

In the town of Willow's Nest, the town farmer Tom Foxhorn, a mixed man (black and native) is murdered. His body is found with a bullet in his head, pinned to the wall by a blade used by colonizers with his arms stretched out like Christ on the cross in the abandoned house of Morgan Seed—a private detective who used to live in town many years ago with the victim's wife, Eleanor Foxhorn—one morning by the police after a neighbor reports a foul smell. In the beginning of the game, you play as Eleanor, waking up alone to check on the cattle in the barn. It's here you're tutorialized on the game's main conversation mechanic by deciding what to say to your cattle as you feed and clean them. Sheriff Thornberry and Deputy DeVille, the sole officers of Willow's Nest Police Department, visit you in the barn with their hats off after a couple minutes. The screen cuts to black, and Eleanor lets out a gut-wrenching scream at the news.

Morgan Seed is retired and living out his days on solely his savings. He is summoned back to Willow's Nest for the next day by the police for questioning, and decides to bring along receipts from his night out drinking as proof of his whereabouts on the night of the murder.

He stands on his balcony holding a photo of himself and Eleanor from back when he lived in Willow's Nest. This becomes a scene of him monologuing the facts of the case while a montage of Morgan smoking on the balcony of his apartment, him throwing away a piece of paper revealing a terminal cancer diagnosis, driving to Willow's Nest, and parking plays.

Morgan arrives at Willow's Nest at night and visits the tree where they first met. Eleanor is there waiting for him. She tells him that she figured he'd show up as early as possible; after all, he's supposed to be scheduled to appear at the police station tomorrow morning. After a brief, tender, yet emotionally distant greeting scene (where Morgan also, to Eleanor's surprise, says some things in a way she is surprised to hear him say) she takes Morgan to the hotel he booked, where the player is tutorialized on how to interact with a scene to make observations which get saved into their logbook. Before sending him inside, Eleanor asks Morgan what his rate is, to which he replies he'll be doing it for free. After looking at everything in the room, Morgan decides that it's time to brush his teeth and go to bed. He stares into the dirty bathroom mirror, and strange music plays while everything around him fades to black.

Hard cut to Eleanor standing outside of Morgan's hotel room, knocking on his door, trying to wake him up as he's overslept past their agreed-upon time. She sighs. Cut to black. Here we have an inspirational, get-hype anime OP song and animation. Once it's over, and the screen is black, you hear a phone ringing twice. Fade in to Morgan speaking with Sheriff Thornberry and Deputy DeVille about where he was the morning of the murder in a player-driven conversation. The Deputy takes a strand of Morgan's long hair and draws blood from him to get a DNA sample.

Morgan is incredibly terse with them in a way which is different from his approach to speaking to himself or with Eleanor, communicating his disdain for the police.

The scene concludes, and Deputy DeVille walks Morgan out of the building where Eleanor is waiting for him as they have no proof that Morgan committed the crime. As he does, Morgan attempts to enter a door, but DeVille snaps at him not to go in there. Once the two of them have exited the building, DeVille hints toward knowing about Morgan's past and warns him not to fly too close to the sun, since word travels and that when you're in Willow's Nest, nothing is secret. Morgan and Eleanor sit at a bench, and Morgan tells her that she won't get far in this investigation with the police. Eleanor hires the indigenous NB person who lives just on the outskirts of town to care for her livestock for a few days while Morgan and Eleanor focus on the investigation at hand.

This is the first day of five. Eleanor doesn't really know where to start, but Morgan suggests the two start by trying to get into the police station, since he's suspicious of the police after being scolded for attempting to open that door. However, you can actually do whatever you want, since this is the first point at which the player is set free to roam around the town of Willow's Nest. You can interview people and learn crucial clues about things that happened to Tom during his final days alive. Eleanor notices and is confused by Morgan's different demeanor in public when he's out and about on the job; he's a lot snarkier and off-the-wall in his attitude then he was years back when they lived together.

Between the two days, you're tasked with figuring out six main story quests which upon completion will paint a picture of Tom's final days. To complete the triangle of main characters, there are points during these sequences where Morgan will essentially be flashed back to 'watch' a visual representation of a scene as it is played out. Morgan verbally describes what he's seeing while Eleanor listens in and asks questions about what he sees (you essentially play as Eleanor during these sequences because it's you asking the questions). Once you complete three of the six events, the end of that day will happen, and the remaining three will be left for the following day. At the end of the first day, the bartender asks Morgan and Eleanor to help make decisions on how to set up her party, a questions-based minigame. As you leave to go home, it transitions directly into a bad dream in first-person. Here, you have just pulled up to a parking lot in front of a forest and are already outside of the car, the driverside door open. The area is similarly ethereal and surreal as the previous dream world was. A distorted voice in your head tells you to pop the trunk. As you move toward the door, we hard cut to walking in the forest. You carry a shovel, and you are dragging a heavy bag behind you, so you move very slowly. Hard cut to a burial site deep in a forest growing on a floating crag. The hole is already dug and the bodybag already placed inside. As you walk back the direction you came, you can hear a noise. If you turn around in response to it, you'll see the bag floating upward and out of the hole.

We cut to Morgan waking up very early in the morning. It's still dark out. He doesn't say anything. The music in this section is ambient and atmospheric. It gives off a strange feeling. You can examine things around your room, but unlike during the day, Morgan doesn't say anything. You leave your room and can walk outside in the night. Every time you try to say anything, Morgan doesn't say anything. It's kind of like he's sleep-walking.

Once enough time passes, we hard-cut to a character in first-person blinking awake at a computer screen. Office sounds and people talking in the background. The focus of the screen here is an old-school computer system, somewhat DOS-style. The idea is you're seeing the screen in first-person, from the perspective of someone working on it. You hear a phone ring. A mysterious man calls you on an old-style telephone. They chastise you for missing the last phone call. You lie and say you were at an important meeting and thus weren't at your desk. The person tells you to upload some pressing documents using their ancient P2P service and then see them in their office. You can explore around the computer UI and look at a bunch of redacted documents, play a couple mini games, and even read a nearly finished novel manuscript she's been working on (literally my book). The documents you're able to find read like normal police cases, but the subjects of them seem a little off with what you can read about them that isn't redacted. When you're ready to leave, you can power down your computer.

Hard cut to Eleanor knocking on Morgan's hotel door; he's overslept again. We play back the same intro animation again; this will repeat for each and every day, and will start to contrast highly in tone with what's actually going on in the show.

Morgan initially assumes that Tom is the second in what could be turning into a serial murder case, the first being Meghna Moltisanti. In doing the first five of six main quests, you'll discover some interesting things which lead you to an important discovery: a hidden underground bunker out in the forest, utilized by a mysterious masked person who prowls through the night and may have stalked the femme fatale Meghna Moltisanti, who fled in fear with her husband Paulie after complaining to him about a stalker. This person has left behind strange and mysterious subliminal messages for whoever is able to find the bunker. Solve this part of the mystery by piecing together the proper acronym, attempt to call each and every one of the businesses/people whose name acronymizes (?) to that acronym using a phone book, and then say the correct secret message. You'll be redirected to a mysterious distorted voice and told to meet up at the place where it all began at 8 o'clock sharp, and to not be late. Confused, Eleanor and Morgan must try to figure out what this means. It seems like you're going to have to be the one to solve it; Morgan suggests they sort of walk around and try to think about where in Willow's Nest that could be. Eventually, Eleanor stops you and suggests that they post up the people of Willow's Nest in different parts of the city in pairs. Morgan thinks it's a good idea, and the two agree that

the police and Mayor Gibbons should be left out of it. Some time passes, and the meeting begins in town square. Morgan gives each character a miniature tracking device to hide in their shoe which they can press with their toe to send out a beacon to the others if the mysterious person approaches them. He tells them to reconvene in town square at nine o'clock. Morgan and Eleanor post up on the pier at the lake which runs through the southeasternmost part of town, near the entrance to town.

Time passes, and it's almost eight o'clock. Morgan and Eleanor both are equipped with firearms to use as self-defense. Ten minutes pass after eight o'clock. Morgan and Eleanor note that nobody has put out a beacon on the tracking device and write this situation off as a hoax. Just as they start to leave, you hear water being parted by something. A mysterious hooded person pulls up to the pier in a rowboat. They tell you that electronic devices won't work in her vicinity, and to get in. You hear a clicking noise, which is Morgan attempting to activate his device, but nothing happens. Morgan looks at Eleanor in confusion. Eleanor gets in, as the person doesn't seem overly threatening. Morgan joins her. Before they leave, the woman asks to temporarily have their phones and that it would be best if they complied. The boat takes off.

The boat travels along the stream for a couple minutes toward a lake and a great clearing. They travel in silence. After some time and the water has widened, the hooded driver kills the engine and reaches in their pocket for something. At this, Morgan draws for his gun, but relinquishes it when he sees that this person has merely pulled out a folded-up piece of paper. He asks the person what's on it. The person takes off their hood but their face is not revealed, as underneath the hood is a strange mask which you only get a quick glimpse of up-close. Eleanor recognizes her voice as being that of Meghna Moltisanti, but the mysterious woman shrugs off the remark. Unlike other dialogue exchanges in this game, this scene does not show a close-up portrait of the opposing character as they speak.

The woman starts to read from the paper in a very stilted way. She gives you a codename to refer to her by: Silent Fortissimo. She reveals that it's her job to try and suppress the return of the ancient primordial evil of all worlds, which if allowed to rise again could shift the very fabric of reality. She says that she's been all over the world looking for the burgeoning source of its return, and that she has reason to believe its source lies somewhere in Willow's Nest. She tells Morgan that she needs Morgan to work with her on the inside, and to do it without telling anyone else that they're working for her. In exchange, she will reveal to them Tom's killer. Morgan questions her; surely it could very well be her who killed Tom, and if not, how would this person they'd never met possibly know who killed him. SF's retort is that a murder leaves behind too much of a footprint, and that such an act would bring far too much attention to her. To the latter question, she admits that he will simply have to trust her. Eleanor believes that SF didn't kill Tom, but doesn't quite believe that she would know who did. To quell their wariness, SF says two words, a name from Morgan's past, and one from Eleanor's. The two of them seem

unnerved and shocked that this person would possess esoteric knowledge of crucial peoples from their pasts. The two acquiesce that they will do as she asks and we get another really quiet, slow ride back to the pier. They arrive back at the pier, and SF tells Morgan a phone number to write down to contact her at, and to only call that number from his own phone, or else she'll reveal both of their secrets. He says to call her tomorrow morning at eight o'clock sharp for their first assignment. He writes it on his arm and pulls down his sleeves so the others won't notice.

SF leaves eastward on the boat and Morgan and Eleanor discuss what they should do about telling other people who they met. They agree not to tell the others of Willow's Nest about the secret meeting with SF and that they'll discuss the rest later in private. It's already nine, so the two hurry back to town square. Upon getting there, almost everybody sent out to meet up with the strange has returned. A couple more arrive as Morgan and Eleanor do. Everybody says that their search came up empty, and the meeting is adjourned. Eleanor seems suspicious that the other people are telling the truth. The bartender is there and reminds them that the big party is tonight.

Morgan and Eleanor attempt to try and enjoy the party. The two slow dance while the mayor, fronting a band of other townsfolk, sings a love song about wishing to retrieve something lost long ago. The screen slowly fades to black as the song reaches its denouement.

The song completely fades out, and for a few seconds there's complete silence. Whispers in your head start speaking what seems to be gibberish. They get progressively louder, and a synthesizer line accompanies them. The noise level reaches a critical peak, and drops out in time with the words, "Do it," appearing on screen. Cut to you shooting down the door to someone's house with a shotgun. The textures on the walls are writhing around. The music is shrill and distorted but pulsates with a tangible musicality. The room in front of you is devoid of life. It appears like any other single-room household. The front door slams shut the second you try to leave. If you try to open it, a distorted voice screams at you. You have no choice but to walk around the house and look for something to do. If you don't do anything, quickly the game will cut to you looking down a staircase with a door at its foot. It cuts to you busting down that door. You aim your shotgun at the person inside, whose face is distorted-looking and strange. We cut to you pointing your gun at the character's back and walking them up the staircase.

As you walk up the staircase, we hear a familiar phone ringing sound. We hard cut to you playing from the perspective of the woman working in the office at her desk once more. It should seem abundantly obvious to the audience that this character is Meghna Moltisanti AKA Silent Fortissimo. She gets a phone call from someone asking her to meet in person in his office. You leave your computer terminal and escort yourself to the caller's office. Along the way, you'll find several doors you can knock on, with silhouettes of people working in windows. None of them come to the door so you never actually see anybody working. A male co-worker asks you

to have a cigarette with him after the meeting. The conversation ends, and you enter the office of the person on the phone. The room is completely dark except for a chair lit by a light hanging above. A character somewhere in the darkness tells you to take a seat, and another character echoes the sentiment. The first character tells you that tonight ‘phase 1 will execute’, and the other character says that tomorrow morning ‘phase 2 will execute.’ They need your word that you’ll be ready and trusting in the vision when the time comes. You must answer this using the sentence-forming functionality, but everything except something along the lines of “Yes, I am,” is crossed out, meaning you can’t choose those.

Before she actually says the thing, we cut to Morgan waking up in his bed. You can tell it’s dark out, just like when he woke up in the middle of the night the previous night. A few seconds, and we hard cut to the woman you were playing as just before and her male co-worker from before smoking on the roof of the building. The man asks her what the higher-ups wanted to talk about, but she pretends that it was just some behavior stuff. The man asks her what she thought of their last assignment, and she says it went pretty well for what it was. He intimates that he’s pretty confused most of the time and is glad she’s there to walk him through scenarios. He starts to ask her out on a date, but is interrupted by the sounds of pistol gunshots coming somewhere from the street below. The screen cuts to black, and there’s another gunshot sound, but it’s the same one that you heard when you previously shot down the door to the stranger’s home, a shotgun blast.

Morgan wakes up again, this time during the day, to the sounds of banging on his door. Sheriff Thornberry and two other police officers enter the room with the help of the hotel manager and put Morgan under arrest for the murder of Deputy DeVille. Fade to black. The theme song plays, and then it’s day 3.

Cut to a scene of Eleanor and Thornberry arguing in front of DeVille’s house. Thornberry ardently refuses to let Eleanor in to see the body, which as of yet hasn’t been moved from DeVille’s house for even the coroner to examine. He seems incredibly erratic, a far cry from his stoic, rude demeanor we’ve known him for up until this point. Morgan’s prints were found on the body.

Day 3 is one long investigation sequence. As Eleanor, you’ll have to figure out a different culprit to pin the crime on and build a case so as to get Sheriff Thornberry to believe you. You’ll also need to convince him that he’s not well enough to solve this thing on his own due to his deep emotional connection to DeVille. This day is about establishing Eleanor’s backstory and decentering Morgan and his problems, especially needed at a point in which Morgan is starting to appear to be not so much the savior or hero of this story.

Cut to a visual vignette cutscene sequence of Eleanor standing moodily on the roof of the Foxhorn farmhouse, smoking for the first time in forever. We start to get a level of insight into

Eleanor's past through this cutscene through very brief flashbacks. You see some shots of her doing chores around the barn, a shot of her lying awake in bed with Tom asleep (the two of them apart from each other), a shot of her getting lunch with a friend at the local restaurant, a shot of Eleanor watching that friend leaving town without her, a shot of several missed calls from her parents, a shot of a job offer letter thrown into the trash, a shot of her struggling in front of a laptop trying to write a novel, a shot of some hospital release documentation indicating she'd had a miscarriage, etc. During this scene, Eleanor monologues about her experience with Morgan over the last couple of days. She starts to try and paint a picture about what exactly is going on here in this strange place called Willow's Nest. She laments the fact that in the last couple of days she's learned more about her neighbors than she had in all her time living here beforehand. Through these visuals, you're supposed to get a notion that Eleanor is lamenting her past, her anti-socialness, all the life opportunities that have passed her by because of her marriage to Tom and the business they'd built up together. These shots are all in black and white, to indicate they are scenes of the past. Then, we start to see visualizations of potential futures for Eleanor, stylized in such a way that makes them appear sort of pie in the sky or dreamy. We see shots of Eleanor writing and accepting some sort of award on a stage for her work, a shot of her driving on the open road along the countryside with the windows down, a shot of her training for a marathon, a shot of her winning a marathon. But Eleanor's words indicate that she truly does deeply miss and is silently tormented by the loss of her husband. Here, we see a portrait of Eleanor conflicted about her lamenting what could have been with the fact that she does love her deceased husband, though wonders if she doesn't miss him as much as a grieving widow should.

At the end of this scene, Eleanor decides that it's time to go out and talk to the people of Willow's Nest once more. Having expressed some distrust in many of the other townsfolk from the night before (when each of them were to post up and meet up with the person who was to visit Willow's Nest that night, who apparently they were the only ones to witness), Eleanor goes on a day-long investigation to discover who killed Deputy DeVille as well as why Sheriff Thornberry is so over-protective of this particular case.

Throughout her investigation, she'll have to meet with almost everybody in the town to ask them exactly what they were doing when they were supposed to be posted up. She'll catch characters in lies, some small (making love, stopping by the store to pick up a snack, things like that). Others can seem more egregious and lead you to suspect them of something. One leads to a side quest where you catch someone having committed a real crime, though not one that has anything to do with the one at hand.

If you talk to Thornberry's wife, she'll tell you that her and the sheriff are only married because it's convenient and that at this point there's not really much love left between the two. She

wonders if he has possibly fallen for another. This puts the idea of the sheriff having been in love with the deputy into Eleanor's head.

A couple of the townsfolk will tell you that at some point they had heard something about Sheriff Thornberry and Deputy DeVille working a case involving the two native folks that live in town, NB and the driver. In hearing about this, Eleanor realizes that neither of the two were part of the round-up from the night before, nor were the sheriff and the mayor. As such, Eleanor concludes that they were the only people in town unaccounted for (she forgets about the police officer who told her about Morgan's prints being found on and around the body), and Eleanor doesn't think it would make sense that the mayor would bring another murder into the town she's trying to govern, and doesn't suspect the sheriff either due to his clear emotional connection to the victim. This leads Eleanor to suspect only the two indigenous people, the NB outsider person for their ability to keep a low-profile and the mail driver for his access to quick transportation through having the only vehicle authorized in town grounds.

In questioning the outsider indigenous person working at your farm, you'll start to develop a deeper understanding of them. Unlike many of the people who live in Willow's Nest, they were born here on designated land and their father was killed at a young age under mysterious circumstance, and their mother disappeared around the same time. Ever since then, they've lived in the small house on the outskirts of Willow's Nest by themselves for over twenty years, getting by on their lonesome by growing their own food. Though they don't speak much with others, Eleanor had befriended them one day while she was out in the woods by her lonesome, walking the dog. Ever since then, they wouldn't speak all that much in person, on occasion she would bring them venison or some other meat, much to the chagrin of Tom. Eleanor is surprised and somewhat ashamed that she had never taken the time to reach out to them and learn more about them sooner, especially that it had to happen under such sordid circumstances. The point of this conversation is to insert the idea of the othering and forgetting of indigenous peoples on their own land into the player's head. NB always had desires to be able to be a part of Willow's Nest and more or less has a heart of gold, but always felt as if they would always be viewed a certain way. On the few times they did try to socialize with others at the bar or wherever, they always felt as if they never truly belonged. By the end of this conversation, Eleanor intuits that NB is not a bad person and probably had nothing to do with the murder though doesn't necessarily have any hard evidence for their whereabouts that night.

The mail driver needs to be sort of caught by triggering an event where you wait for them by a mailbox. To get this objective, you'll have to ask one of the townspeople about the driver, who will tell you that that person stops by their house at a certain time to deliver their mail and suggest that you should just wait there for them. In this conversation, you'll enter a deep, deep conversation tree with her where the two of you discuss the case, philosophy, the politics of the world, and the nature of policing in the modern age. She doesn't give her name, saying that she

doesn't have one. She says that she moved here from a place far away to try and escape a demon that's been haunting her. The bit about policing gets the woman to openly speculate about the nature of the modern police state. She prods at Eleanor for allowing herself to believe in the sanctity of policing as a concept. Eleanor is hesitant to agree with her, but the mannerisms of her face communicate a discomfort with them and the way they have appeared throughout the last few days. The driver notes that Sheriff Thornberry and Deputy DeVille have long suspected her of foul play and have watched her intently due to her involvement in an incident from long ago. If you prod at her about this, you can get her to tell you about the fact that she has in the past murdered a police officer who used to be the sheriff in self-defense who was attempting to steal something precious from her, a case which got her sent to state prison for twenty years.

With the police already leery of the driver, Eleanor is very surprised then that the driver is not seen as a suspect in the murder of Deputy DeVille. This clues Eleanor into the idea that perhaps Morgan did in fact commit the crime.