

Melissa Koven

Portfolio



About

Please peruse some examples of my **career highlights**, including industry talks, personal projects and professional projects.

Reach out if you'd like more information or additional samples related to anything featured in my portfolio.



Projects

(The ones that aren't top secret)

Go to Work
Make Your Way to Aerocorp

SCAREDY CAT

Scaredy Cat is a pixel mystery/thriller narrative adventure that begins with a tale all too familiar. Henny has been worn to the bone by a soul-sucking corporate career that has gifted her with heart problems. After she rage quits and starts pet sitting, she discovers her new gig will be just as horrifying as her last.

It's a solo-dev labor of love about interlinked stories of trauma and corporate conspiracy.

Demo is free on Steam for PC and Mac.



Try the Demo

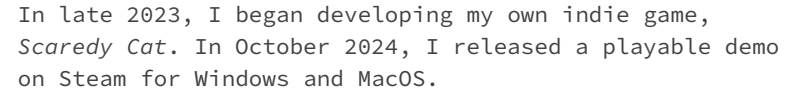


Press Kit



Gameplay Video

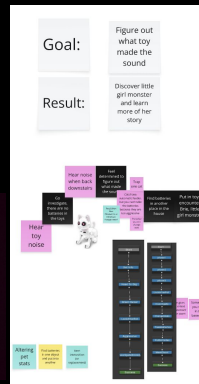
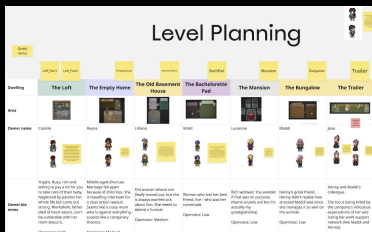
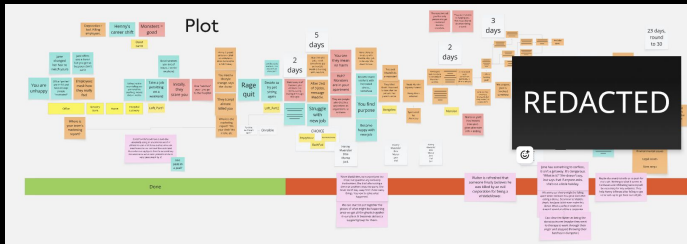
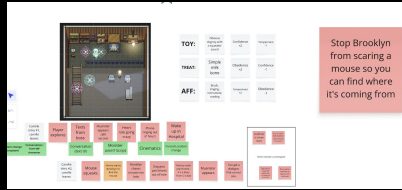
Solo Dev on Scaredy Cat



- Loneliness and human interconnectedness
- Cycles of trauma and coping through humor
- Commentary on consumerism and disconnection

- Built narrative systems using PixelCrushers tools
- Created pipelines, systems, and tools supporting art, programming, and design
- Implemented Unity's native 2D Tilemap and URP 2D lighting workflow

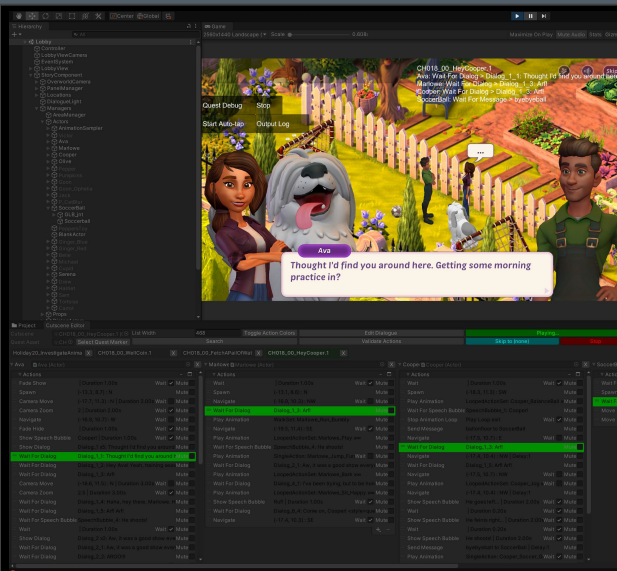
- Shared regular dev updates and engaged the community through social platforms
- Participated in Steam events—including Next Fest and Women’s Day Sale—growing wishlists to 1,200+ organically with zero marketing spend





Design Lead on Ava's Manor

Ava's Manor is a narrative-driven mobile title featuring **over 40 hours of story content**. Romance, mystery and friendship form the core of the experience, brought to life through a world of intrigue and memorable characters.



- Served as Design Lead for a multidisciplinary team of narrative, cinematic, and technical designers
- Developed narrative pipelines to optimize for live-ops environment
- Provided creative direction across art, animation, UX, and narrative systems
- Partnered closely with engineering to deliver narrative engine QoL improvements
- Worldwide launch in September 2020 for Android and iOS

**MIGHTY
KINGDOM**

**UKEN
GAMES**

Crafting a cutscene involves a series of creative and technical decisions, including:

- [**Fun fact:** The narrative includes over 1,000 cutscenes and more than 150,000 words of story content.]





Design Lead on Power Rangers Mighty Force

Power Rangers Mighty Force is a story-driven idle game that brings classic Power Rangers nostalgia into a fresh style. It draws on characters and plotlines from across the franchise, weaving them together in an original new narrative.

- Co-development between East Side Games and Mighty Kingdom
- Supported the project from concept through technical launch
- Collaborated closely with Hasbro and internal dev teams to introduce new features and systems, including the battle system
- Initially placed on the project as Narrative Lead, then shifted to Design Lead and Product Lead roles shortly after kick-off



**MIGHTY
KINGDOM**

East Side
GAMES

Design Lead on Early Minigame Prototypes for **Fitbit Ace**

- Led design on early minigame prototypes for Fitbit Ace, shaping gameplay concepts and user experience for a child-focused wearable
- Tackled the challenge of delivering engaging narrative on a small-format device
- Drove ideation and prototyping with cross-functional teams, refining core loops
- Worked closely with internal dev team and Google to align on pillars, brand identity, and innovative ideas that maximised sensor functionality

[Learn more](#)

**MIGHTY
KINGDOM**

Google

Other game projects

Here are other games I've worked on during my career which have been announced but not released.

- **Narrative Lead** - building up narrative framework and content backlog with ZAG and internal dev team for *Miraculous Ladybug* branded idle / decoration game, which was put on hold (*Mar 2023 - Jul 2023*)

Other shipped games I have contributed to:

- Narrative Design: writing, cutscene creation, introducing new narrative systems - [Wild Life](#)
- Narrative Review and Editing - [Star Trek Lower Decks: The Badgey Directive](#)
- Early narrative system design contributions for CRPG-inspired game [Gnome Heister](#) (Fitbit Ace)
- Dialogue contributions and editing for Jelly Jam (Fitbit Ace)
- Worldbuilding contributions for Spirit Garden (Fitbit Ace)
- Playtesting - [Conan Chop Chop](#)
- Various pitch work, from working as part of a dedicated pitch team on concept and deck formation through to pitching to senior teams at Apple Arcade and Google

— — —

Other Creative Pursuits

MindHalfFul - Instagram

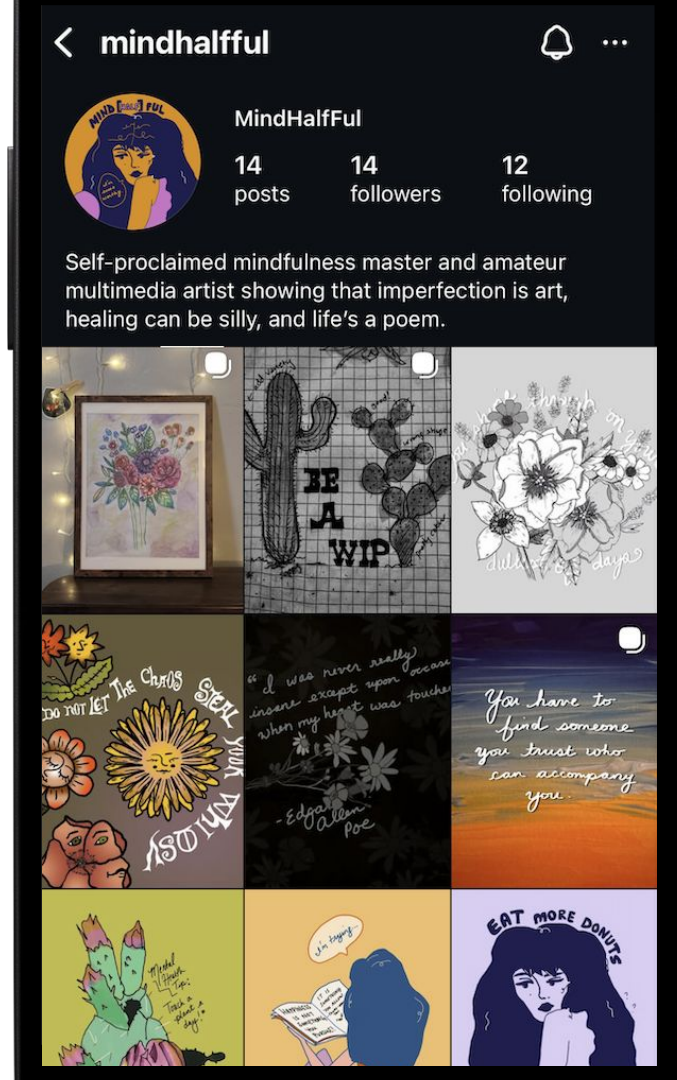
Mindfulness and Healing through Art

Aside from writing games, stories and poems, I love to express myself in a full array of creative outlets, including drawing, painting, digital illustration and other multimedia projects.

I keep an Instagram page called **MindHalfFul** (to communicate the perpetual struggle) which merges my illustrations with quotes and motivational words supporting the continual pursuit for living mindfully.



Link



Game Dev TikTok

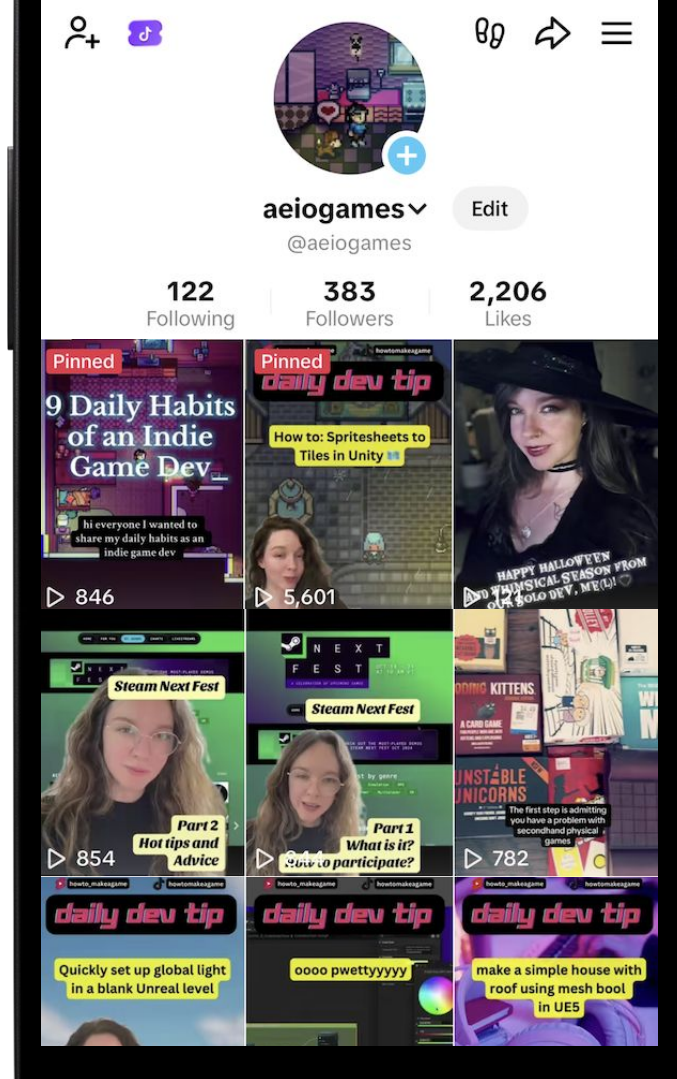
Game development tips and updates on my solo project

To engage with my core audience for *Scaredy Cat*, I maintain a **TikTok page (aeiogames)** where I share dev updates and recordings from my indie games in short-form video content.

I also use the platform to connect with the broader game dev community by sharing dev tips and mini-tutorials covering many aspects of game development.



Link



Industry

**GAMES
FOR
CHANGE**

LEARN

Games for Change Student Challenge 2025 Juror

Volunteered as a **Juror** for the **2025 Games for Change Student Challenge**. G4C Student Challenge stands out as a program that amplifies student voices to address critical societal topics like education, health and wellbeing, inequality, access to basic human needs & more.

- Played dozens of student-developed games and assessed against the pillars of the competition
- [Learn more](#) about the Student Challenge

Industry

NZGDC 2022 Talk: Narrative Pipelines

This talk was aimed at narrative designers, producers and other developers interested in the operational side of planning and producing narrative in games projects.

This was a passion of mine after working on many live-ops projects that needed solid and reliable pipelines.

- Delivered in Wellington NZ in Aug 2022
- Joint talk with colleague Ella Lowgren
- Large turnout and high level of audience engagement during and after event



Industry



Learn more about
the program

Screen Queensland Games Assessor

Participated in 2022 and 2023 game grant and digital game incentive rounds with a panel of other video game experts.

- Reviewed applications from local developers and studios
- Assessed budget, pitch decks, design documentation and more
- Collaborated with other assessors to fairly review and come to decisions



Industry

Media Interview: Weaving Tales

This interview with Sifter was focused around what makes good interactive stories and the narrative design tools that can be used to execute.

- Done in conjunction with Mark Riley, Design Director at Mighty Kingdom
- Online interview, also [published on Sifter website in May 2022](#)



SIFTER

— — —

Personal Development

Narrative Tools



Third Party Tools

In my own time, I have learnt several third-party tools for branching narrative and quest design as below.

- Dialogue System for Unity (intermediate/advanced)
- Quest Machine (intermediate)
- Ink (intermediate)
- YarnSpinner (intermediate)
- Articy (some knowledge but would like to learn more)
- Twine (some knowledge)
- Utilizing Blueprints and visual scripting in Unity to create narrative systems



Eieio Farm



Farming Sim

Eieio Farm is an ad-free, mobile farming simulation that has a profession leveling system, breeding, pets and quests. Contains in-app purchases for unlocks and currencies, although these are not necessary to enjoy the game.

- Launched August 2019 for Android devices
- Solo project made in Unity using 2D Tilemaps
- Successful implementation of in-app purchases
- Complex breeding and profession systems
- 1,000+ Installs on Play Store



Eieio Farm Narrative

Tutorial NPC

Players can interact with the Flower Lady to receive help.

She explains the basics, gives the player an introductory gift and is always there to help out.



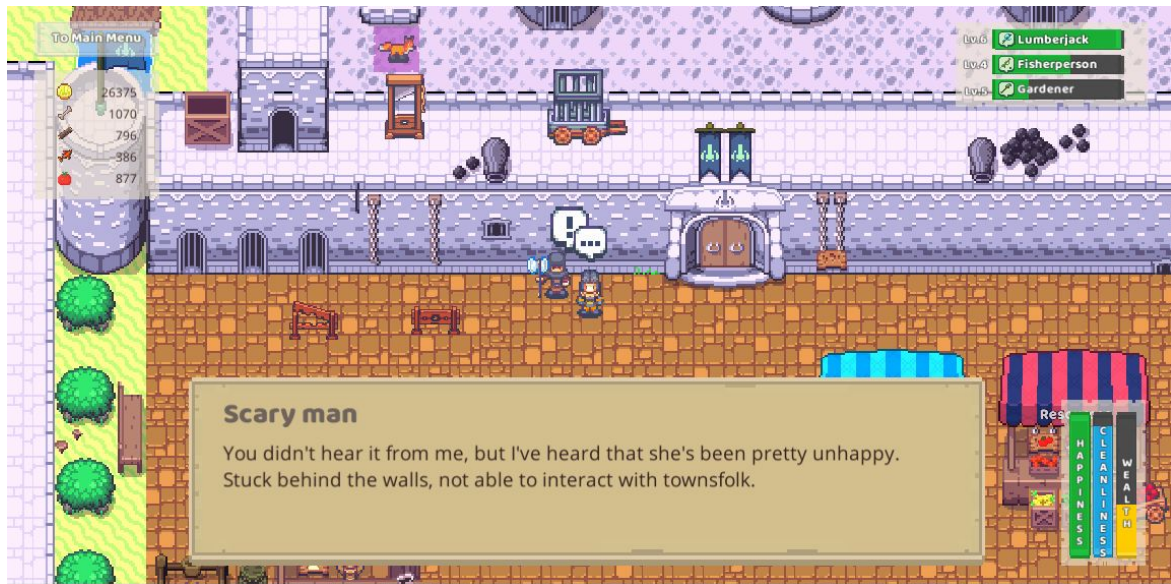
Eieio Farm Narrative

Quest: Beyond the Wall

In this quest, the player can befriend the princess of the realm who happens to be hiring a BFF.

The quest rewards include unlocking a new zone and pet.

Dialogue Sample



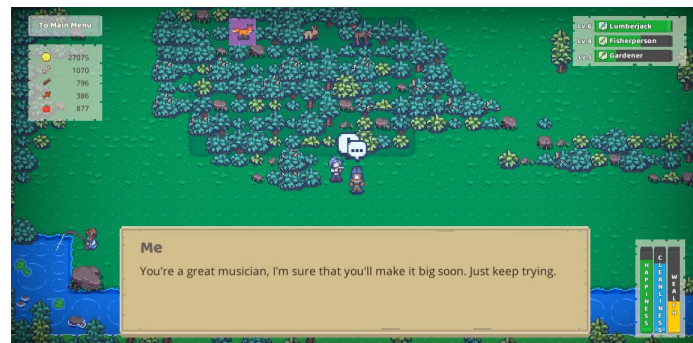
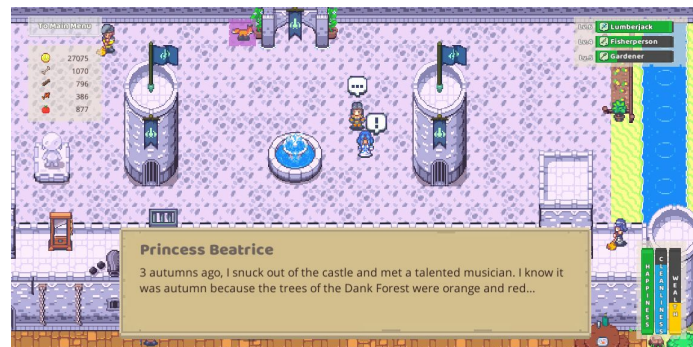
Eieio Farm Narrative

— — —

Quest: The Princess and the Pauper

This short, *semi*-romantic quest can be started once the player completes Beyond the Wall.

Dialogue Sample

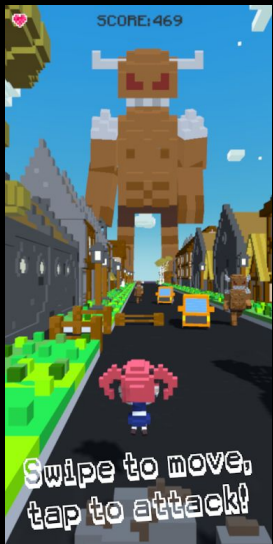


The Witching Hour

Mobile Endless Runner

The Witching Hour is a free mobile endless runner about a cute little witch named Nani. It was developed in a two-person team to learn how to integrate ads and in-app purchases.

- Released for Android in April 2019
- Created procedural level system for spawning objects and enemies
- Contained multiple zones with different environments and enemies
- Built in Unity



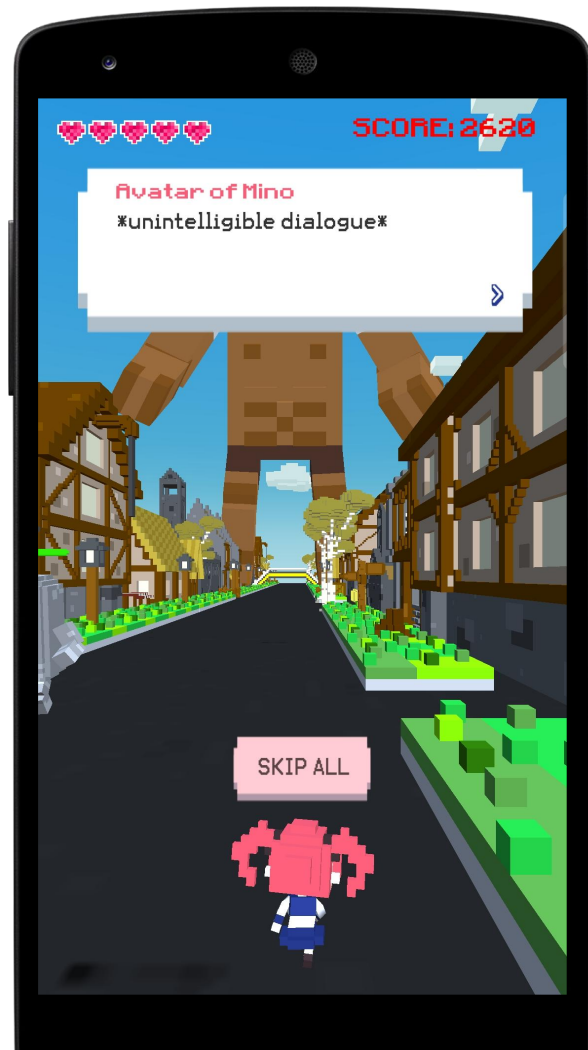
The Witching Hour

Narrative

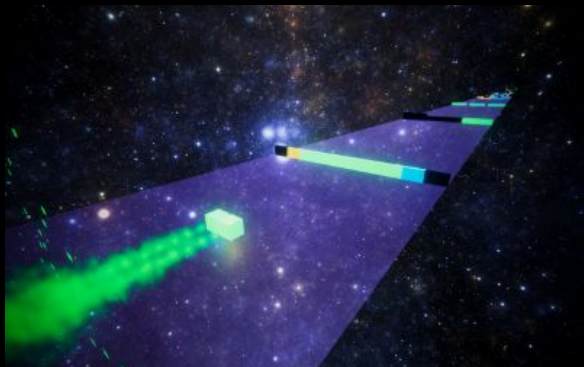
Purpose

Dialogue is slowly fed to players to unveil a story about Nani (the player character witch) and the megademons she is fighting against.

Bits of the story are uncovered as the player progresses through environments with their own themes and obstacles.



Collide & Conquer



Cooperative/Competitive Puzzle

- Designed as a minimalist two-player experience, blending competition and cooperation to overcome obstacles
- Genre: Racing + Puzzle + Platforming
- Role: Led design and development of gameplay mechanics, cooperative systems, and level flow
- Released on Itch.io, Dec 2018
- Built in Unity



— — —

**Other random certifications or
achievements**

2023 wins 🎆

- Successfully planned and executed an international move from Australia to the USA. With a dog! 🐕
- **Delivered a games pitch** to the Apple Arcade team, which had a positive reception and repeat session
- Served as the lead for an **award-winning narrative team** 🏆
- Started a deeper dive into Reinforcement Learning with the Hugging Face **Deep RL Course**
- Participated as assessor for a state-based games funding assessment panel
- Upskilled using **lights and shadow in 2D** environment with Unity's URP
- Diving more into level design in Unreal using nanite and Blueprints

2022 wins

- Completed **Masters Degree of Data Science**
- Received a promotion to **Narrative Discipline Lead** at Mighty Kingdom
- Served as game lead on two unannounced projects, utilising product, leadership and broader design skills
- Participated as assessor for a state-based games funding assessment panel
- Covered director duties for Design Director at Mighty Kingdom for 9 weeks of parental leave
- Completed **Dare to Lead** training
- Made two narrative projects in **Ink** featuring branching quests and dialogues, one for a personal project, another for a work project
- Learned **YarnSpinner** and implemented in my latest personal project for branching dialogue

Contact

— — —

Melissa Koven

kovenmelissa@gmail.com

www.melissakoven.com

 [meliska_](https://twitter.com/meliska_)

 [@aeiogames](https://soundcloud.com/aeiogames)

 [/kovenmelissa](https://www.linkedin.com/company/kovenmelissa)

