintance of the friends.

INFORMATION BOUNDARIES

Only Darrell is aware of the loops. NPC reactions depend on the current attempt. Keep the player's suspicion separate from Darrell's confirmed knowledge. Melisha's identity as Keeara and Ayden's father are late revelations. This complete GDD contains designer spoilers; the portfolio introduction should preserve them.

Friends, secrets & complicity



SOCIAL STAGING

Elijah's proximity conveys protection; Trey aligns himself with Elijah; Jakobe stays apart. Relationships shape interruptions, eyelines and willingness to answer. Guilt is a lead to examine, not a complete confession.



THE PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE CAR

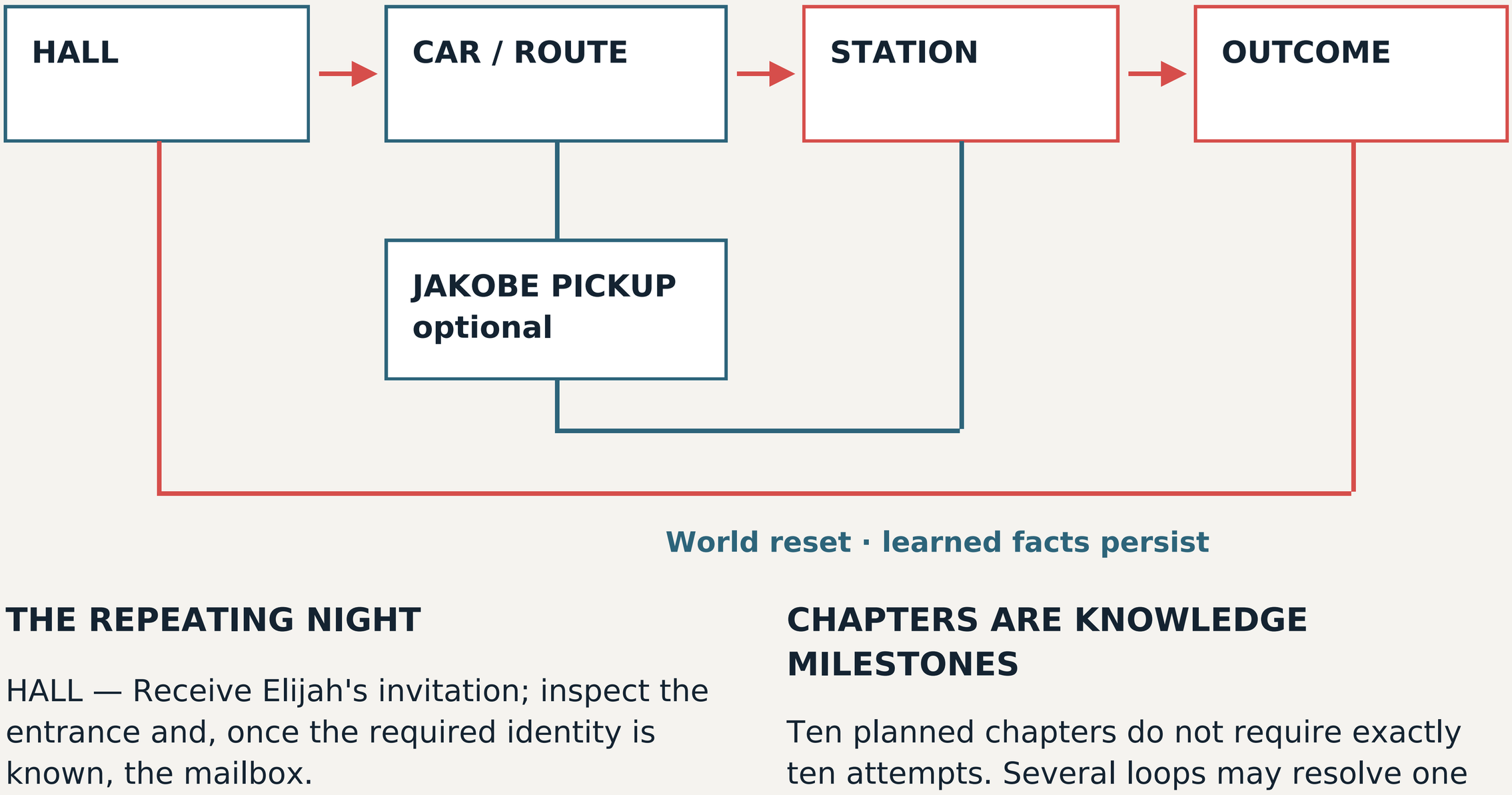
Lakeysha Gibson — Jakobe's former partner and Deliza's mother. Her independence and plans to leave frame his fear of losing contact with his daughter.
Deliza Howard — their ten-year-old daughter. She loves her father, supports her mother and knows the family is in difficulty.
Ana Richard — Trey's partner and a law student. Her sense of justice can conflict with loyalty to him.

PHONE-BASED INVESTIGATION

Supporting relationships expand the enquiry through contextual communication rather than a playable location per person. Their messages and reveal conditions remain authoring work. Preserve individual knowledge boundaries: no off-screen contact shares Darrell's awareness of the loops.

Core gameplay & time loop

Chapters describe knowledge milestones. Attempts test a hypothesis.



THE REPEATING NIGHT

HALL — Receive Elijah's invitation; inspect the entrance and, once the required identity is known, the mailbox.
CAR — Join Elijah and Trey, guide the route and decide whether to collect Jakobe.
INVESTIGATION — Explore topics, phone exchanges, compartments and reactions.
FUEL STOP — Elijah needs fuel; the early confrontation converges on the station.
OUTCOME — BIKER kills Jakobe if present, then Darrell in the initial version of events. Darrell returns to the hall with new knowledge.

TIME & END EVENTS

Time advances during dialogue, inspection and phone use; pause suspends play. The threat also advances if Darrell remains in the hall: BIKER eventually reaches him there. Exact duration and event offsets need pacing tests. Directing the car to the station can bring the confrontation forward. Later knowledge changes the encounter; the initial murder script is not every chapter's inevitable outcome.

CHAPTERS ARE KNOWLEDGE MILESTONES

Ten planned chapters do not require exactly ten attempts. Several loops may resolve one question. Chapter advancement follows an authored revelation or decisive interaction, not elapsed play count. Preserve learned facts when an attempt ends so experimentation produces progress.

EARLY DEPENDENCIES

First death → questions about BIKER and the unfinished message. Cigarette request → glove box → Elijah's letter → notice Trey's reaction and question the group. Jakobe may admit receiving one. Learn Darrell's full name through Melisha's communication → identify his mailbox and investigate his own letter.

FAILURE, MASTERY & SHORTCUTS

Death can be an intentional investigative step. After the relevant information is established, authored shortcuts let the player raise a topic directly instead of repeating an entire discovery chain. A failed confrontation resets the situation, not understanding. Make new leads visible without revealing their solutions.

The same night, new questions

AN ATTEMPT ENDS; A CHAPTER MAY CONTINUE

The reset restores the recognizable hall, invitation and starting situation. The chapter is a question; an attempt is one experiment within it. Several attempts may contribute to a revelation. Ten chapters do not mean ten mandatory deaths.



HALL = RECOGNIZABLE RESET ANCHOR

EVENT SOURCES

Road triggers stage stops and outside encounters. Time offsets deliver pressure and messages. Conditional events react to discoveries, passengers or topics. NPC memories reset; learned facts and earned shortcuts persist. The early station encounter repeatedly tests the player's understanding.

INTERRUPTION RULE — PROTOTYPE TARGET

If an end event becomes due during an interaction, hand over at a safe boundary. Queue a deferred event once and avoid overlapping dialogue or losing clues. Test lengthy reading and phone use against the timer. The hall fallback prevents waiting at the start from suspending the threat indefinitely.

ROAD TRIGGER

TIME OFFSET

CONDITION

Event sources are authored independently, then coordinated by scene state

Player experience & 3C

EXPLORE

INSPECT

DIALOGUE

PHONE

Contextual modes change input focus and available actions

CAMERA & CHARACTER

First-person exploration places the player near faces, documents and compartments. Support free observation, with visible hands and legs where useful. In the car, Darrell occupies the front passenger seat: movement is constrained, but looking, questioning, inspecting and using the phone remain available. Camera limits and controlled look-at moments need comfort testing.

EXPLORATION & INTERACTION MODES

On foot: walk, move quickly where appropriate, aim at a hotspot and interact. Inspection allows closer examination and rotation of eligible objects. Dialogue opens a thematic choice hub; phone mode transfers input to applications. Entering or leaving the car uses authored animation and a consistent arrival marker. Exit is available when stopped and when the scene allows it.

INPUT INTENT — PROTOTYPE MAPPING

Keyboard/mouse and controller are planned. Left stick or movement keys navigate; right stick or mouse controls the camera. Separate interact/confirm, back/cancel, phone, zoom and FOCUS actions. Exact bindings remain provisional: test reach, hold-versus-toggle behavior and remapping before fixing buttons.

PLAYER RHYTHM & ONBOARDING

Begin with a warm, ordinary exchange. Introduce movement and the invitation SMS in the hall, then talking and inspection in the car. The first death teaches reset; the next letter discovery teaches knowledge-based follow-ups. Introduce FOCUS when a guarded response gives it a purpose. Avoid front-loading every tutorial.

READABILITY & ACCESSIBILITY TARGETS

Use clear focus targets in the cramped cabin, speaker-labelled subtitles, scalable text and choices distinct from ambience. Offer reduced camera motion and avoid colour-only FOCUS signals. Previously heard material should be skippable without skipping new branches. Final settings and interruption behavior need prototype validation.

Investigation systems

DIALOGUE & TOPIC HUBS

Select an interlocutor, open thematic groups and choose an available question. Topics derive from observations, SMS, reactions and remembered facts. Responses can depend on passengers, route and prior choices. Repeated questions expose evasiveness; new knowledge reframes an existing topic. Distinguish new leads from previously heard exchanges.

INSPECTION, DOCUMENTS & INVENTORY

Letters, mailbox, glove box and trunk trigger dialogue, animation, audio, text, images or cinematics. Documents open in a legible close-up with transcription where needed. Inventory is informational: evidence supplies descriptions and contextual topics. Eligible evidence is used automatically when its authored condition is met; there is no free-form item-combination puzzle.

ANTI-REPETITION & REPLAY

Solved interaction chains can become direct topic shortcuts. Physical evidence resets, but understanding its contents may support a remembered question. Keep unexplored branches readable and avoid a long repeated conversation to reach one new line. Return with an experiment to try, not a sequence of clicks to memorize.

FOCUS & FOLLOW-UP

Slow time to read an oscillating emotional signal: GUILTY, PANICKED, HONEST, DEFENSIVE or LYING. The displayed state is truthful, but clarity varies. It helps choose an angle of questioning; it does not reveal the hidden event or prove a suspect's complete account. Detailed interpretation appears on the following page.

FROM OBSERVATION TO CONFIRMED FACT

Separate observations, interpretations and confirmed discoveries. A concrete interaction validates a fact and opens dependent topics. Example: Trey reacts to the letter → suspicion of concealment; a later admission confirms he received one. Emotion supports investigation but does not replace the admission. Each unlock needs a clear cause and useful response.

EXAMPLE · FROM SUSPICION TO A CONFIRMED FACT



An emotional signal supports the question. The admission confirms the fact.

FOCUS: emotional observation



FIVE TRUTHFUL STATES

GUILTY — self-reproach; PANICKED — acute fear; HONEST — truthful response; DEFENSIVE — resistance; LYING — deliberate deception. The signal reflects the current state. Guilt does not identify a specific act; honesty about one question does not validate an entire account.

READING & ACTION

Activate FOCUS to slow time and observe an oscillating cue. Clarity varies: interpret the reaction, choose a follow-up and compare the response with evidence. Pair rhythm with a label or equivalent accessible cue; do not rely only on colour.

JAKOBE EXAMPLE

A guarded response about letters, a guilty signal and a supportive follow-up can lead him to admit receiving one. The admission confirms the fact; FOCUS helps choose the approach.

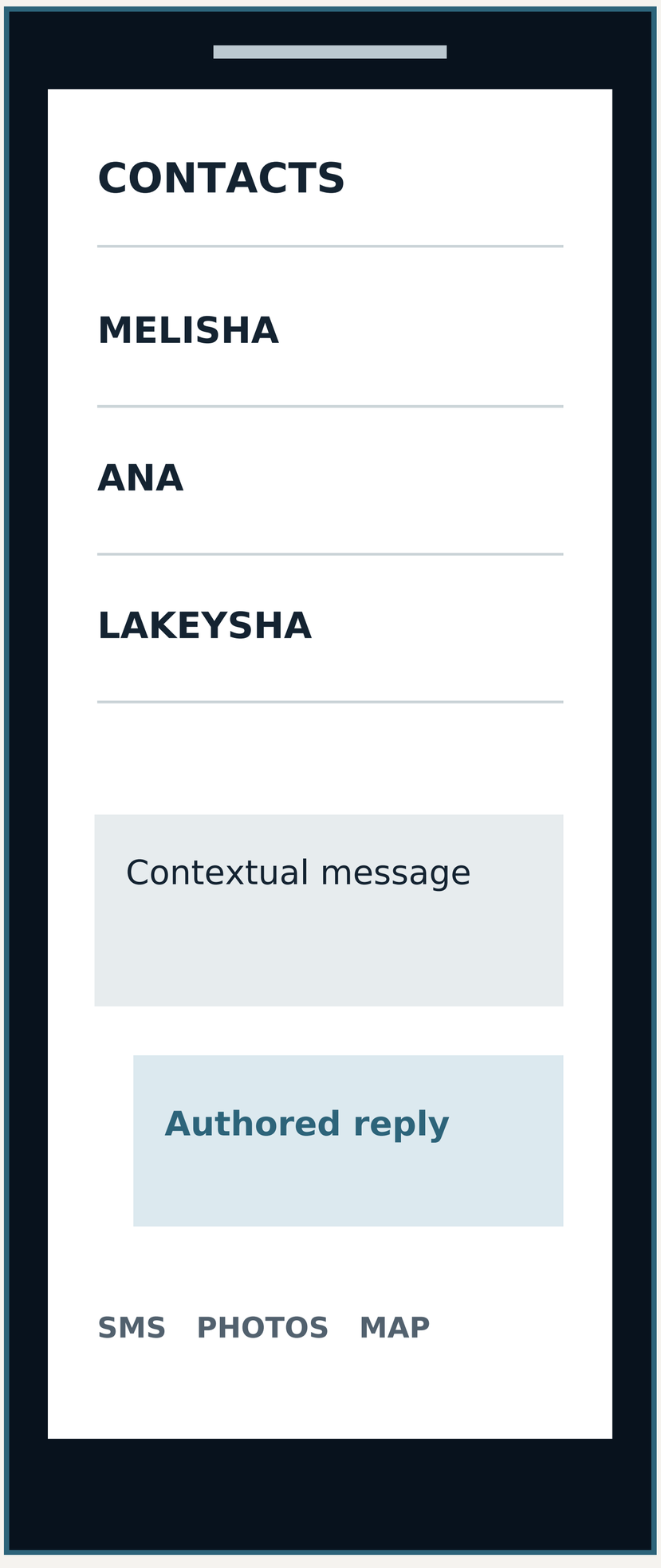
RESOURCE STATUS

A consumable FOCUS gauge is the initial prototype hypothesis. Cost, recovery and exhaustion outcome require playtesting before balancing is locked.

STATE ≠ COMPLETE ACCOUNT

Interpret the signal.
Choose a follow-up.
Compare with evidence.

Smartphone & communication



CONCEPTUAL INTERFACE

Contacts open authored exchanges. Responses depend on context and knowledge. This schematic shows system relationships, not a final UI skin.

PHONE MODES & APPLICATIONS

Contacts, SMS, Photos and Map connect the journey to the wider story. Opening the phone transfers input from movement to navigation; back returns through the application hierarchy. Provide a quick return to the scene. The world continues while the phone is open, so its use competes with conversation and remaining time.

SMS & CONTEXTUAL RESPONSES

A sound and visual notification announce a message. Opening immediately leads to its conversation; otherwise it remains in the list. Replies and outgoing messages are authored choices unlocked by context or knowledge, not arbitrary typed text. Melisha's messages establish intimacy and can reveal Darrell's full name. Off-screen contacts supply accounts to compare with passenger claims.

PHOTOS & EVIDENCE SHARING

Open the camera, frame a target, adjust zoom, capture, then accept or discard. Accepted images enter a gallery for review, deletion and contextual SMS sharing. Initial capacity: ten slots, subject to prototype testing alongside target recognition. Useful captures explain what they recorded and which topic or recipient they enable.

RESET RULES

Keep conversation history from before the night. Messages sent or received during the attempt and newly taken photos reset with the world. Darrell retains learned facts; an authored shortcut can use them in later conversations. Remembered information must not appear as a physical photo or fresh SMS that survived the reset.

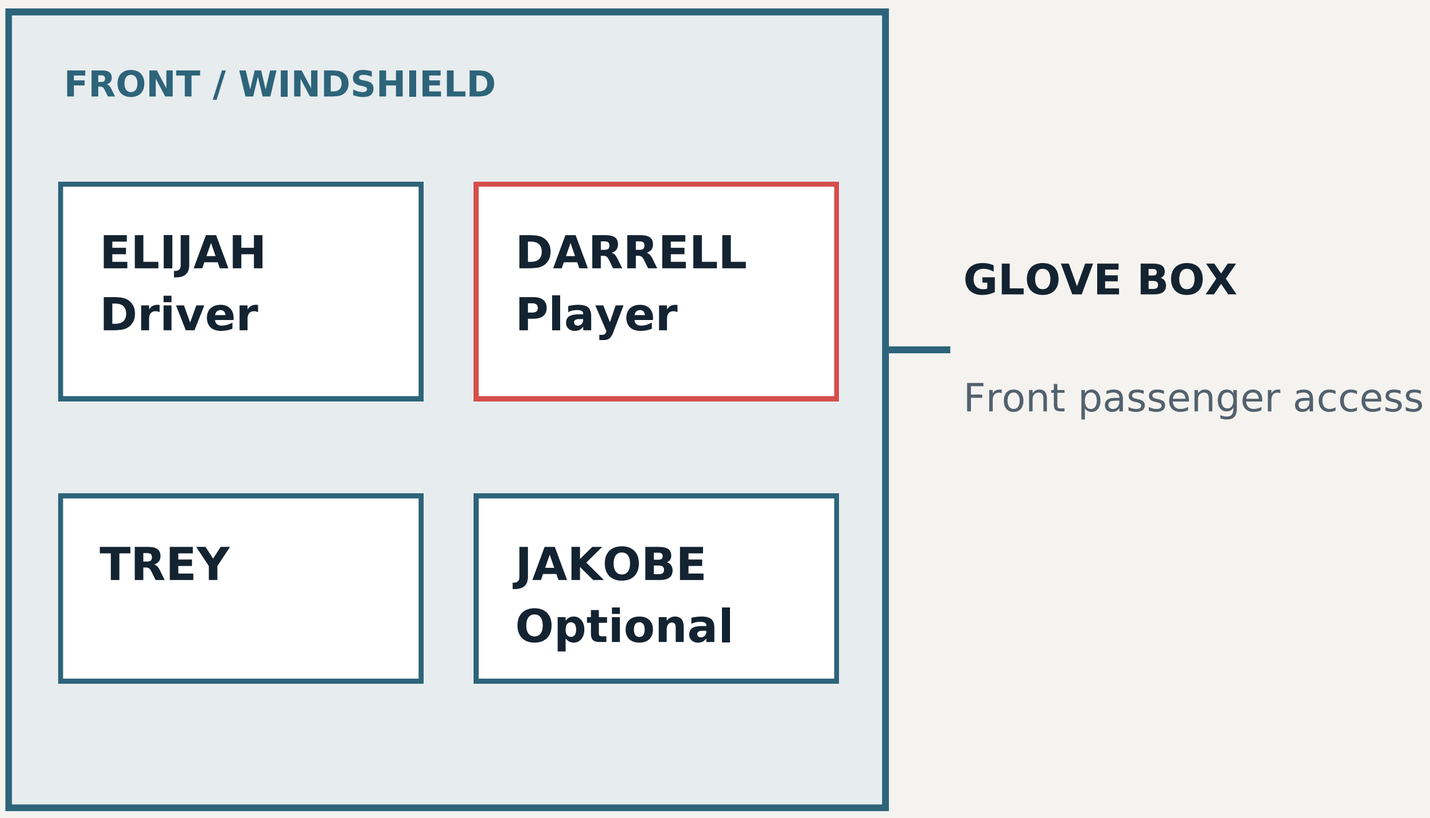
MAP & COMMUNICATION PRIORITIES

The map supports route guidance, Jakobe's optional pickup and later destinations. Unread states, sender identity and new replies must be clear. Provide large text and simple navigation. Test notifications against spoken dialogue so messages remain noticeable without hiding a face, stealing a choice or making evidence easy to miss.

Vehicle & road systems

SEATING SCHEMATIC

The player guides the route. Elijah controls the vehicle.



CAR AS THE PRIMARY GAMEPLAY SPACE

A rigged five-door sedan brings the group into close proximity. Elijah drives; Darrell investigates from the front passenger seat. Stage faces, sightlines, compartments and phone use as a coherent social space. Influence destinations through guidance, not steering, acceleration or free driving.

COMPARTMENTS & ANIMATION

Passenger door, glove box, trunk and windows form the interaction set, constrained by position and scene state. The cigarette request reveals the glove-box letter; trunk access supports tension around Elijah's weapon. Enter, sit, exit and door closure need matching camera transitions and placement markers to align hands and targets.

DEPENDENCIES & PROTOTYPE CHECKS

Synchronize vehicle transforms, seats, camera, speech, gestures and hotspots. Test opening the phone near a junction, inspecting as an event begins and leaving the stopped car. Avoid concurrent conversations or essential clues during incompatible transitions. Verify the complete ride before expanding the road network.

AUTHORED ROAD TRAVERSAL

The vehicle follows connected splines. Junction triggers request a direction and select the next path. Stops, turns and road events regulate pacing; speed eases at junctions and rises on straights. Author roads to support dialogue and timing. A large open-world traffic simulation is outside the core requirements.

PASSENGER VARIANTS

Elijah and Trey are present at departure; Jakobe joins only if collected. Reserve stable seats and authored entry/exit paths. Dialogue, eyelines and the first station death must branch when Jakobe is absent. His testimony is unavailable in that attempt; the confrontation and Darrell's loop must still work.

Route guidance

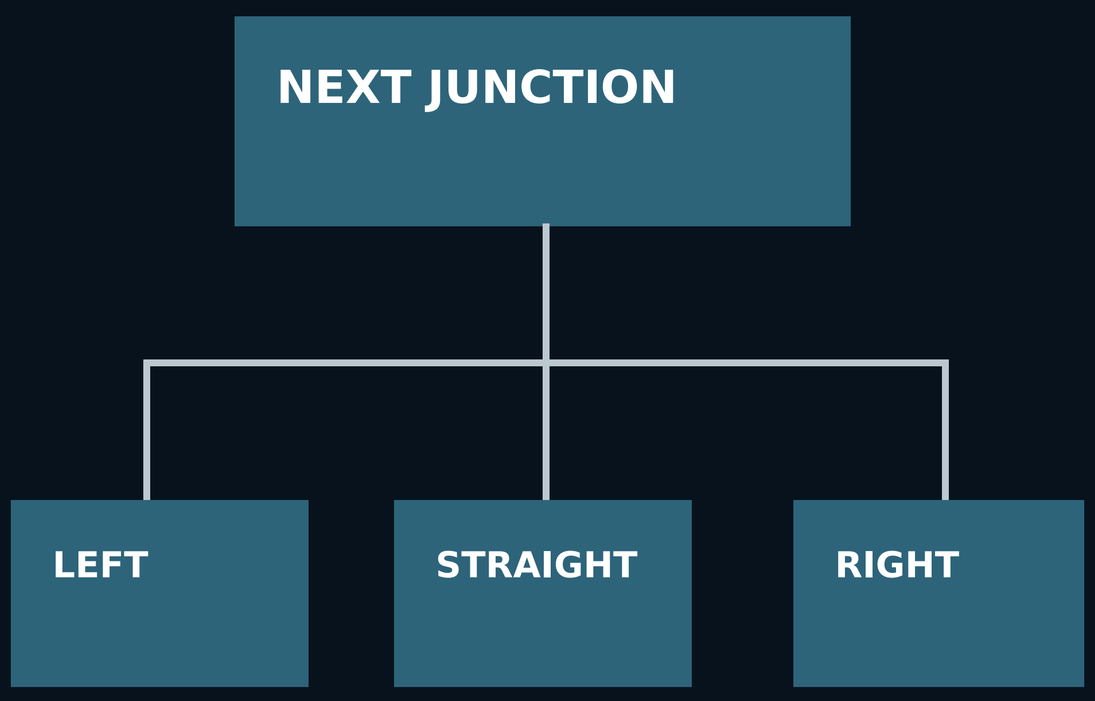
INTERSECTION GUIDANCE

Consult the map, identify the destination and choose left, right or straight when a junction requests guidance. The car selects the next authored spline. If no choice is made, the driver briefly waits, then continues along a signposted default route. Test the delay and make the fallback visible before the junction.



MEANINGFUL DESTINATIONS

Jakobe's home adds a passenger and testimony. The station brings the early confrontation forward. The warehouse becomes relevant after rendezvous information is obtained. Routes change encounter context rather than creating a driving challenge.



Choose the next authored spline

NAVIGATION MASTERY

Remembered routes and known destinations can support authored shortcuts, emphasizing investigation on later attempts. Keep recognizable landmarks across resets. This map is conceptual: junction topology, travel times and unlock conditions must be defined with the event schedule.

Persistence & knowledge

THREE STATE LAYERS

WORLD STATE — Positions, doors, objects, phone messages, photographs and NPC awareness in the current night.
KNOWLEDGE STATE — Learned facts, validated topic unlocks and earned shortcuts.
ATTEMPT CHOICES — Route, Jakobe's presence and dialogue outcomes.
Separating these prevents a persistent clue from preserving an impossible physical situation.

RESET & SAVE INTENT

Restore the hall and world baseline; remove attempt-specific messages, photos and physical acquisitions; reset NPC awareness. Keep established knowledge and valid shortcuts. Use one automatic save slot, no manual save, and commit progress around loop outcomes. Crash-safe writes and mid-attempt resume require implementation validation.

DEPENDENCY EXAMPLES

Witness BIKER → ask who sent him. Inspect Elijah's letter → question recipients. Learn Darrell's full name → identify his mailbox. Establish Keeara's name → provoke BIKER's response. Expose the group's roles → open the collective-responsibility confrontation. Every unlock needs an observable cause and defined follow-up.

MEMORY FEEDBACK & INFORMATIONAL INVENTORY

Signal a meaningful learned fact and an available question. Evidence descriptions and rereadable text support review. A dedicated diary is an interface decision, not an implemented feature. If used, separate verified facts from hypotheses and remembered information from items held in the current attempt.

STATE CONSISTENCY MATRIX

Test repeated resets; Jakobe collected or skipped; hall refusal; rediscovering the letter; unlocked topics; SMS/photo cleanup; and saving after a revelation. A pass requires appropriate retained knowledge, NPC behavior based on current awareness and dependent options that neither disappear nor unlock early.

RESET WORLD STATE / RETAIN VALIDATED KNOWLEDGE

Narrative progression

Knowledge milestones can span several attempts.

01 BOYZ N THE LOOP

Enter the car, meet the group and reach the station attack. Teach exploration, SMS, dialogue and reset. Exit knowledge: the night repeats; BIKER's unfinished message suggests a motive.

02 DEAD LETTERS

Inspect the glove box after Elijah's cigarette request. Compare Trey's denial with Jakobe's admission; learn about shared threats and investigate Darrell's own letter. Introduce FOCUS through a guarded exchange.

03 DO THE WRONG THING

Probe contradictions and contact people outside the car through SMS and photos. Establish that an old crime links the group. Exit knowledge: the survivor's name becomes a concrete lead.

04 NAMED & SHAFTED

Present Keeara Reed's name to BIKER. His reaction confirms the contract's connection to her and opens questioning. Naming her creates leverage, not automatic safety.

05 FOXY REVENGE

Use contract information to challenge evasions. Discover the nature of the assault and Darrell's apparent connection. The chapter investigates motive and denial rather than repeating early tutorials.

06 AMERICAN MONSTERS

Compare friends' accounts and outside testimony to reconstruct their roles twelve years ago. Responsibility involves actions, assistance and concealment. The second past-revelation sequence reframes Darrell.

07 SET IT STRAIGHT TOGETHER

Confront the group and BIKER with the facts. Scapegoating does not resolve the central question; collective acknowledgment opens the viable route to further contract revelations.

08 PAID IN GUILT

Present Keeara's name and the group's admissions to negotiate a stand-down. BIKER lowers his weapon and shows the rendezvous message. Record its address and time; leave him behind.

09 SHE KNOWS WHAT YOU'VE DONE

Reach the warehouse in BIKER's place. Discover Melisha's identity and Ayden's parentage. Dialogue brings Darrell's loyalties into conflict and prepares the final course of action.

10 JUICE RUNS OUT

With the truth acknowledged, confirm whom Darrell will protect. This irreversible commitment ends the reset cycle before the confrontation resolves. The two tragic outcomes follow on the next page; neither can be undone by dying again.

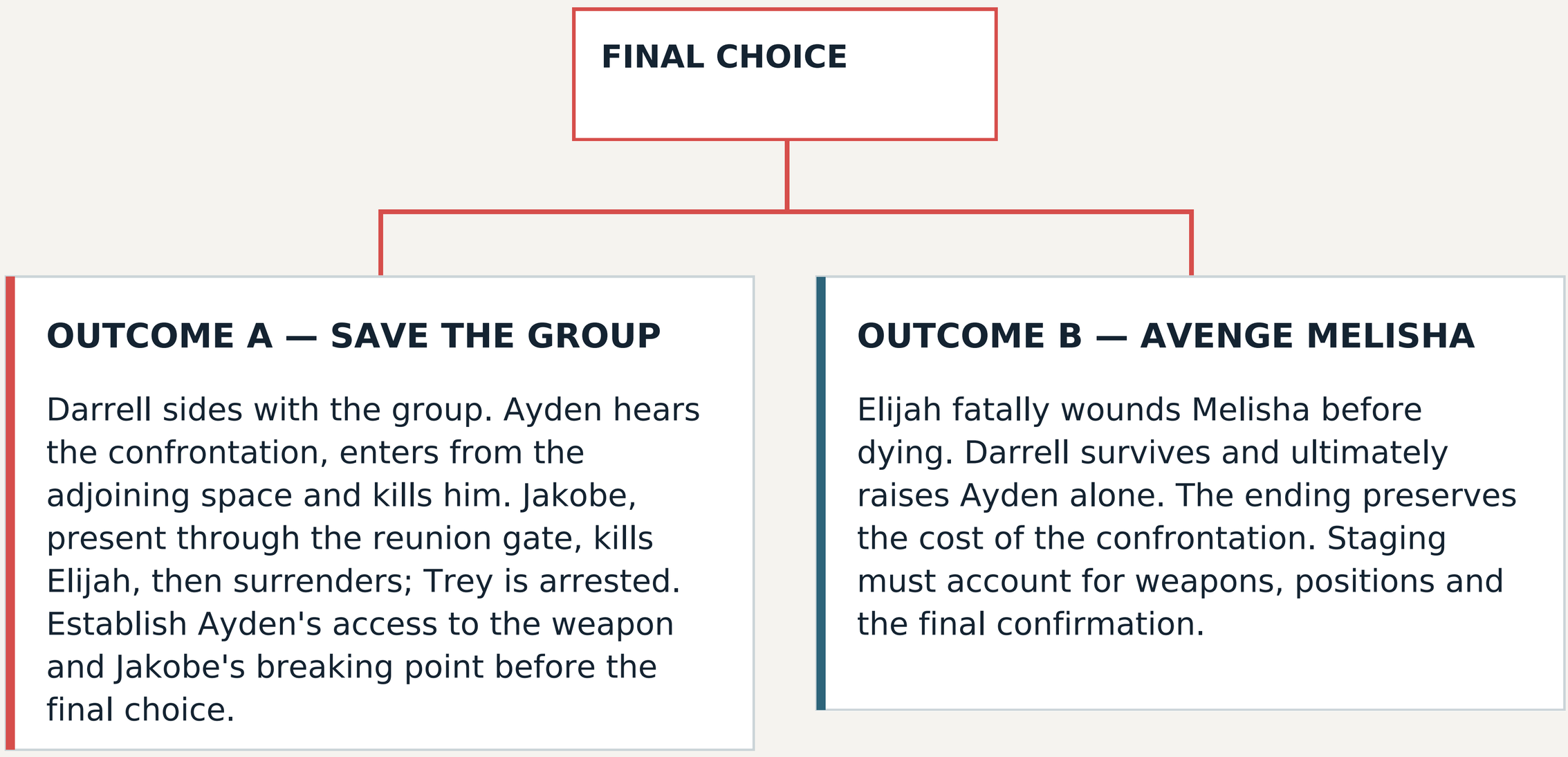
Revelation & endings

WAREHOUSE REVELATION

BIKER's message supplies the warehouse address and meeting time. Before entry, reunite all four friends: if Jakobe was skipped, contact him and collect him en route. Melisha brought Ayden, initially waiting nearby; an earlier SMS establishes his presence. The meeting reveals her former identity and Ayden's parentage.

THE DECISIVE CHOICE

After confronting Melisha and the group, Darrell chooses whom to protect and confirms his course. Both resolutions are tragic. Foreshadow that accepting the truth closes the cycle; make the commitment explicit without revealing every consequence or suggesting that either choice erases the past.



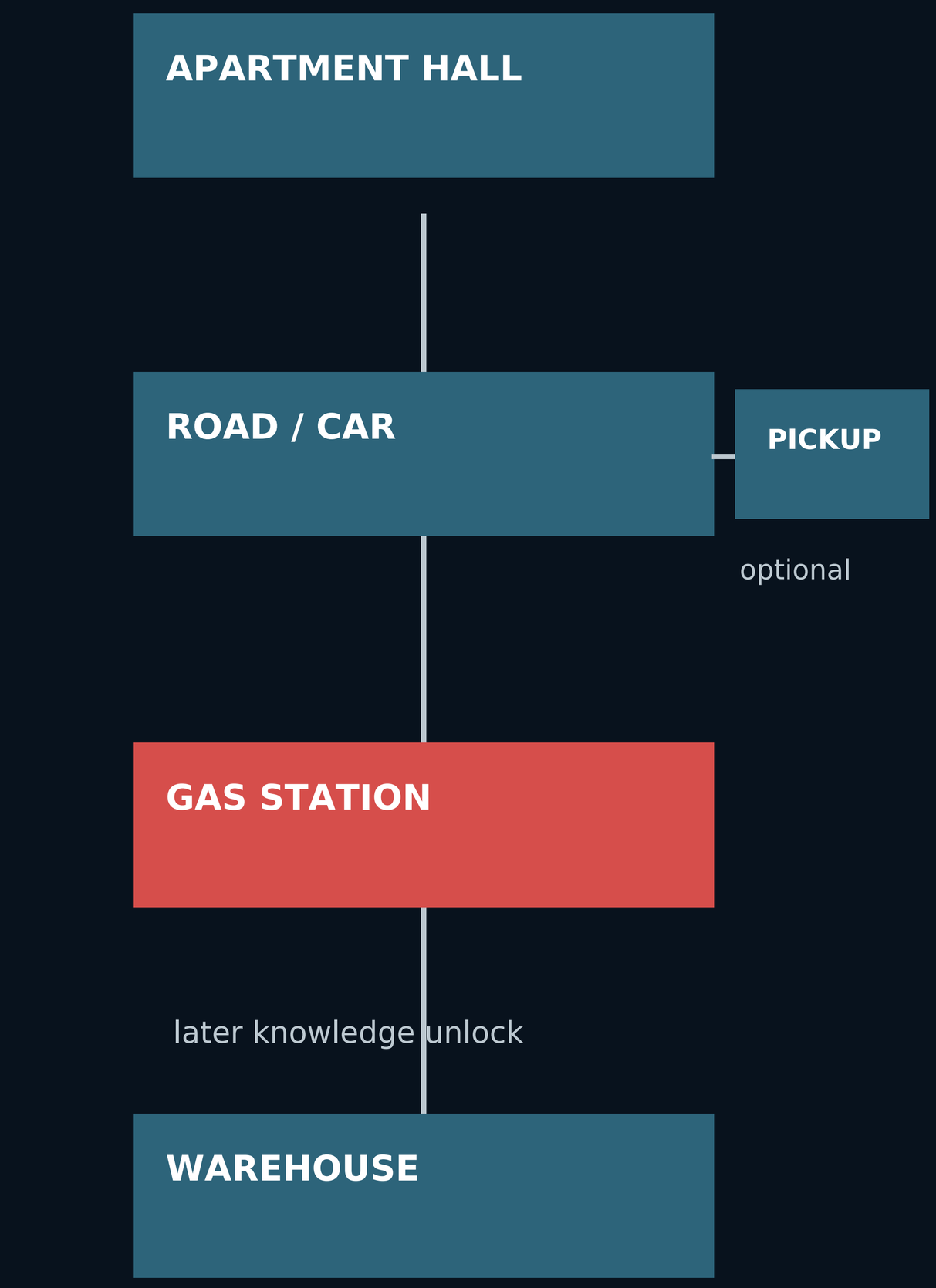
ENDING THE LOOP

Narrative rule: the cycle holds Darrell until he acknowledges his role and commits to a consequential choice with the truth exposed. The final confirmation closes it before either outcome, so his death in outcome A is permanent. A changed reset motif signals closure. Validate that players understand this rule; its supernatural origin remains ambiguous.

FORESHADOWING & VALIDATION

Foreshadow Ayden's presence through Melisha's SMS, then establish the adjoining waiting space. Require Jakobe's reunion before warehouse entry. Stage weapon access and reactions before the final choice. Test both endings and make the cycle's closure legible. Preserve the survivor's perspective; keep these revelations out of the public teaser.

World & level design



Conceptual network · topology and timing TBD

HALL, ROAD & PICKUP

The hall anchors the reset and mailbox discovery. An authored network joins it to Jakobe's optional pickup, station and warehouse. Landmarks make passenger guidance learnable. The pickup changes testimony and encounter composition without requiring an open world.

STATION — RECURRING CONFRONTATION

Stage the car, pumps, shop lighting and BIKER's approach with clear sightlines. Early escape constraints must be understandable. New knowledge changes the same encounter on later visits.

WAREHOUSE — SPATIAL STORYTELLING

Separate arrival, recognition and decision. Distance between Melisha and the group makes divided loyalties readable. Entry points and eyelines must support both endings; character arrivals need prior setup.

LEVEL DESIGN RULE

Reuse space, transform meaning. Each revisit offers a new hypothesis or interaction. Prove hall–car–station first; expand after recurring investigation works. This image is conceptual staging, not a final playable layout.



Art & audio direction

VISUAL LANGUAGE

Dark adult graphic novel: painterly surfaces, ink-like contours, strong silhouettes and bold chiaroscuro. Stylized, believable anatomy preserves expressions. The contemporary setting stays grounded. Concept art communicates mood and staging; it is not a screenshot of an implemented game.

CHARACTER & ENVIRONMENT CONTINUITY

Keep consistent faces, silhouettes, clothing and relative builds across the hall, car, station and warehouse. Preserve passenger positions and left-hand-drive configuration. BIKER stays helmeted. Motifs include the letter, phone, mailbox, red canopy and motorcycle light; each image explains its own section.

AUDIO PRIORITIES

Intimate voices lead the mix. Engine, rain, tyres and cabin resonance establish routine; interruptions and silence shift attention as suspicion grows. Messages and discoveries need restrained, distinct cues. Music supports escalation without signalling every lie. Composition, voice production and mix remain production decisions.

PALETTE & LIGHTING

Midnight blue and charcoal establish night. Restrained red neon and warm orange mark danger, artificial warmth and landmarks. Use rain, glass and wet asphalt for reflections without burying faces or clues. Preserve value contrast around the glove-box letter and phone.

UI & FEEDBACK

Use contextual hotspots, readable topic hubs and a diegetic phone with a legible close-up. Decorative framing must not compromise body text. Pair FOCUS colour with shape, rhythm or labels. Distinguish unread communication, confirmed knowledge and new questions without exposing answers.

ILLUSTRATED EDITION

Eight distinct generated concept illustrations cover the portrait cover, car investigation, social tension, reset, FOCUS, route guidance, warehouse staging and soundscape. They follow the established visual direction and retain their full composition. Their purpose is explanatory and atmospheric; final in-game art needs a separate production pipeline.

MIDNIGHT CHARCOAL NEON WARM LIGHT PAPER

Soundscape & sensory feedback

SOUND AS A PACING TOOL

Begin with ordinary conversation, engine hum and rain. As trust breaks down, pauses, reactions and the motorcycle's approach redirect attention. Preserve speech intelligibility: ambience supports the exchange rather than competing with it.

CONSISTENT VISUAL DELIVERY

Keep dark blues, charcoal, warm practical light and red accents across the set. Preserve readable faces and clues. Each image serves its subject; this image supports atmosphere rather than demonstrating implemented audio.

FEEDBACK HIERARCHY

Distinguish ordinary messages from discoveries. Use restrained cues for learned facts and new topics. A consistent reset transition connects the fatal encounter to the hall. FOCUS needs a recognizable sensory change and alternatives to purely visual information.

PRODUCTION STATUS

Voice direction, recording scope, music references and final mix need a dedicated production pass.

MIX PRIORITY: VOICES / ENVIRONMENT / MUSIC



Production scope

PROJECT & AUTHORSHIP

Personal game concept by Nathanaël Deslances — game design, narrative systems and level-design intent. Target: single-player PC; planned engine: Unreal Engine 5.5. This describes a concept, not an implemented or completed game. Team, budget, schedule and final play length remain unscoped.

IMPLEMENTATION ORDER

1. Exploration, interaction and object reading.
2. Seated camera, spline traversal and safe transitions.
3. Dialogue topics, conditions and knowledge flags.
4. Phone, SMS and contextual photographs.
5. Reset, save and shortcut persistence.
6. FOCUS and scheduled/conditional events.
7. Chapter gates, route variants and ending staging.

VERTICAL SLICE

Build hall → car → optional Jakobe pickup → station → death/reset, followed by a second attempt where the letter changes available questions. Include a phone exchange and emotional-reading interaction. Prove that retained knowledge materially changes play before expanding the ten-chapter story.

RISKS & RESPONSE

Branching complexity → explicit dependencies and passenger variants. Repetition → knowledge shortcuts. Timing collisions → serialize events and preserve information. Confined-space monotony → vary topics, contacts and stakes. Unclear responsibility → distinguish facts, reactions and admissions.

OPEN PROTOTYPE DECISIONS

Loop duration, FOCUS cost/recovery, input mapping, photo recognition and diary presentation require prototyping. Playtest BIKER's negotiated stand-down, the warehouse reunion gate and the signal ending the cycle. These are validation tasks; untested values are not final balancing.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

Players explain why the second attempt differs. The letter opens a meaningful question; Jakobe present/absent and hall refusal stay coherent; resets preserve the correct knowledge. No event overlaps an incompatible interaction. Validate chapter gates, both endings and spoiler-safe portfolio framing before production.