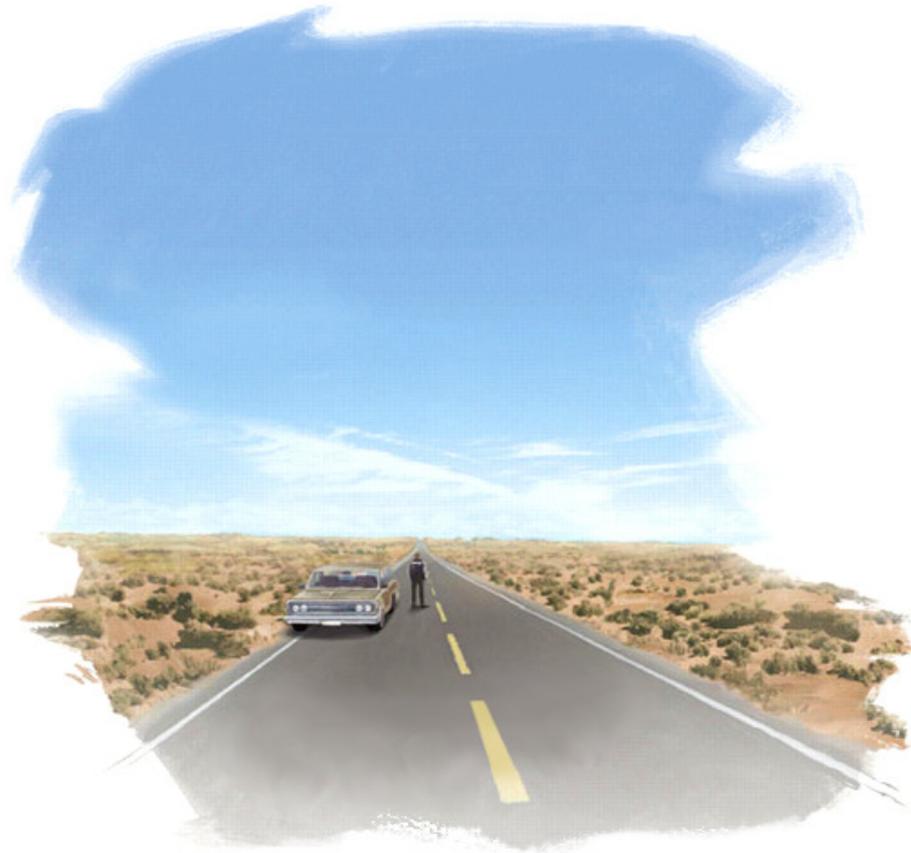


Analysis of a Game Narrative
By Shaun Collier

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Character Analysis

Note: The website “TV Tropes” was used as a reference for character archetypes, and a link to every archetype below is listed in the *trope list* section.



KYLE HYDE

AGE: 33

PRIMARY ARCHETYPES: ANTIHERO, CAPTAIN OBVIOUS, JERK WITH A HEART OF GOLD

Stubborn, lazy, aloof and inconsiderate, Kyle Hyde is the anti-hero protagonist of this game. The game has a film noir theme, and as such, Kyle presents typical detective traits, such as pointing out the obvious. Kyle used to be a detective, but now works for Ed Vincent at Red Crown.



ED VINCENT

AGE: 55

PRIMARY ARCHETYPES: THE LANGER, MISSION CONTROL

Formerly worked for the police and used to know Kyle's father. Ed founded a door-to-door sales company, Red Crown. Due to his relationship with Kyle's dad, he offered Kyle a position at the company after Kyle left the force. As Ed is Kyle's boss, he provides Kyle with objectives, although he sometimes gets frustrated with Kyle's lazy approach to matters.



RACHEL

AGE: 27

PRIMARY ARCHETYPES: SEXY SECRETARY, MISSION CONTROL

Rachel works as a secretary at Red Crown, assisting Ed and keeping in touch with clients. She also helps Ed with directing Kyle by beeping his pager and discussing work matters over the phone. As a result, Rachel has developed a bond with Kyle; something that doesn't come easy.



MILA

AGE: 19

PRIMARY ARCHETYPES: CUTE MUTE, SHRINKING VIOLET, MYSTERIOUS WAIF

Mila is a shy and timid girl, who is for most of the game mute, due to post-traumatic stress. She is Bradley's (see below) kid sister. It is eventually discovered that before six months ago, Mila was in a coma for ten years and that she's trying to find her own answers at Hotel Dusk.



DUNNING SMITH

AGE: 49

PRIMARY ARCHETYPES: GRUMPY OLD MAN, JERK WITH A HEART OF GOLD

Dunning is, in Kyle's own words, a “grumpy piece of leather”, which is slightly ironic since the two share a few similar traits. Dunning has run Hotel Dusk for the past five years, although he sometimes seems more interested in watching the game than assisting his guests.



ROSA FOX

AGE: 40

PRIMARY ARCHETYPES: I WAS QUITE A LOOKER, COLLECTOR OF THE STRANGE

Rosa is a middle-aged lady with a mixed personality, and is Hotel Dusk's maid, often taking orders from Dunning and working far harder than him. She is one to often gossip about guests, and is a collector of celebrity signatures. When she discovers Martin Summer is a guest, she is ecstatic.



LOUIS DENONNO

AGE: 25

PRIMARY ARCHETYPES: THE SLACKER, GENTLEMAN THIEF

Louis seems to give the *stoner* vibe, as he is very lazy, a freeloader, and often acts immaturely. He works at Hotel Dusk as a bellhop and a bartender, but never seems to do much. He has a dark past as a street punk and a thief, and seeks redemption and a fresh start in life.



KEVIN WOODWARD

AGE: 35

PRIMARY ARCHETYPES: OVERPROTECTIVE DAD, PARENTAL NEGLECT, JERK ASS

Kevin is a pale-skinned surgeon at Robbins Hospital. He is staying at Hotel Dusk with his daughter, Melissa, who he often scolds—for this reason, Kyle sees him as overprotective and short-tempered. Kevin usually appears to be worrying about something.



MELISSA WOODWARD

AGE: 8

PRIMARY ARCHETYPES: SPOILED BRAT, DELIBERATELY CUTE CHILD

Often behaving selfishly with a blunt way of talking (after all, she is eight), Melissa frequently gets on Kyle's nerves. Though such an attitude is expected from a child, she lacks emotional stability and often cries due to her seemingly abusive father's behaviour, and her longing for her mother.



HELEN PARKER

AGE: 70

PRIMARY ARCHETYPES: LITTLE OLD LADY INVESTIGATES

Helen is a kind, old lady, who confides in Kyle during her stay at Hotel Dusk. She feels remorseful about her past; she abandoned her son to become a magician when she was younger, and her wishes of fame and fortune were granted. She hopes to rebuild bridges while she still can.



MARTIN SUMMER

AGE: 50

PRIMARY ARCHETYPES: PLAGIARISM IN FICTION, REDEMPTION QUEST

Martin had become a famous writer, having written one of the most popular books in the United States. He was, however, a one-hit wonder, with most of his later books rated as mediocre. He has a thing for investigating other guests, and it turns out he has a dark past to hide of his own.



IRIS

AGE: 28

PRIMARY ARCHETYPES: BITCH IN A SHEEP'S CLOTHING, LIVING A DOUBLE LIFE

Iris is a pretty woman with a pretty big ego. Her superiority complex becomes apparent to Kyle, as she writes him off as a rude brute and is easily upset, suffering from mood swings. Iris has a secret life which she keeps hidden, and no one quite knows why she's staying at Hotel Dusk.



JEFF ANGEL

AGE: 19

PRIMARY ARCHETYPES: WANGST, HE WHO FIGHTS MONSTERS

Jeff is an angsty adolescent, who seems to lack empathy and often doesn't listen to other people. For this reason, he comes across as a suspicious character to Dunning and some of the guests. Kyle soon discovers that Jeff isn't just a loud-mouthed kid.



BRIAN BRADLEY

AGE: UNKNOWN

PRIMARY ARCHETYPES: DIRTY COP, DARK AND TROUBLED PAST

Bradley is Kyle Hyde's old ex-partner. He became a fugitive and leaked vital police information to a crime syndicate called Nile. The truth of the matter was that he was told that Nile had his sister, Mila, hostage, and thus did it to save her life. Kyle shot Bradley, who managed to escape.

Plot Summary

Prologue



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1976
NEW YORK, 5:07 P.M.
N.Y.P.D.

"Hyde! Phone!"

Kyle answers.

"Eighty-ninth precinct, this is Hyde. What the hell—
Bradley?!"

After arriving at the docks, Kyle confronts Bradley.

"Bradley! Why?"

Bradley starts to turn around.

"Don't move!"

*Having ignored Kyle's warning, Bradley is shot. He
utters somebody's name, and falls back and into
Hudson River.*

"...Mila."





Gasping for air, Kyle has awoken from yet another nightmare about Bradley, his ex-partner. Almost a crystal clear flashback. Kyle trusted Bradley with his life, but three years ago when Kyle was on the force, Bradley sold the whole department out to a criminal syndicate known as Nile.

Kyle put a bullet in Bradley, and quit his job.

Kyle sighs...

“Just a dream,” he muttered.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1979
LOS ANGELES, 10:16 A.M.

It's a busy morning at Red Crown. The phone rings, and Ed answers.

“Red Crown. What's that? How many? Got it! All right. We'll send it right out. Rachel! Where the hell is Hyde? Get him on the horn, pronto!”

“Yes, sir,” answers Rachel.

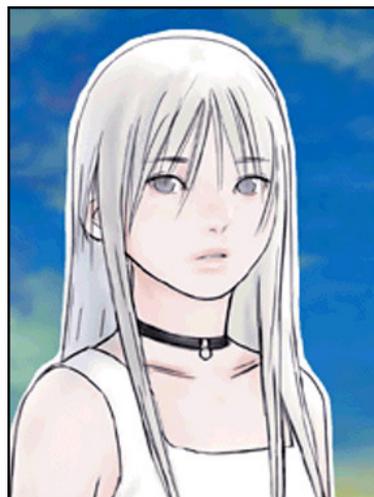
In his car, Kyle's pager beeps. He knows all too well by now that it must be Rachel. Feeling lethargic, Kyle tosses his pager back onto the passenger seat and soon forgets about it.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1979
NEVADA, 4:09 P.M.

Remembering to call Rachel back, Kyle pulls up at a gas station, drops a fifty-cent piece in the payphone, and calls Red Crown.

“Hyde!” Ed yells. “Why haven't you checked in?”

Ed explains to Kyle that a client has called, and that a package is waiting at a hotel called Hotel Dusk. Hyde drives towards Hotel Dusk, and on the way spots a strange-looking girl on the road.



Story

Kyle arrives at the hotel and checks in with Dunning, who gives him room 215 and claims it “grants wishes”. Dunning also mentions that somebody with the name “Kyle Hyde” had previously stayed at Hotel Dusk. Kyle meets the young woman he met earlier on the road when driving to the hotel. He finds it rather peculiar that she wears the same bracelet he recalls Bradley wearing. Kyle receives the package and his order sheet. The assignment is to retrieve two items: a pin-up magazine featuring the celebrity Cecily Lee, and a small red box.

After talking to the hotel maid, Rosa, Kyle discovers the girl’s name is Rosa. Kyle finds out that a crook he knew when he was on the force is working at the hotel as a bellhop. Name’s Louis. After a while, Kyle tells Louis the truth about Bradley; how he shot him because he sold out to a criminal syndicate called Nile. Louis is shocked by this—turns out he’s on the run from Nile. Nile hired Louis’s friend Danny to commit an art robbery. Danny requested Louis’s help, who complied, but the man Danny worked for from Nile, known as “J”, shot Danny dead. Louis witnessed this and fled.



Kyle finds the magazine, infiltrates Dunning’s office, and finds the small red box, thus completing his job. Kyle goes to the hotel restaurant for dinner, and talks to another guest called Martin Summer, who is supposedly a famous author. Martin has lost his bookmark, and asks Kyle to keep his eyes peeled for it. Kyle finds the bookmark, which has an interesting design—an angel painted onto it. Kyle asks Martin about

this, who says it's a replica of a famous painting by Osterzone called "Angel Opening a Door".

Kyle encounters Louis, who mentions that room 217 has been out of use for six months. When Kyle entered Dunning's office, he found out that's where the second "Kyle Hyde" had been staying. Kyle asks for a key, which Louis provides. In room 217 Kyle finds Bradley's old lighter and an old photo. Kyle becomes increasingly curious about why Mila is at the hotel, and gets her to write her old man's name down, which is *Robert Evans*.



Robert owned an art business called Gallery May in Santa Monica. Kyle calls his boss, Ed, and asks him to dig up some info on Robert and Gallery May. Louis invites Kyle to a bowling match. Typical of Louis, he ends up breaking a plant pot. Inside however is an old key. Rosa, the hotel's maid, mentions she overheard Kyle asking about Mila's father, and mistakenly thinks he's Dunning. When she confronts Dunning about this, Dunning denies it but does reveal he has a daughter. Rosa spills more beans on Dunning in private conversation with Kyle. Dunning indeed bought Hotel Dusk five years ago.

However, Dunning had visited Hotel Dusk a long time ago with his family, which Kyle finds rather odd, since Dunning said he just picked it up on the cheap. Finally, Kyle asks Rosa if she knows anything about an angel painting. She doesn't, but she mentions that the hotel has a lot of apple paintings. Kyle's pager beeps—time to call Red Crown. Ed has some information on Gallery May. It closed down seven years ago. Robert Evans had inherited it from his grandfather, and Evans was managing business well. He found undiscovered paintings by famous artists and sold them for high prices. All of a sudden though, Gallery May shut down and Robert went missing.



Kyle ends the call. Louis reveals that he knows what the old key is for. It's a wine cellar key, and the two agree to meet later to explore the wine cellar. Kyle seeks the apple paintings out. He finds four, each with a letter at the bottom-right, which spell out "Y-E-N-N". After asking Rosa about the fifth apple painting, she reveals there's a *special room* which the painting is in: room 111. Rosa lets Kyle in who discovers the fifth painting. After rearranging the letters, they spell out "J-E-N-N-Y".

Mila hears Kyle discussing his revelation with Rosa, screams, and faints. After Kyle performs CPR, Mila wakes up and speaks for the first time. "Don't... take... Jenny." Mila tells Kyle she remembers playing with Jenny a long time ago in room 111, but a

scary man took Jenny away. It turns out that Mila has been in a coma for the past ten years, as when she was a little girl; the events at Hotel Dusk traumatised her and she was hospitalised at Robbins Hospital.



Since she'd awakened from her coma, Mila's been looking for her father. Kyle acknowledges that her memory is still very foggy. Kyle gives Ed a call, who has more information on Robert. It was ten years ago when Robert became the owner, and strangely as soon as he bought the hotel he shut it down. Rosa interrupts the call and tells Kyle that Dunning's took Mila away. Kyle brakes in Dunning's room and finds lots of birthday cards address to *Jenny*. Kyle prepares to enter the wine cellar with Louis, when they're both knocked out, presumably by Dunning. Rosa wakes them up. Kyle resumes exploring the cellar.

In the cellar, Kyle finds a book called "Osterzone, the Phantom Painter", written by Robert Evans, and a letter that reveals Robert is Jenny's kidnapper, and also the shocking revelation that Dunning is Osterzone—in addition to finding the famous painting, *Angel Opening the Door*. However, Kyle discovers there was never really an Osterzone. He was literally a legend created by Robert. The mysteries regarding "Osterzone's" paintings made them grow in value. Dunning was the painter. It was good business.

Because Robert and Dunning were in a deep situation with Nile, when Dunning refused to paint any more (he felt terrible about his glory being hidden behind the Osterzone façade) they organised the kidnapping of his daughter, Jenny. Robert aided Nile with the kidnapping. Dunning confides in Kle and tells him everything. He gives Kyle a key to a small red box—the box Kyle retrieved. Inside is a letter from Bradley, who turns out to be Kyle's client.

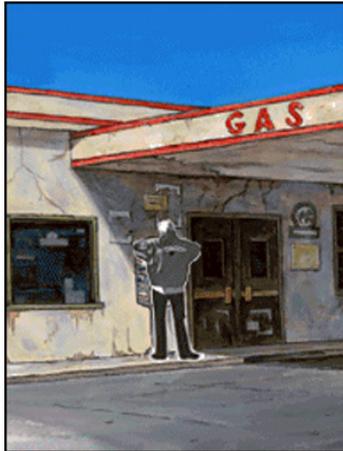
The next morning, Kyle leaves Hotel Dusk. Mila still wants to find out about her past, and asks Kyle if she can go with him. Kyle agrees. A final cutscene shows the near future—a delighted Dunning, reunited with his daughter, Jenny.



Story Structure

Hotel Dusk is a linear point-and-click adventure game, with an explicit narrative. The game is highly narrative and dialogue driven, and almost plays as a visual novel with mini games and some puzzles.

Chain of Events



Initiating Event: Kyle Hyde is haunted by his dark past and memories of his partner, Bradley, and is working for Red Crown—a sales company that does odd jobs on the side. Red Crown sends him to Hotel Dusk; a place that holds many secrets.

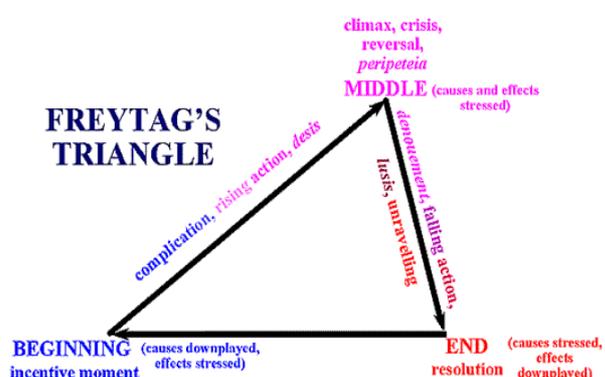
Internal Response: Kyle finds himself confused when he arrives at Hotel Dusk. He finds lots of clues that suggest Hotel Dusk has something to do with Bradley, but has no idea what the guests' reasons are for staying at Dusk. He soon gets to work and begins his quest to find Bradley.

Attempt: An ex-detective, naturally Kyle's good at pressing guests and hotel staff for information. Kyle uncovers mysteries about the guests' pasts, the hotel's past, and about Bradley and the crime syndicate Nile.

Resolution: Though he only stays at Hotel Dusk for a night, in that time Kyle is able to connect the dots and find out that every guest at the hotel had—even if in a distant way—some link to Bradley, and a reason for staying at the hotel. Kyle solves the mystery regarding the painting robberies and the famous Osterzone, and somehow manages to solve every guest's personal dilemma in the process.

Reaction: Not much is revealed about Kyle Hyde at the game's end. He's a man with a shady past, and seemingly a shady future. Though his future is not revealed, it is clear that he is happy Bradley's case has been solved, and soon, closed. Kyle met Bradley's sister at the hotel, called *Mila*. Since she had suffered from a coma, as a personal favour to Bradley he agrees to look after her. They drive away from Hotel Dusk and into the distance.

Freytag's Triangle is an appropriate structure diagram for Hotel Dusk. There's almost an exponential growth in the player's interest as Kyle uncovers more truths. There are more conflicts with other characters as the story progresses. Finally, at the story's climax, Kyle takes risks but it pays off; he gets the facts he sought. The game's complete, there's no longer any tension, and it's a happy ending.



Narrative Techniques



First and foremost, one of the most obvious techniques of *Hotel Dusk* is the film noir style, though it is important to note that not all of the game's art is film noir—it's usually just the characters, which definitely creates a unique visual style and a contrast between the colourless characters with their own personal matters to solve, and the colourful hotel which holds their answers and encompasses them.

That said, whilst some of the music is a little film noir in style, some of it is also very upbeat which can detract a lot from the noir feel. The noir art style did end up marketing the game well. It should also be said that the game is set in the late '70s, far beyond the typical noir period; thus the noir style should just be seen as an accompaniment.

Though the game is linear, there are a lot of variables to consider and whilst the player's actions lead to the same ultimate outcome, in the fashion of most *foldback* narratives, dialogue choices will result in different reactions from the other characters and may affect the game later on. Unfortunately, due to the foldback nature of the game, if a player makes a wrong choice he or she might have to play through an extra five minutes of the game before reaching the inevitable game over screen.

Like with a novel and most narrative-driven games, *Hotel Dusk* doesn't have much replay value. With the deep plot it is definitely a game with a niche audience, and it is marketed that way. The game has a bittersweet ending. Whilst the characters are able to continue on with their lives and have found new purposes, they all have to face their own recent tragedies.

Trope List

In the *character analysis* section, character archetypes are listed. These were found through a popular website called TV Tropes. For further reading, here is a list of the *tropes* and links to them...

TROPE NAME	TROPE URL
ANTIHERO	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/Antihero
BITCH IN A SHEEP'S CLOTHING	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/BitchInASheepsClothing
CAPTAIN OBVIOUS	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/CaptainObvious
COLLECTOR OF THE STRANGE	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/CollectorOfTheStrange
CUTE MUTE	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/CuteMute
DARK AND TROUBLED PAST	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/DarkAndTroubledPast
DELIBERATELY CUTE CHILD	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/DeliberatelyCuteChild
DIRTY COP	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/DirtyCop
GENTLEMAN THIEF	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/GentlemanThief
GRUMPY OLD MAN	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/GrumpyOldMan
HE WHO FIGHTS MONSTERS	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/HeWhoFightsMonsters
I WAS QUITE A LOOKER	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/ICameWithALooker
JERK ASS	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/JerkAss
JERK WITH A HEART OF GOLD	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/JerkWithAHeartOfGold
LITTLE OLD LADY INVESTIGATES	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/LittleOldLadyInvestigates
LIVING A DOUBLE LIFE	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/LivingADoubleLife
MISSION CONTROL	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/MissionControl
MYSTERIOUS WAIF	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/MysteriousWaif
OVERPROTECTIVE DAD	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/OverprotectiveDad
PARENTAL NEGLECT	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/ParentalNeglect
PLAGIARISM IN FICTION	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/PlagiarismInFiction
REDEMPTION QUEST	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/RedemptionQuest
SEXY SECRETARY	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/SexySecretary
SHRINKING VIOLET	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/ShrinkingViolet
SPOILED BRAT	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/SpoiledBrat
THE LANCER	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/TheLancer
THE SLACKER	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/TheSlacker
WANGST	http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/Wangst