The Art of
BROKEN AGE
Foreword by Tim Schafer

Early Concepts
Nathan Stapley

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## Creating Characters

The character process always begins with initial concept exploration. During this phase, one or more artists create rough drawings to explore different directions the characters could take. A good concept isn't a finished illustration; it need only be clear enough to communicate the important ideas. Some qualities of a good character design that we always keep an eye out for include:

**Personality.** Does the character's appearance match their personality? One of the best ways to express this is through pose. A great pose is a succinct summary of the character's attitude and beliefs.

**Readability.** Does the character have an interesting silhouette? Will the character stand off the background? Are the character's major areas (head, hands, upper body, and lower body) distinct from one another? Color can be a great tool here (as can in-game effects, such as rim lighting), but we look for strong readability even in a rough grayscale sketch.

**Expressivity.** Is the character built to animate? Are the proportions, face, and hands capable of the acting and actions that the game requires? Adventure games have lots of acting and dialogue sequences, so Nathan "Bagel" Stapley's tendency to draw oversized heads really helps us.

One of our visual goals is to bring a painterly but still relatively crisp style to the characters. We want to add enough texture and detail to satisfy the eye while also creating an easy-to-read, highly stylized character that is easily distinguished from the background.

Because the lumberjack wasn't an actual game character at this point, he didn't go through as much iteration and scrutiny as a normal character, but Bagel's early sketches below still demonstrate several of the qualities needed for successful characters.

Nathan Stapley

Scott Campbell

Levi Ryken and Emily Johnstone

## Designing Vella

Vella (known for a long time as "Sacrifice Girl") was chosen for a great honor by her village: to be eaten alive by a horrific monster. Her story was inspired in part by the character of Ann Darrow in *King Kong* and the question of what would happen if she kicked the giant ape in the nose.

She is an independent, spirited, brave young girl in the vein of the heroes of Miyazaki films like *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* or *Kiki's Delivery Service*—one of the reasons she starts her story dozing on a grassy hillside.

Scott Campbell

These color treatments for some of the early Vella designs were shared with the backers for feedback.

Nathan Stapley