

This is a short sample with the following goals:

- Exemplify the classic "introduce character, get quest" structure common to many games.
- Provide rich, accessible characterization and worldbuilding through dialogue.
- Be mindful of resource allocation for art and animation; one cutscene with one unique character and all re-usable movements.

EXT. MAPLE CAMP (FREE MOVEMENT)

Vented huts for boiling sap into syrup, domesticity caged by haphazard walls and barricades. Narrow streets between refugee tents lined with the denominational heraldry of nearby towns and messages of hope. Splashes of colour attempt inspiration through the snow that's starting to pile up.

The Player Character (PC) has eased pressure on the camp for the moment. There's an uneasy gratefulness permeating, skeptical chatter as the PC passes.

HOPEFUL

I packed up my tent...

COOK

(over sizzling meat)

You? You're shackled up with someone?

HOPEFUL

Well it's not a wedding ceremony.  
We're leaving anyway, aren't we?

COOK

If our new arrival gave you that idea, you should take a second look. Nothing's changed but another mouth. Good for chewin' and jawin' and not much else.

(Note: could pursue opportunities for further interaction with this reference to the PC as "new arrival" -- for instance a reaction line ("You heard me. Now walk on.") if the player stops to listen/stare.)

HOPEFUL

(dejected)

Huh... is it that hard to believe I'd have a shot with someone here?

COOK

*Trust*, I'd hope you have better judgment.

More chatter.

SHIVERING

Piled up three blankets, it's still not enough.

JEALOUS

You have *three* blankets?!

DILIGENT KID

Got my stuff ready, pa.

WEARY FATHER

Good. Knife?

DILIGENT KID

(patting self)

Uhhh... oh yeah.

WEARY FATHER

Can't be losing that... here, let's give her a name.

DILIGENT KID

"Mawkiller"!!

WEARY FATHER

How about "Martha." Take care of her, okay? But no Maw on your own.

DILIGENT KID

(appreciatively, or perhaps disappointed)

Martha...

The father and child walk off.

PAINTER

Goin' out later, hey? Want me to do your face?

WATCHMAN

Thanks, T. It really helps.

PAINTER  
 (teasing)  
 Just try not to sweat so much this  
 time?

The painter and watchman retreat into a nearby tent (or simply walk off).

SUGARMAKER  
 Of all the places to make a stand...

GRATEFUL COOK  
 It had shelter. More than you can say  
 for most places now.

GRATEFUL COOK (cont'd)  
 Plus, as long as we don't run out of  
 eggs, we've got fluffy, dripping  
 flapjacks for days!!

SUGARMAKER  
 (ultimately endeared)  
 Ugh.

EXT. BARRICADE WALL (CUTSCENE/DIALOGUE)

At the top of the barricade, the PC approaches LAGRANGE, a ranger clad in unflattering autumn camo and a long coat against the cold -- with winter snow mounting, it's clear she's beyond her means. She checks the slide on her worn bolt-action rifle: it's a little sticky (if we can adjust the timing or imply it through facial expression).

PC  
 Your people held their own at the  
 gate.

LAGRANGE  
 Uh-huh.

PC  
 But it won't last forever -- only  
 getting colder. Have you tried to  
 lead them out of the valley?

LAGRANGE  
 Course I *tried*.

PC  
 They're afraid to follow?

LAGRANGE

Nuh-uh -- raised to raise the land  
we's *raised* on. Get me?

PC nods with what could be interpreted as somber understanding -- or maybe they're lost in the local idiom and feigning confidence.

LAGRANGE (cont'd)

But you don't have that problem, do ya. S'pose you have a suggestion.

PC

Based on what I saw coming in, we're all we have. If it's too dangerous to take the camp - or they don't want to leave - we could search for the source of this, or...

LAGRANGE

We get whittled through the winter.

Lagrange sighs and starts pacing along the wall.

LAGRANGE (cont'd)

Your feet are learning this ground, I wouldn't expect you to understand.  
It's been a long--  
    (hollering at a  
    nearby lookout)  
What's it been now?!

The lookout mutters their response inaudibly.

LAGRANGE (cont'd)

Not even a month. Damn.  
    (gallows amusement)  
Find myself hopin' to catch a shot  
for the excuse to lay down.

A beat of awkward silence -- the PC searches for what to say to help. Lagrange suddenly wheels on them.

LAGRANGE (cont'd)

They fell from the *sky*. You get how shaking that is? No one here looks up anymore. So for a *source*? We're fresh SOL.

PC

They're coming from something, somewhere. What do you know about them?

LAGRANGE

(shrugging)

Well, we call 'em the Maw. They ain't all that big, not at first. When they fall it's a little central... I dunno, like an orb o' nothin'. But it starts suckin' up stuff around it right quick, and tears through almost anything it hits on the way down too. Makes armour out of it, you know? They can throw it, too, branches at bullet-speed.

PC

Hm -- heh. Heheh. No problem.

LAGRANGE

What, you figured it out, just like that?

PC

Actually, one problem. We need *lift*. You know, *thrust*?

LAGRANGE

(lost, thus joking)

Oh you better not be askin' me for a thrust.

PC

(pointing up)

No no -- wherever they come from, they're not armoured *there*.

LAGRANGE

(embarrassed, then inspired)

Ah. Ah! *Lift!*

(beat)

Yeah, I know where you can find some. It'll be a trek, but not as bad as getting out of the valley with a passel of refugees.

Lagrange pulls a map out of her coat (rather than custom animation/asset, could be handled on in-game map, or cut altogether).

LAGRANGE (cont'd)

Through the ol' Witchholm ruins. I know how that sounds, but don't listen too much and you'll be fine.

PC  
Hold on--

LAGRANGE  
(hurried)  
Losin' light, bud. You'll find the  
old airfield out there.

Lagrange pulls aside one of the planks on the barricade, opening the way, all but shoving the PC out. Lagrange starts walking off.

LAGRANGE (cont'd)  
I'll get a team together to give you  
some cover once you're airborne. Grab  
a plane, see what you can see... and  
don't leave us hanging here, right?

PC  
Of course, but--  
(Lagrange disappears  
behind a section of  
the wall)  
I don't -- plane...?