



## Pedagogical sequence/Introductory sheet

# The Detective

Language level	B1
Skills	Reading
Time	30 minutes
By the end of the sequence, pupils will be able to...	Understand and identify crime and investigation, body parts, furniture vocabulary, and W questions.
Inclusiveness	The layout is adapted for pupils with Specific Learning Disorders (SLDs): font, line spacing, contrast and text in chunks. However, it remains a text-based narrative game requiring a lot of reading, which will make it more challenging for learners with reading difficulties.
Operating system	Any (web browser based) but not recommended for small screens

## Where to find the game

You can download the game file and open it in any web browser, or play the game online at <https://d-esl.itch.io/the-detective>

# Hosting the game sessions

## Accessibility

### English level

**B1:** The game contains basic English grammar and vocabulary coupled with more advanced features.

**B2:** Due to the length of the game and the connexions to make in a foreign language, this game is suitable for B2 pupils as they can be asked to write a short essay using the clues in the game.

### Accessibility features

The game is a narrative game played in a browser, presented as interactive text. It does not require sharp and precise movements and is, therefore, suitable, for example, for learners with dyspraxia.

The text meets inclusive guidelines (sans-serif font, left alignment, 1,5 line spacing), even though the textual nature of the game will make it more challenging for learners with reading difficulties and/or visual impairment.

## Advice for specific pupil profiles

15+: due to the crime investigation and noir ambiance we advise pupils of 15+ years old.

Since the game is played in a regular web browser, you can advise pupils who find the text difficult to read to simply zoom in the entire page.

## Classroom organisation

### Duration

Reaching one of the ends of the game should take about **45 minutes**, but this duration may vary depending on the English level of your pupils and how much they want to learn about the case.

Pupils should be made aware of the expected duration of the activity. Make sure to keep track of the time they spend if they are playing in the classroom to help pupils who are struggling to advance in the story. The game is not linear, which means that pupils have the freedom to explore the crime scene (in text form) and search for clues however they like. They should keep track of the clues they find on the crime scene.

### Single-player mode

#### Solo

The game can be played in single-player mode, for example either with only one player behind the screen, or a small group of pupils, that read the story and make the decision together. To launch the game, simply double-click on the game file "The Detective.html".

#### In Group

The game can be played by a small group of pupils (2-3) who make decisions together and confront their opinions on who the culprit is.

## Play as homework

The game can also be used as a homework activity. You could then provide a vocabulary list (have a look at the player guide), and authorise pupils to use an online dictionary (eg. [deepl.com](https://www.deepl.com)) if they need any help.

## Briefing

### Pedagogical requirements

The game is tailored for B1 learners. The story and dialogues should be understandable for learners of this level, even though the narrative nature of the game allows to expose the learners to small doses of more complicated, literary vocabulary.

The game covers the following topics:

- Crime and investigation vocabulary
- Furniture
- Parts of the body
- W questions

### Explanations to give before playing

Before the activity, prepare your pupils by telling them that they are going to play a game. **It is important to tell them that the game is not a graphically intensive video game, but simply a narrative game in textual form with some images and sound.**

Tell them that they are going to play an **interactive story** where they will have to solve a case of murder.

## **Emotional security and other warnings**

The theme of this narrative story is a murder case, which contains a crime scene described in text (no graphic elements) and a theme of corruption. The end screen can depict situations of people being in custody or losing their jobs. It is advised to make sure that these aspects are not emotional triggers for some of your pupils.

Apart from that, the game uses mostly text with only a few non-graphic pictures which should not shock your pupils.

## **Follow-up and Post-play activities**

### **Evaluation: score analysis or resolving difficulties encountered**

To verify the level of exploration and of understanding of the game, you can ask pupils to list the clues they found as well as their understanding of the story. The game has an open end: depending on the person they accuse at the end of the story, they will be shown a different end screen.

### **Lesson plan using the in-game content learned**

This game can be used as part of a sequence on murder mysteries: you may use the vocabulary introduced in the game (about the body parts and the police force) or the general atmosphere to lead to the writing of a detective short story. You may also use the end of the game as an introduction to making hypotheses using modals such as “may”, “could” or “should”.

### **Debrief or production based on the game session**

Ask your pupils to crack the case! They can write a short essay to defend the opinion: let your class choose the best plea to decide who the culprit is.

If you believe that this topic can be addressed (depending on the age and English level of your pupils), ask your class to think about the Captain's behaviour: why did he react in such a way when you confronted him? What could he have to gain?

### **Debriefing session**

A debriefing session after the game is always a good idea, in order to make sure that the story was understood and spot the most difficult aspects as felt by your pupils.

### **Written activity**

Depending on the English level of your pupils, you may ask them to:

- Write a short report of the game: what happened during the game? Who was the victim? What clues did you find?
- Write a short story to end this investigation: did you put the right person in custody at the end of the game? Who was the actual culprit? What were their motivations? Did they commit any other criminal acts?
- Write a short essay to defend their opinion on who the culprit is: What were the clues that led to their arrest? What were their motivations, and did they believe they were right to kill that person? Do they show any regret?
- Write a short essay on the history of corruption through famous criminal cases: Al Capone, the cartels and Pablo Escobar, the Moon sect, etc.

# The game

## Context and story

### Plot

The story is set in a fictional yet contemporary timeline. A journalist named Emma Muller, 39 years old, was found dead in her house. The player, a detective, must gather the clues left in the house to determine who is the killer.

### Lore – game world

The plot is set in the 21st century, in a house and in a quiet neighbourhood.

## Characters

### Protagonist

**You** are a detective and you want to show your talents to the world. Although you know some of the people on the crime scene (such as your colleague Murdock, the Coroner and later the Captain), you prefer to analyze facts only and care little for their feelings.

Your goal is to solve the murder case without being influenced by your affect.

## Other characters(s)



**Murdock** is a colleague of yours. He has been working as a detective too, and has become quite cynical about his profession.

You can turn to him to get some information on who the victim is. Once you have cracked the case, you can turn to him to go to the Captain's office and explain your reasoning.



**The Coroner** is a collected woman who is known for her good analytical skills.

She looks quite puzzled on the crime scene and argues that she knew the victim.

She is the only one capable of determining the time and cause of death using her forensic skills.





**The Captain** is your superior. He is a bureaucrat who is mostly interested in keeping the peace at all costs.

He seems eager to close the case as soon as possible once the first suspects have been brought to custody. However, your opinion may differ: all the characters on the crime scene looked suspicious, and so does he.

**The woman at 117 Blue Street** is the first neighbour you can talk to.

She looks quite sad, does not talk much and is quick to send you to house number 115.

**The man at 116 Blue Street** is an old man with white hair who does not like the intrusion of the police in the neighbourhood.

He tells you that his former neighbour was a journalist (confirmed by Murdock) and that she would watch for his cats occasionally. He says he saw her car in the alley at 6:30 as she came home quite upset, but does not have any other information to give.

**The woman at 115 Blue Street** is a single mother who does not seem to know much about the crime.

She only lets her child, Chloe, speak to you. She does not say anything else.

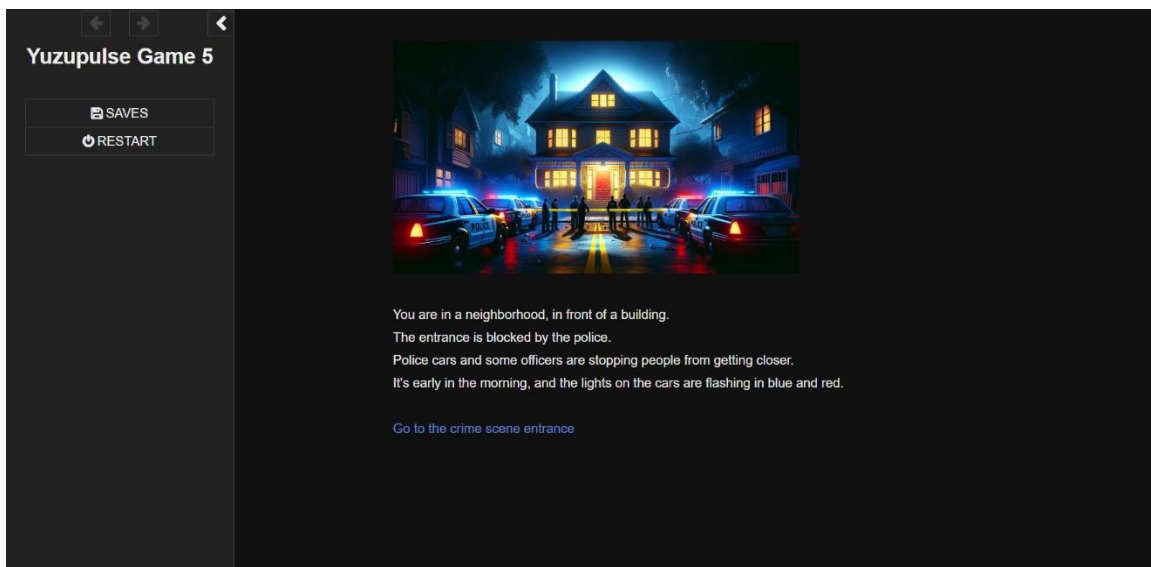
**Chloe** is the daughter of the woman living at 115 Blue Street. Although she is a child, she seems to have witnessed quite a lot of the action.

She says she has seen an unknown black car with shiny wheels park in the alley, and a man with a tattooed skull smoked cigarettes inside the car. She stayed outside without the people noticing her, and went inside when her mother came back from work, without the people interfering in any way.

## Gameplay

### Interactive text

The game launches in a regular internet browser. The text of the story is displayed on the screen, and the players can click on links to interact with the story, move around in the manor and talk to the non-playing characters.



The menu on the left of the screen allows the player to:

- Go back and forth using the arrows at the top of the page

- Save the game if needed
- Restart the game if they missed clues or want to explore the alternative endings.

## Additional material needed

Additionally, players are encouraged to use a pen and a piece of paper to keep track of the clues they get. They may also use it to write down the names of the suspects and make links to determine what they could or could not have done.

## Pedagogical impact of the gameplay

The advantage of a purely textual narrative story is that it offers the opportunity for the learners to read relatively **long texts that are by nature divided into small, manageable chunks.**

The learners are then asked to collect valuable information from what they read, which makes them more capable to extract important information from other documents written in a foreign language.

The useful vocabulary can be given to the learners in the Player's guide.

## Playthrough

### Phase A – Get to the crime scene

After talking to the policeman guarding the entrance to the house, the player gains access to the crime scene.

## A.1 – Talk to the policeman

When the game starts, the player gets a short introduction to the plot of the game by a standing police officer. The initial observations conclude to a robbery gone wrong.

### Grammar:

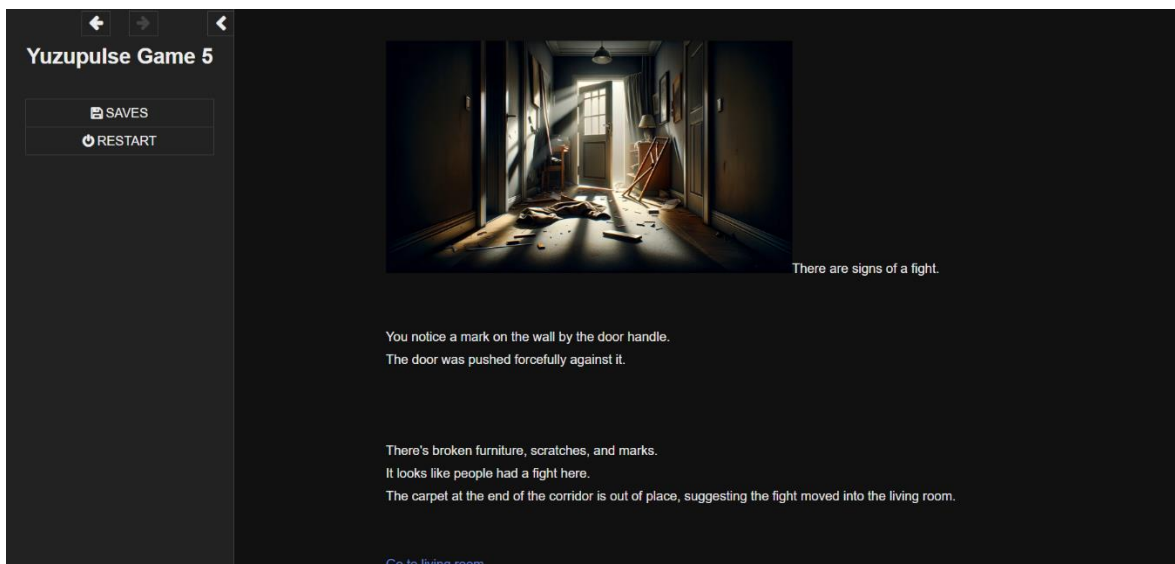
Passive voice, present continuous

### Vocabulary:

Robbery

## A.2 – Inspect the hallway

The player is led to inspect the first clue: the door, which shows signs of someone breaking in the house. There are signs of a fight, showing evidence that the victim was inside when the intruders came in, and that the victim may have seen them coming.



Then, the players reach the living room, where most of the investigation takes place.

**Grammar:**

Simple past, passive voice

**Vocabulary:**

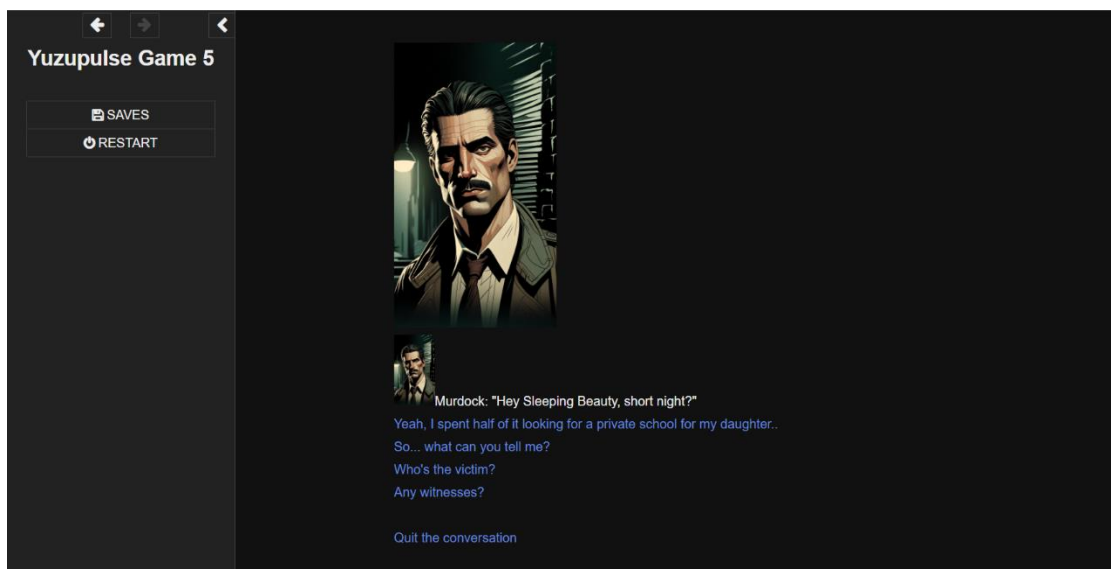
Damage, handle, forcefully

## Phase B – The crime scene

Now that the players are inside the house, they have access to the crime scene: they can talk to their colleagues Murdock and the Coroner, or look at the furniture and the corpse.

### B.1 – Identify the victim

Talk to Murdock to learn more about the victim. He reveals her name, age and profession (Emma Muller, 39 years old, a journalist). Murdock also leads the player towards asking the neighbours if they have seen anything.

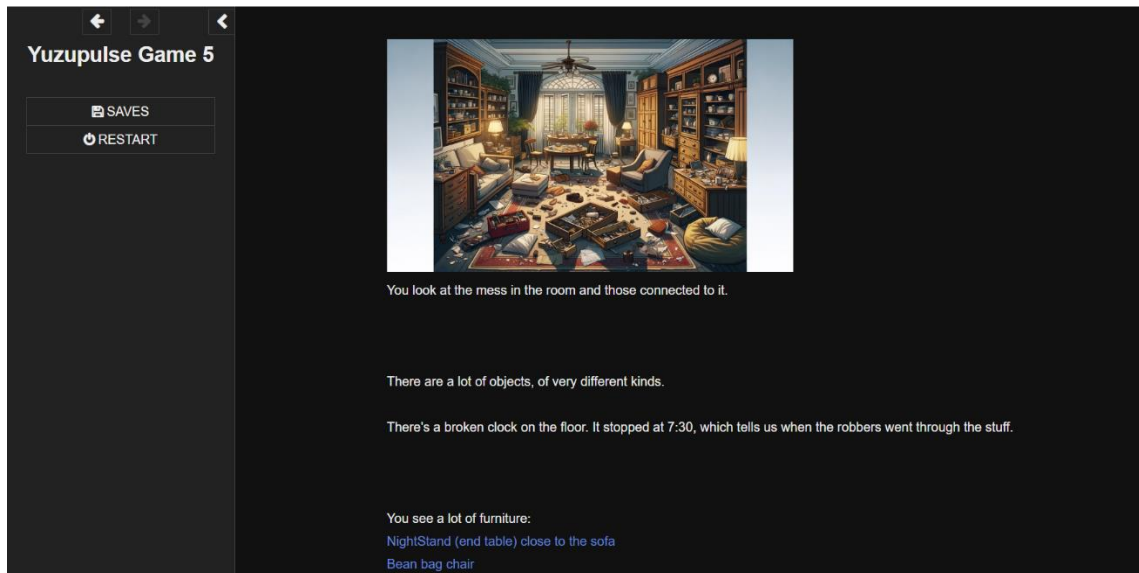


### Vocabulary:

witness, coroner

### B.2 – The crime scene

The player can explore the crime scene and click on some of the items of the room to gather information. This will help them determine the possible time for the murder (7:30, according to the alarm clock) and find a hollow book on the floor, which was hiding an item that is now missing.



## Grammar:

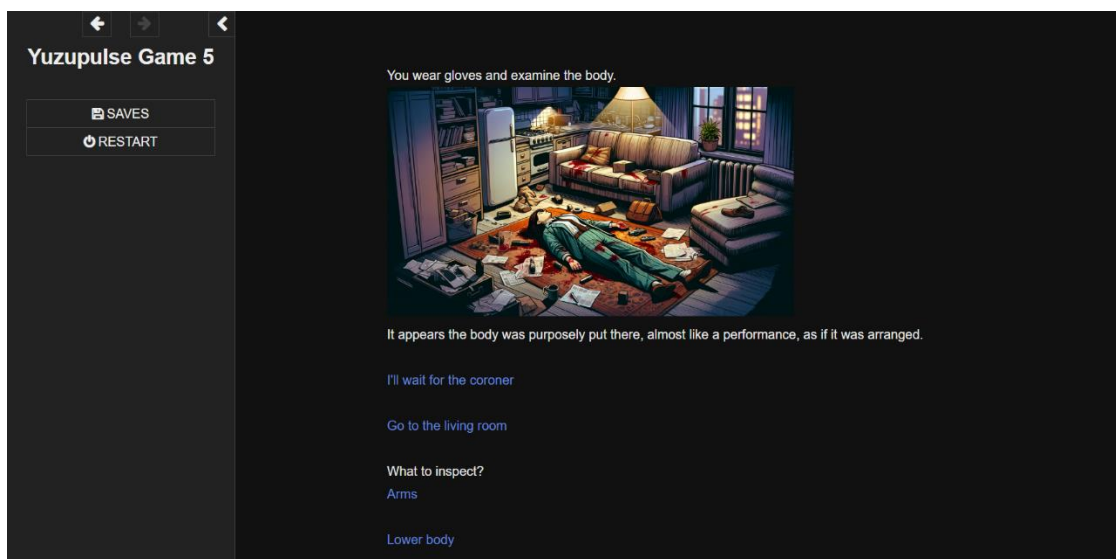
Past participle, past simple

## Vocabulary:

Robber, jewel, abrasion, rope, lock, folder, thief

## B.3 – The body

Likewise, the players can take a look at the body. They can talk to the coroner or inspect the body themselves.



## Grammar:

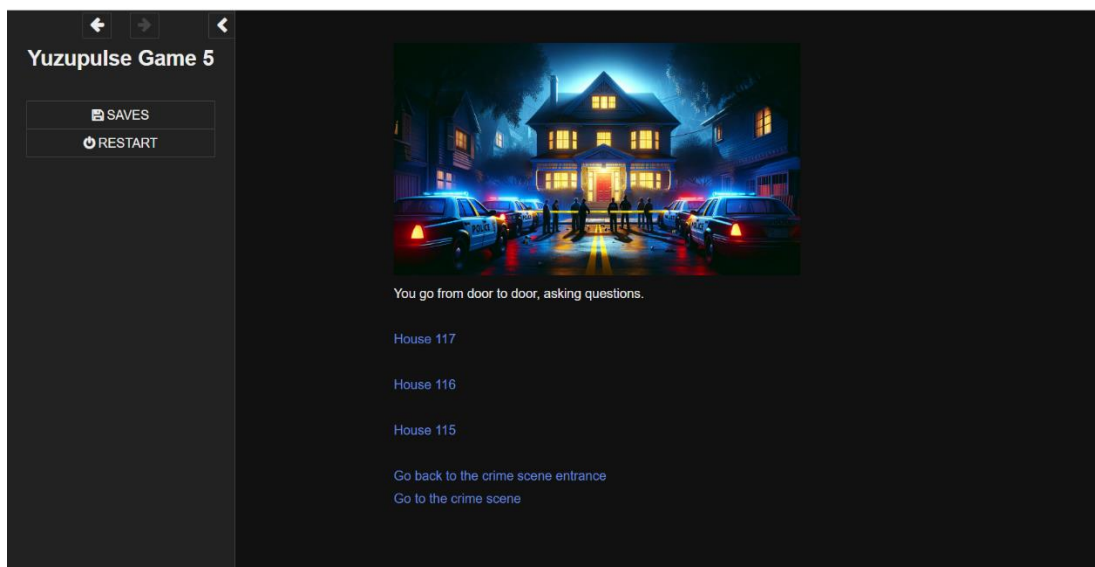
Past simple

## Vocabulary:

Autopsy, beating, blow, forensic, heartbeat, lesion, strangulation, bruise,  
DNA, various body parts

## Phase C – The neighbours

Once the players have analyzed the crime scene, they can talk to the three neighbours outside the house. They each give indications of where they were when the murder took place and give some clues that can be confronted with what other characters have to say.



### C.1 – The woman at 117 Blue Street

The player can start with the first house, at number 117. The sad-looking woman does not have a lot to tell them and sends the player to another house, the number 115.

## Grammar:



Past simple

## C.2 – The man at 116 Blue Street

This old man with white hair knows a little more about the victim: she was a journalist who used to watch for his cats every now and then. He noticed her change in behaviour in the past few days but did not notice anything at the time of the murder.

### Grammar:

Past simple, past continuous

### Vocabulary:

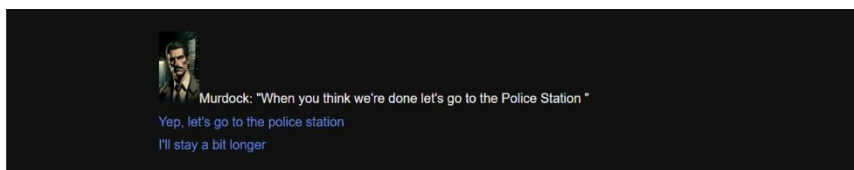
Unusual

## C.3 – The mother and daughter at 115 Blue Street

The mother does not know anything about what happened since she was at work when the murder happened. Her daughter saw suspicious-looking men wait outside the house in a beautiful car: the men wore skull tattoos on their face. The girl mentions that they arrived at 4 and stayed in front of the house for a little while, and she went home when her mother came back from work.

## Phase D – The suspects

Now that the players have seen all the clues, they can talk to Murdock at the bottom of the crime scene screen to meet the Captain and tell him who they think the culprit is.



## D.1 – Chat with the Captain

The Captain is a bureaucrat who is quite confident of his skills and of his detectives'. He asks the player to trust him when he says that he arrested the main suspects. The player can either trust him, in which case they are sent to one of the end screens, or doubt him and access several other options. All the endings are different: although there is a hint of who might be behind the whole case, the players can advocate for their solution to be the right one.

### **Grammar:**

Past continuous

### **Vocabulary:**

"Case closed", confess

## D.2 – Accusing the characters

There are 7 possible endings. Each ending comes with a short paragraph on how the player's character situation evolved after the accusation, and how they lived through it. Each solution is open-ended, which means that the game does not confirm or infirm the player's theory, even though the paragraphs suggest that the Captain might have hidden some pieces of information. The follow-up activities can use the findings of the pupils for them to write their own story or a more researched essay!

### **Grammar:**

Past simple

### **Vocabulary:**

Jail, custody, "better safe than sorry"

## References

The game has been realised with [Twine](#), with the assets of the program. The pictures have been generated online using [DALL-E2 from OpenAi](#), and the sound effects (including the soundtrack) were generated via [Pixabay](#), [Gamesounds.xyz](#) and [Mixkit](#).



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