

# **Narratology 3 - Support Document - Interesting Times Machinema**

A machinema adaptation of the Interesting Times novel by Terry Pratchet

## **Made by Group 1**

Elroy Aarts

Thomas Buijtenweg

Jesse Ravensbergen

Gavino Robles de Medina

Dave van Wijk

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## Machinema story justification

The decision about which section of the *Interesting times* novel we chose to base our machinema on was made using the following factors.

- The general conflict in the novel
- Implementing the unique strength of the novel into the machinema (humour)
- Delivering a stand-alone story that has a clear beginning and end

The general conflict that takes place in the book is about the revolution against the empire and the fight for the throne. Major characters in this conflict are the barbarians which is why we decided to base the story around the journey of the barbarians from the border of HungHung to the throne.

Additionally, the actual strength of the book is also very clearly present in this section of the book. The struggle of the barbarians to get a grasp on concept “civilisation” is very funny to watch and clearly illustrates the strong points of the book. This is why the barbarian’s struggle with civilisation is at the heart of our machinema’s story. To support this we have chosen for a story structure that allows us to string a lot of funny and good dialogue together in a limited amount of time.

Lastly, we made sure to have a create a Machinema with a clear beginning and end to make it feel like a stand-alone story which should give a better sense of closure and satisfaction than an open ended story. To achieve this we used the basic principles of the three-act structure in combination with the unique aspects of the machinema to create our own deviation of the three-act structure that serves all the needs of the machinema project. Because of our approach the machinema will also be more enjoyable to people that are not familiar with the book or Discworld series.

## Scene breakdown

Before we started working on the script in any detail we planned out the number of scenes we could cover, which scenes were important and roughly how much time we would be able to spend on each scene. Based on this data and important story elements that are introduced in the various scenes we also had marked the scenes that could be scrapped if the machinema turned out to be too long. We marked these scenes in red below. In the end we had to scrap them both.

### Interesting Times machinema scene planning (10 minutes)

Scene 01: Ninja room (30 seconds) [p.199]

- Dialogue between teacher and accountant

Scene 02: City gates & guardhouse (90 seconds) [p.130]

- Barbarians enter city and get arrested (taken to guardhouse)
- Barbarians beat up guards and enter city

Scene 03: Ninja room (10 sec) [p.199]

- Dialogue between teacher and accountant

Scene 04: City streets & Apple vendor (180 seconds) [p.142]

- Civilized swearing (60 seconds)
- Genghis buys an apple (120 seconds)

Scene 05: Ninja room (10 seconds) [p.199]

- Dialogue between teacher and

accountant Scene 06: Dinner (60 seconds) [p.157]

- Teacher explains plan to enter Forbidden

City Scene 07: Sewers [p.164] (70 seconds)

- Barbarians enter Forbidden City by using a bomb as decoy
- Civilized swearing II

Scene 08: Forbidden city halls (55 seconds) [p.169]

- Barbarians carrying papers around (Civilized swearing III)

Scene 09: Ninja room (60 seconds) [p.199]

- Teacher finalizes recap
- Barbarians defeated ninja's
- Accountant asks to join barbarians

Scene 10(Optional): Bath room [p.212]

- Barbarians take a bath

Scene 11: Throne room (90 seconds) [p.221]

- Enter throne room through backdoor.
- Short dialogue between barbarians
- Dialogue between barbarians and accountant
- Genghis sits on throne and proclaims himself emperor

## **Justification of modifications**

In the interest of producing a higher quality machinema we made a variety of modifications to the original work. Many of the modifications were a result of the constraints we had for making the machinema. Since the machinema could be no longer than 10 minutes we had to omit some scenes. There were also some materials and locations were limited to when making the machinema. Below I discuss the major changes we made in some more detail.

### **Changing the character Hamish**

In the book Hamish was actually using a wheelchair and had a, presumably, normal body composition. Some of the scenes also focused on the wheelchair during dialog. For example in the sewer scene the barbarians were struggling with the wheelchair to get it through the water. However, because there was no way we could visualize a wheelchair in World of Warcraft, which we used for our machinema, we had to alter the character and change some of the conversations to fit the new character. The fact that Hamish himself only says one thing (whut?) made this fairly easy. We did have to adapt his character to match the deaf and disabled role he has in the book. This is why Gavino made a very silly and small character in World of Warcraft that won't be taken too seriously and thus acts as a great way for comic relief. He can wander about during scenes and do random stuff for comic effect.

### **Omitting the Forbidden city halls and the bath room scene**

Due to the time constraint of ten minutes that was set for the machinema we had no time to fit in these scenes which we originally did plan to include. The reason why we scrapped these scenes was due to the fact that compared to the other scenes they were not very relevant to the story we wanted to tell in the machinema. The major plot points were found in other scenes thus these scenes were given lower priority.

### **Omitting other scenes**

The reason why we did not include any of the Rincewind scenes or some other scenes with the barbarians is similar to the reason why we did not cover the Forbidden city halls and the bath room scene. For the Rincewind scenes the choice was simple. We wanted to focus on the story of Ghengiz Cohen. If we had also covered a few Rincewind scenes, we would not have been able to tell the full story of Ghengiz Cohen that we wanted to cover in the machinema. The reason we have omitted some other scenes with the barbarians is due to the fact that before we even started writing the script we prioritized the sections of the book that we wanted to cover. The scenes that are listed under "scene breakdown" are the ones we selected during the prioritising process.

### **Omitting Boy Willie**

The reason why we decided to omit Boy Willie (the only barbarian not included in our machinema) was that he literally had one line in all our scenes. Because of this we decided that he was not worth it to include in the machinema. It made filming, controlling the character during filming, designing the character and voice acting a lot easier because we had one less character to worry about. And because the horde still consists of six other barbarians and the teacher, it did not really feel like anyone was missing. This is especially true because Boy Willie is not really a prominent character in the book anyway. The line in question: 'Except for the bit where you set fire to that shopkeeper.' We decided to

give this line to Truckle since he is the one barbarian that is really picking up a lot on whole civilisation concept.

#### **Exit sewers scene changed to daytime**

Because we weren't able to record during night time, because the NHTV was closed, we could not manage to record this scene at night. Therefore we just decided to turn it into a day scene since the time is not all that relevant to the story anyway. In our machinema the barbarians exit the sewers not the same night they enter them, but late into the day after that. Then they wander around some time before they come across the accountant in the ninja room.

#### **Changing lines to better fit the visuals and medium**

In some cases we took some creative freedom to omit, change or mix the order of some lines in order for the conversations to sound better when spoken and to reduce the time the conversations took by giving them a more to-the-point nature. Even so, we have been very faithful to the events and dialogue that can be found in the book because most of the lines have been taken directly from the novel.

## **Appendix 1 - The Machinema Script**

INT.NINJA ROOM.NIGHT

ACCOUNTANT

Who are these mad old men?  
What do they do?

TEACHER

Barbarian heroing, generally.  
Rescuing princesses, robbing  
temples, fighting monsters,  
exploring ancient and terror-  
filled ruins . . . that sort  
of thing.

ACCOUNTANT

But they look old enough to  
be dead! Why do they do it?

Saveloy shrugged.

TEACHER

That's all they've ever  
done, which made it quite  
difficult introducing them  
to civilised behaviour.

EXT.CITY GATES.DAY

Camera cuts to guard holding note saying: We are  
wandering madman who have no papers. Sorry.

G. CAPTAIN

"Indeed, can't you  
speak grandfather?"

Cohen turns to teacher and shrugs.

G. CAPTAIN

Foolish dummy, you need papers  
in order to enter the Imperial  
Capital.

TEACHER

I thought you were supposed  
to show special consideration  
for the insane."

G. CAPTAIN

You cannot be insane without  
papers to say you're insane.

COHEN

Oh, I'm fed up with this, I  
said it wouldn't work if we  
came across a thick guard.



G. CAPTAIN  
Insolent peasant!

COHEN  
I'm not as insolent as my  
friends here.

The Horde nods.

TRUCKLE  
That's us, flatfoot.

CALEB  
Bum to you.

HAMISH  
Whut?

G. CAPTAIN  
Take them to the guardhouse!

Barbarians get taken to guardhouse.  
[OC] Fight erupts inside guardhouse.

G. CAPTAIN  
May you live in interesting  
times! I would rather die  
than betray my Emperor!

COHEN  
Fair enough.

TEACHER  
No! No. You see, once you've  
got them at your mercy, you're  
not allowed to kill them.  
(Pause)  
'I'm afraid that's  
civilization for you.'

TRUCKLE  
But you said the sods haven't  
got any bloody weapons!

TEACHER  
Yes, that's why you're  
not allowed to kill them.

COHEN  
Are you mad? Got mad papers,  
have you?  
(Pause)  
Alright, alright.

Barbarians casually exit the guardhouse.

INT.NINJA ROOM.NIGHT

ACCOUNTANT

You call that civilised?

TEACHER

Well, it's a start...

EXT.HUNGHUNG STREETS.DAY

TRUCKLE

When I was riding with Bruce the Hoon, we never walked in through a front gate like a bunch of sappy mother--

TEACHER

Mr Uncivil, I wonder if this might be a good time to refer you to that list I drew up for you?

TRUCKLE

What bloody list?

TEACHER

The list of acceptable civilized words, yes?

Teacher turns to the Horde.

TEACHER

Remember I was telling you about civ-il-ized be-hav-iour. It is vital to our long-term strategy.

CALEB

What's a long-term strategy?

COHEN

It's what we're going to do later.

CALEB

And what's that, then?

COHEN

It's the Plan.

TRUCKLE

Well, I'll be f--

TEACHER

The list, Mr Uncivil, only the words on the list.

(Pause)

Please?

COHEN

Better do what he says, Truckle.  
With bad grace, Truckle fished a  
grubby piece of paper out of his  
pocket and unfolded it.

TRUCKLE

"Dang"? Wassat mean? And  
what's this "darn" and "heck"?

TEACHER

They are . . .  
civilized swearwords.

TRUCKLE

Well, you can take 'em and--

Teacher raises a cautionary finger.

TEACHER

Ah?

TRUCKLE

You can shove them up--

TEACHER

Ah?

TRUCKLE

You can--

TEACHER

Ah?

Truckle shut his eyes and clenched his fists.

TRUCKLE

Dang it all to heck!

TEACHER

Good, that's much better.

EXT.APPLE VENDOR.DAY

Cohen is grinning at Truckles discomfort.

TEACHER

Cohen, there's an apple  
stall over there. Do you  
fancy an apple?

COHEN

Yeah, might do.

TEACHER

Right. Now, then, cla-- I mean,  
gentlemen. Ghenghiz wants an  
apple. There's a stall over  
there selling fruit and nuts.  
What does he do?

Teacher looked hopefully at his charges.

TEACHER

Anyone? Yes?

TRUCKLE

Easy. You kill that little-

There is a rustle of unfolding paper again.

TRUCKLE

chap behind the stall, then--

TEACHER

No, Mr Uncivil. Anyone else?

HAMISH

Whut?

VINCENT

You set fire to--

TEACHER

No, Mr Vincent. Anyone else . .  
.?

RIPPER

You rape--

TEACHER

No, no, Mr Ripper. We take  
out some muh - muh--?

Teacher looks at them expectantly.

THE SILVER HORDE

--money!

Choruses the horde.

TEACHER

--and we . . . What do we do?  
Now, we've gone through this  
hundreds of times. We . . .

The horde is pondering what to do.

COHEN

(Hesitantly)

Gi . . . ?'

Teacher gives him a big smile and a nod of encouragement.

COHEN

Give? . . . it . . . to . . .  
him?

TEACHER

Yes! Well done. In exchange for  
the apple. We'll talk about  
making change and saying "thank  
you" later on, when you're  
ready for it. Now then, Cohen,  
here's the coin. Off you go.

Cohen wipes his forehead. He is sweating.

COHEN

How about if I just cut him up  
a bit--

TEACHER

No! This is civilization.

Cohen nods uncomfortably. He throws back his shoulders  
and walks over to the stall, where the apple merchant  
nods at him. Seven crowded seconds pass. Then, when the  
horde is were safely around the corner teacher interviews  
the horde.

TEACHER

Now, everyone: who can tell  
me what Ghenghiz did wrong?

RIPPER

Didn't say please?

HAMISH

Whut?

TEACHER

No.

CALEB

Didn't say thank you?

HAMISH

Whut?

TEACHER

No.

TRUCKLE

Hit the man over the head with  
a melon and thumped him into  
the strawberries and kicked him  
in the nuts and set fire to his  
stall and stole all the money?

HAMISH

Whut?

TEACHER

Correct!

Mr Saveloy sighed.

TEACHER

Ghenghiz, you were doing so well up to then.

INT.NINJA ROOM.NIGHT

ACCOUNTANT

How did you even get them inside the forbidden city?

TEACHER

Well...

INT.RESTAURANT.NIGHT

CALEB

We've been shopping! Paying for things with money. We're dressed up like civilized people.

TEACHER

Yes indeed.

COHEN

Itchy, this is a robe, is it? Never worn 'em before. What good's cloth that's not chain mail?

CALEB

We did very well, though.

VINCENT

Yeah, we're really civilized.

TRUCKLE

Except for the bit where you set fire to that shopkeeper.

COHEN

Nah, I only set fire to him a bit.

HAMISH

Whut?

COHEN

Teach?

TEACHER

Yes, Cohen?

COHEN

Why did you tell that firework merchant that everyone you knew had died suddenly?

TEACHER

So he wouldn't get suspicious about what I was buying.

COHEN

Five thousand firecrackers?

HAMISH

Whut?

TEACHER

Well, did I ever tell you that I taught geography for a few terms in the Alchemists' Guild?

TRUCKLE

Alchemists? Loonies, the lot of them.

TEACHER

But they're keen on geography. I suppose they need to know where they've landed.

(Pause)

Eat up, gentlemen. It may be a long night.

INT. SEWERS. NIGHT

Chamberlain hears voices from below in the sewers.

COHEN

Where the hell are we?

TEACHER

Somewhere under the palace, I'm sure. Look for another manhole in the ceiling . . .

HAMISH

Whut?

TRUCKLE

I'm fed up with this 'danging' sewers! You call this a way to enter a

TRUCKLE

city? Waist deep in water? We didn't enter a . . . wretched . . . city like this when I rode with Bruce the Hoon! You enter a . . . lovemaking . . . city by overrunning it with a thousand horsemen, that's how you take a city--!

CALEB

Yeah, but there ain't room for 'em in this pipe.

TEACHER

Can we please hurry? I'd like us to be out of here when the cauldron goes off and I didn't really have much time to experiment with the fuses.

CALEB

I still don't understand about the cauldron, Teach.

TEACHER

I hope all those firecrackers will blow a hole in the wall.

COHEN

Right! So why ain't we there? Why are we in this pipe?

TEACHER

Because all the guards will rush to see what the bans was.

COHEN

Right! So we should be there!

TEACHER

No! We should be here, Cohen. The word is decoy. It's . . . more civilized this way.

EXT.SEWER EXIT.DAY

Teacher exits the sewer.

TEACHER

Careful!

TRUCKLE

I ain't used to being careful! Bruce the Hoon wasn't care--



COHEN

Shut up about Bruce the Hoon!

TRUCKLE

Well, dang you too!

HAMISH

Whut?

TRUCKLE

Anyone out there?

INT.NINJA ROOM.NIGHT

ACCOUNTANT

But... why here? Why come here?

TEACHER

We're going to undertake  
a robbery.

Six Beneficent Winds nodded sagely. The wealth of the Forbidden City is legendary. Probably even blood-sucking ghosts have heard of it.

ACCOUNTANT

The Talking Vase of Emperor P'gi  
Su?

TEACHER

No.

ACCOUNTANT

The Jade Head of Sung Ts'uit Li?

TEACHER

No. It's something rather  
more precious than that.

There was a light in Six Beneficent Winds' expression.

ACCOUNTANT

Have you got an accountant?

TEACHER

Well, no, as a matter of fact.

ACCOUNTANT

Will this theft be treated  
as income or capital?

TEACHER

I haven't really thought  
like that. The Horde doesn't  
pay taxes.

ACCOUNTANT

What? Not to anyone?

TEACHER

No. It seems to disappear on drink and women and high living. I suppose, from a heroing point of view, they may count as taxes.

ACCOUNTANT

But those sort of things probably count as allowable expenses for a barbarian hero. And there's pensions, of course.

TEACHER

Ah. Don't use that word. They think it's a dirty word. But in a way that is what they're here for. This is their last adventure.

ACCOUNTANT

When they've stolen this very valuable thing that you won't tell me about.

TEACHER

That's right. You'd be very welcome to join us. You could perhaps be a barbarian accountant. Have you ever killed anyone?

ACCOUNTANT

Not outright. But I've always thought you can do considerable damage with a well-placed Final Demand.

Mr Saveloy beamed.

TEACHER

Ah, yes, Civilization.

The last ninja was upright, but only just. Cohen(?) chops him down. Mr Saveloy surveyed the wrecked gym. Mr Saveloy patted the taxman's arm.

TEACHER

Ah, looks like they are done. Now, could you perhaps lead us to the throneroom?

INT.EMPEROR'S THRONE ROOM.NIGHT

TEACHER

Oh, my . . .

Mr Saveloy was gratified. The room they'd stepped into was enough to silence the Horde, if only briefly. It was large, of course, but that hadn't been its only purpose. One Sun Mirror, as he welded the tribes and countries and little island nations together, had wanted a room built which said to chieftains and ambassadors: this is the biggest space you've ever been in, it is more splendid than anything you could ever imagine, and we've got a lot more rooms like this. He had wanted it to be impressive. He had very clearly wanted it to intimidate mere barbarians so much that they'd give in there and then. Let there be huge statues, he'd said. And vast decorative hangings. Let there be pillars and carvings. Let the visitor be silenced by the sheer magnificence. Let it say to him, 'This is civilization, and you can join it or die. Now drop to your knees or be shortened some other way.' The Horde gave it the benefit of their inspection.

TRUCKLE

It's all right, I suppose, but not a patch on our chieftain's longhouse back in Skund. It hasn't even got a fire in the middle of the floor, look.

HAMISH

Whut?

TEACHER

Typically foreign.

COHEN

I'd do away with most of this and get some decent straw on the floor, a few shields round the walls.

HAMISH

Whut?

TRUCKLE

Mind you, get in a few hundred tables and you could have a helluva carouse in here.

Cohen walks across the huge expanse towards the throne, which stands under a vast ornamental canopy. The throne is made of lacquered wood, but with many precious gems set in it. Cohen sits down.

COHEN

Is this it?' We've done it,  
Teach?

TEACHER

Yes. Of course, now you have  
to get away with it.

ACCOUNTANT

I'm sorry, what've you done?

TEACHER

You know that thing we were  
here to steal?

ACCOUNTANT

Yes?

TEACHER

It's the Empire.

The taxman's expression didn't change for a few seconds, and then it flowed into a horrified grin. The taxman was still grinning fixedly.

ACCOUNTANT

But . . . but . . . you can't  
conquer an empire like this!  
You've got to have an army,  
like the warlords! Just walking  
in like this . . . It's against  
the rules! And . . . and . . .  
there are thousands of guards!

TEACHER

Yes, but they're all out there.

COHEN

Guarding us.

ACCOUNTANT

But they're guarding the real  
Emperor!

COHEN

That's me.

ACCOUNTANT

You're still going to have  
big trouble with the guards  
and things.

COHEN

Maybe not, tell 'em, Teach.

TEACHER

Have you ever seen the former  
Emperor?

ACCOUNTANT

Of course not. Hardly anyone has seen--  
(Pause)  
Ah...

TEACHER

There you are, then, very quick on the uptake.

COHEN

Have summoned all those lovemaking buggers who think  
they know what the Emperor looks like. I'm fed up  
with this civilised approach. It's about darned time  
we did things the barbarian way.

HAMISH

Whut?

(Pause)  
hehehe.