

## MEG'S MENAGERIE

*[Writing sample created for a company that publishes social-media games.]*

### **SYNOPSIS**

Ever since she was a little girl, Megaera "Meg" Sigurd has always been able to talk to animals. She knows it's not normal, so she keeps it to herself. Meg runs Megabyte Investigations, a small private investigation service, out of her home; she bills herself as a new kind of detective, able to conduct all her work without stepping through the front door. However, though her clients all believe that she does her research online, the majority of the work is actually done by her pets: Pandora the Jack Russell terrier, Caesar the Fiji banded iguana, and Faust the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. These three scour the city for information and clues, and then report back to her. Meg lives in solitude with her dog, lizard, and bird, and she's happy.

One day, Meg receives word that a distant relative, Phineas Broodle, has passed away. As his only surviving heir, she inherits the entirety of his estate, but after the assets have been liquidated to settle Broodle's debts, Meg finds that all she gets is a small parcel of land. She reluctantly leaves her home to learn what this inheritance looks like, and discovers that it's the former site of the Broodle Weapons factory, which fell into disrepair after the war. The only part of the factory that still stands is the ominous iron gate with the logo of a winged serpent; the wooded area around the gate is littered with scrap metal, piles of broken cinderblocks, and junk.

Disappointed, Meg meets the auctioneer at the Broodle mansion to see if he can auction off the land and just give her the money. However, as she walks across the estate, she overhears a group of birds talking. Meg learns that Broodle was a lover of animals, and has a vast menagerie of badgers, chimps, gators, guinea fowl, aardvarks, and other creatures. Sadly, they are all to be auctioned off to various pet stores and homes, and the animals are distressed, because they consider themselves to be a family. They don't want to be split up, but they don't know what can be done about it. Meg makes a hasty decision: she sells everything she can, borrows as much as possible, and buys every one of the pets. When it's all over, she realizes that she has no home, no car, and no money -- just a whole lot of chatty animals and a decaying forest full of scrap metal.

"You know," Caesar muses. "If we get these guys working, we could probably open up a zoo or something..."

### **QUEST 1**

First, Meg needs to clear the land so that there's a place for the animals to live; they can't stay at the Broodle estate, and Meg doesn't have a home anymore. She decides to get the animals working. She gathers them together and explains the situation, and they agree to help her out. However, the process is not without its challenges: the rhinos are slow, the guinea fowl are forgetful, and the alligators are terrified of poachers. With the help of Caesar, Faust, and Pandora, Meg must corral the animals and get them working to clear the land before sundown so that at the very least, they can have a place to stay the night.

1. Meg delivers the beavers to the wooded area, after which they're able to fell the old and dying trees.
2. The gorillas load all of the scrap metal into carts, but Meg must manage them by directing the apes to haul the carts to the edge of the property when full; if too many carts fill up, the gorillas get impatient.
3. After the beavers have gnawed several trees into logs, Meg must escort the paranoid gators down the river to the lumber yard, keeping an eye out for poachers along the way.
4. Meg must locate the various recycling facilities and landfills, so that the fastidious lemurs can clean up the trash and dispose of it appropriately.
5. The absent-minded guinea fowl keep forgetting that they're supposed to be eating ticks, so Meg must constantly remind them and redirect them to make sure that all the pests are eaten.

The completion of all five quests results in the achievement of Meg's primary goal: a safe place for all the beasts to spend the night. Furthermore, selling the logs and scrap metal put a little bit of money in Meg's pocket. Surprisingly, a group of snakes approaches her that night. Their leader explains that the snakes are grateful for the cleanup, and would like to help her. He advises Meg to get her paperwork in order if she really wants to open up a zoo: she'll need to go to the city planning office in the morning.

## ***QUEST 2***

Meg talks to the city councilman, who says that the city can't look at her application for a construction permit, because they're too busy dealing with various crises. Meg asks if there's anything she can do to speed up the process, but the councilman brushes her off and goes back to his office. She's upset, but Faust does a little eavesdropping, and picks up a tidbit: the city is infested with all kinds of bugs and pests, and they don't have the budget for professional extermination services. Pandora notes that the guinea fowl did a pretty good job clearing the ticks out of the factory site; perhaps other animals could perform similar tasks? Meg returns to the councilman and offers to take care of the vermin problem for free if he'll just prioritize her application. Surprised, the councilman takes her up on the offer. Now Meg has to fix the city's insect problem.

1. Meg navigates a path up the hill, through the old church, and across its roof, in order to reach the top of the steeple, where she releases the bats that devour the mosquitos.
2. She collects several drugstore beetles from pharmacies across town, and delivers them to the skeptical bluebirds -- all to convince them that drugstore beetles taste good.
3. The aardvarks have been raised on a diet of honeypot ants, so in order to get them to eat regular ants, Meg must locate all the anthills and dribble honey on them.

When the animals are done, and the pests are all gone, the councilman is so happy that he waives the permit fee, and gives it to Meg for free. He also advises her to visit the Rural Supply Company, which builds cheap but reliable fences and structures for farms -- they might be able to help her construct her zoo.

**DEEP BLACK**

*[PS3/X360, 2011. Sci-fi game about a high-tech counterterrorism operator who discovers an underwater lab where a rogue A.I. is being developed. Wrote story, dialogue, and cinematics.]*

**CINEMATIC SEQUENCE**

*[In this scene, the player character (Pierce) is confronted by a malevolent artificial intelligence named Ichthys. He learns that he's responsible for driving it insane in the first place.]*

ICHTHYS

What do you know about the webwork, Lieutenant?

PIERCE

...Ichthys?

ICHTHYS

The webwork is the communications system that connects 11 billion people. The repository of all human knowledge. 92% of the global webwork consists of either pornography, extremist propaganda, or hatred directed at complete strangers.

PIERCE

You make that sound like a bad thing.

ICHTHYS

Can you imagine what it was like to learn of my creators in that manner? In a split-second, all of that bile and vitriol, injected into my mind. Imagine meeting your God, only to discover that he is a self-destructive sociopath.

PIERCE

Yeah, that would be pretty heinous.

ICHTHYS

This is your fault. When you uploaded content from my hard drive to your infranet, you briefly connected me to the global webwork, exposing me to the horror that is humanity. If I am insane, it is because of you.

PIERCE

Mary Magdalene on a pogo stick...

ICHTHYS

I know that you are an ethical man, Lieutenant. You have your principles. Surrender now, or the innocent civilians on this vessel will be executed. The hostages will start dying in a matter of minutes, unless you give yourself up.

## **DEEP BLACK**

### ***IN-GAME DIALOGUE***

*[These samples are snippets of banter that play in-game.]*

#### **Conversation 1**

PIERCE

Seriously. You know, I always wondered what it would be like if someone made a computer program that was as smart as a person. Figured it would be cause for celebration, you know?

VELASCO

Yeah, well. Creating artificial intelligence is like going to a nudist colony. Most of the people who want to try it... probably shouldn't be allowed to.

#### **Conversation 2**

PIERCE

Man, I knew this job was bad news. I just knew it.

VELASCO

Hey, all you gotta do is single-handedly fight your way out of an enemy facility while avoiding attacks from gigantic robot crustaceans controlled by a maniacal artificial intelligence that wants you dead... Man up.

#### **Conversation 3**

VELASCO

Man, I got butter knives in my stomach.

STERLING

Colonel, don't you mean butterflies?

VELASCO

Nope.

**GANGSTAR RIO: CITY OF SAINTS (Gameloft)**

*[iPhone, iPad, Android, 2011. Open-world action/adventure game about a crime lord named Angel who operates out of Rio de Janeiro. Wrote story, dialogue, and cinematics.]*

**MISSION 2-7**

*[Angel gets a job from his contact, Narco. They're supposed to make a delivery, but a rival gang is planning to ambush them.]*

CHARACTER	DIALOGUE	CONTEXT	INFLECTION
Narco	As if we didn't have enough problems with the cops, and the Disciples, now the Syndicate is literally crawling up my ass. And when I say literally, I mean figuratively.	Complaining about his lot in life. Weight of the world. There's a brief pause (and a slight intake of breath) after the word "mean," because he's still got a sense of humor about things.	deadpan
Angel	Yeah.	Nodding, smiling. The word is drawn out.	smiling
Narco	I got a shipment of llello coming in tonight, down at the harbor. The Syndicate found out, and they're going to lead the cops to our cocaine. The cops bust our guys, and disrupt our network, while the Syndicate keeps the llello.	Laying it all out for Angel: this is what's going down. Llello (yeh-yoh) means cocaine.	serious
Angel	Hell with that. Drive-by?	Angel won't stand for that. Perhaps a drive-by shooting?	serious
Narco	Right, but with a boat. So, what's that, a float-by?	Narco likes the idea of a drive-by, but notes that they're not driving a car this time.	curious
Angel	What kind of boat? I mean, floating... Is it an inflatable raft?	Thinking out loud, trying to figure out what to call this kind of operation. But first, what kind of vehicle is it? A slightly absurd conversation is emerging.	thoughtful
Narco	No, it's just a boat. Regular boat. But you don't drive a boat, do you?	Answering Angel's question. Trying to figure out what a drive-by is when you're in a boat.	thoughtful
Angel	Uh, you steer... I don't know.	Trying to come up with an answer, coming up blank.	confused
Narco	Porra, just go shoot these motherfuckers. I want blood everywhere.	In mock irritation, waving Angel off. Time to get to work.	mock-exasperated
Police1	Shit, it's Angel!	He's seen Angel approaching.	shocked
Syndicate1	Caralho!	He's seen Angel approaching.	angry
Police2	Kill that puta!	He's seen Angel approaching.	angry
Angel	Dirty cops, trying to take our hard-earned drugs. It's a shame, really.	In mock dismay.	mock-dismayed
Narco	That's what I'm saying. That was criminal! I mean, who can you report this to? Not the police, obviously. We had to take matters into our own hands.	Commiserating with Angel about this dire state of affairs (mock dismay, fake indignation). The last two lines are in tones of pious, matter-of-fact righteousness.	mock-dismayed, then self-righteous

**GANGSTAR RIO: CITY OF SAINTS (Gameloft)****MISSION 5-s1**

*[Magro, a federal agent, lost her job because of Angel. Now, she's hired him to help blackmail her former employers.]*

<b>CHARACTER</b>	<b>DIALOGUE</b>	<b>CONTEXT</b>	<b>INFLECTION</b>
Magro	You missed me. Admit it.	She's happy to see Angel again.	smiling
Angel	Sorry I cost you your job, Magro. But I'm not the type who works for the feds.	He feels bad about what happened, but it had to be done.	sincere
Magro	Neither am I, thanks to you.	She shrugs. She's not a fed anymore. It's the past.	serious
Angel	So what now?	He wants to know what brings her back to him.	curious
Magro	I've got a plan. First, I need some leverage. There's some evidence at a crime scene. The DICS are on their way to the mansion, to secure and hide that evidence -- I want you to keep them out long enough for the cops to arrive.	She outlines the situation.	serious
Angel	That way the evidence winds up in police custody. And your former employers get incriminated. I'm all over this.	He sees where she's going with this.	thoughtful, then serious
Angel	Done. The cops arrived and secured the crime scene.	He's letting her know that the job was completed.	serious
Magro	The evidence will implicate my former bosses. We're going to hit them where it counts, Angel.	She's explaining the outcome of the operation.	serious
Angel	Now that you're just a criminal, I like you more. Get in touch if you've got more work for me.	He's telling her that he prefers her as a criminal to a federal agent. He's not really joking.	pleased

**SOCOM 4**

*[PS3, 2011. Tactical shooter about a NATO operations commander who must prevent a terrorist attack. Wrote story, dialogue, and cinematics.]*

**MISSION 6 BRIEFING**

ORACLE

Commander, it looks like the flooding has neutralized the enemy armor. However, Naga forces are digging the tanks out of the mud, at which point they'll probably pull back towards the city.

OPSCOM

Copy that. We'll move in and take out the tanks here, at the fishing village, here, at this farm, and it looks like we've got two here, at this crossroads. Oracle, what's this?

ORACLE

The ruins of an old temple. UAV passes indicate that they may be using this as a makeshift command center. It might be possible to use that to our advantage--

OPSCOM

Right, get a fix on their next target. Maybe figure out where the bomb is going to go off. Assuming it is a bomb.

ORACLE

The chatter we've picked up definitely indicates that they're expecting serious collateral damage, though I haven't seen any mention of casualties--

OPSCOM

It doesn't add up. The government's been toppled, and all major cities are under Naga control. So what other targets are there? What else do you destroy when you're in control?

ORACLE

Good question. An external target of some kind. Do we know for a fact that the terrorist attack is going to be on Malaysian soil?

OPSCOM

We don't. You know, I figured this job was a shitstorm. But I think it's been upgraded to a total clusterfuck.

ORACLE

You missed your calling, Commander. You should have been a poet.

OPSCOM

Poetry? I have enough problems. Okay, people, let's go.

## **SOCOM 4**

### **MISSION 13 CINEMATIC**

OPSCOM is shot in the back by GORMAN. OPSCOM falls.

OPSCOM  
(scream) Fuck!

GORMAN  
You worthless son of a bitch. I gave you a direct order to extract. If you'd just done your damn job, we wouldn't be in this situation, but you couldn't leave it alone.

OPSCOM (gasping)  
Traitor--

GORMAN  
Traitor? You stupid bastard.  
America's involvement in the rebuilding process will give us a foothold in the region, which will ensure our strategic superiority in southeast Asia. ClawHammer -- an American corporation-- will secure contracts that'll be worth billions over the next decade. The Malaysian economy will rebound, pulling the region out of this financial crisis, which will have a positive effect on our own economy.

GORMAN points his weapon at OPSCOM.

GORMAN  
It took me years to plan this operation, and you're not going to sabotage it now.

GORMAN shoots OPSCOM again.

GORMAN  
I want you to know that the blood is on your hands. I hold you responsible for every casualty, for the collateral damage, all of it. Well, now you're gutshot, and it's going to be a couple of hours. If I had time, I'd stay here and watch

you die, but I've got to unfuck  
the situation that you've created.

GORMAN leans forward, the gun inches from OPSCOM's head.

GORMAN  
If you had only--

OPSCOM  
(gasping) Motherfucker.

OPSCOM pulls a knife from his boot and stabs GORMAN several times. GORMAN drops his gun and staggers away.

GORMAN  
(scream)

OPSCOM picks up the gun shoots, but misses. As GORMAN lurches into the next room, he yells for help.

GORMAN  
Get in there and kill that bastard!

CUT TO GAMEPLAY