

Kimbell Educator Packet

Storytelling in Action



Kimbell Art Museum

Thomas Gainsborough, *Going to Market, Early Morning* (detail), c. 1773, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum

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Egyptian, *Portrait Statue of Pharaoh Amenhotep II*
Red granite, c. 1400 BC (recarved, c. 1250 BC)

Egyptian

South Karnak, Egypt; New Kingdom, Dynasty 18 (c. 1427–1400 BC)

Recarved for Ramesses II (the Great), Dynasty 19 (c. 1279–1213 BC)

Portrait Statue of Pharaoh Amenhotep II

Red granite, c. 1400 BC (recarved, c. 1250 BC)

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

This regal figure of Amenhotep II shows him holding the traditional insignia of kingship against his chest—the scepter in the form of a crook in his left hand and the flail or whip in his right. He wears Upper (i.e., southern) Egypt’s distinctive crown, embellished by the *uraeus* cryptogram, or royal cobra, and a broad collar composed of five bands. His body is enveloped in the jubilee robe—worn by kings at festivals, particularly the Sed-festival—in which he was physically and spiritually rejuvenated. Usually the Sed-festival was observed after a reign of thirty years. Since most pharaohs never reached their thirtieth year, however, some, including Amenhotep II, celebrated it prematurely.

The sculpture was originally part of a larger figure seated on a throne, which was excavated in 1896 at the Temple of Mut at South Karnak. Fragments of the throne that are now lost bore inscriptions of Ramesses II (“the Great”), who lived more than a century after Amenhotep II. Ramesses usurped this and many other sculptures of his predecessors and converted them into images of himself. In this case, Amenhotep’s eyebrows were erased and his eyes, nose, and mouth slightly reshaped to make them resemble those of Ramesses.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What clues tell you that this is from ancient Egypt? Describe what the figure is wearing.

What accessories catch your eye? Who do you think he might be? Why? Try standing in the same pose. How does this make you look and feel?

What other types of items do people include in portraits to show their status or interests?

What material is this? How do you think this looked when it was first made? How is granite different from wood or clay?

CREATE your own Egyptian-style collar necklace. What decorations would impress others with your supreme authority?



Olmec, *Standing Figure Holding a Were-Jaguar Baby*
Jade (jadeite), c. 900–300 BC

Olmec culture

Mexico, Olmec culture, Middle Preclassic period (900–300 BC)

Standing Figure Holding a Were-Jaguar Baby

Jade (jadeite), c. 900–300 BC

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

The Olmecs were Mesoamerica’s mother culture and earliest civilization. In addition to hewing monumental stone sculpture and modeling animated figures in clay, Olmec lapidaries mastered the art of working hard stones to fashion exquisite figures, masks, celts, and personal ornaments for the ruling elite. Olmec style is also represented by composite supernatural creatures ranging from realistic to abstract.

This masterfully carved jade statuette depicts an unclothed, standing Olmec male figure, possibly a ruler, holding an infant were-jaguar, a supernatural creature that is part human and part jaguar. The baby displays the features typical of an Olmec were-jaguar: a V-shaped cleft in its head; slanted, almond-shaped eyes; a foreshortened, broad nose; and a fangless gaping mouth with downturned fleshy lips. A headband with two nodules and pleated ear ornaments at the sides link the were-jaguar baby with the Olmec Supernatural, who controlled the rain and the growth of maize. The physical association between the male figure and the supernatural being in this statuette would have validated the figure's authority, demonstrating his shamanic capabilities and access to the supernatural through ritual performances. Effigies such as this, carved from precious materials, were empowered objects and may have been animated in rituals or deposited in burials or caches with other magical objects in sacred precincts. The ruler’s missing left leg may have been broken in such a ritual.

In the ancient Mesoamerican world, jade was highly prized for its rich green color, which was closely associated with maize and the attendant ideas of sustenance, fertility, preciousness, and enduring life.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What is your first impression of these figures? Describe their poses and expressions.

What ideas do you associate with jaguars? What sounds and movements do they make?

Why do you think rainstorms were so significant to the Olmecs? What are the benefits and dangers of that kind of weather? Why might a leader be shown holding this powerful figure?

What material is this? Describe its color and texture.

RESEARCH the Olmecs and compare this sculpture to others created by them.



Kaikei, *Standing Shaka Buddha*
Gilt and lacquered wood, c. 1210

Japanese

Kaikei (active c. 1185–1225)

Standing Shaka Buddha

Gilt and lacquered wood, c. 1210

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

Kaikei, the great master sculptor of the Kamakura period (1185–1333), together with his contemporary Unkei (died 1223), established the Kei school, the primary school of sculpture that produced statuary for the major temples in Nara and Kyoto. Together they created a new, realistic style that revitalized Buddhist sculpture. Especially important among Kaikei sculptures is a distinctive style of refined, graceful Buddha, clothed in deeply folded and decoratively draped robes.

Kaikei produced many Buddha images, particularly of Amida (Amitabha), the Lord of the Western Paradise. The Kimbell's sculpture is a rare image of the historical Buddha, Shaka (Shakyamuni), who is identified by the *abhayamudra* (gesture of reassurance or granting of the "absence of fear") of the right hand. His left foot advancing, the Buddha appears to move forward to greet the devotee with an expression of gentle and profound compassion. The beautifully proportioned figure is wrapped in an elegant, rhythmically folding robe that ripples across the stomach and cascades over the arms. Entirely covered with gold lacquer, the robe is further embellished with a floral and geometric pattern of fine-cut gold leaf.

The Kamakura period saw a revival of the historical Buddha in a new type of image—as a divine savior who descends from heaven to meet the faithful. This image, called "Shaka *raigo*," is documented in paintings of the early thirteenth century that show the Buddha standing on a lotus pedestal atop a cloud, his hand raised in the gesture of fearlessness. The Kimbell statue is a rare example of this type in three-dimensional form and the only known image of Shaka created by Kaikei.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What are some of the first things you notice about this beautiful sculpture? Does anyone recognize the figure? What clues help us to know this is a religious sculpture?

What words would you use to describe the Buddha's expression and pose? What clothing details do you see?

What do you notice about the other parts of the sculpture? What natural forms do you recognize? What is he standing on? What shape is the base of the pedestal? For what purpose do you think this was created?

READ the story of the Buddha and learn about other important symbols in Buddhist art.



Chokwe people, *Chibinda Ilunga*
Wood, hair, and hide, mid-19th century

Chokwe people
Northeastern Angola, Africa

Chibinda Ilunga

Wood, hair, and hide, mid-19th century
Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

In Central Africa, the role of chief is often linked with that of hunter. For the Chokwe people, the importance of the hunter stems from the myth of their founding hero, Chibinda Ilunga, the son of a great Luba chief and a passionate huntsman, who wooed and eventually married Lweji, a Lunda chieftainess. He introduced the Lunda to the concept of divine kingship and also taught their tribe the art of hunting. From their union, if rather indirectly, came the Mwata Yamvo rulers of the Lunda, to whom the Chokwe paid tribute and regularly furnished sculptors, who produced court art almost up to the present day. By association, Chibinda Ilunga became a culture hero and model for men in Chokwe society and especially for Chokwe chiefs. He came to represent the archetypal chief who maintains the well-being of his people.

As in much African art, the representation of the coiffure, headdress, and other ornaments serve to emphasize the figure's status and identity. Chibinda Ilunga wears elaborate headgear with rolled side elements as a sign of his royal rank. He holds a wanderer's staff and a carved antelope horn, which is a container for substances that supernaturally assist the hunt. The greatly enlarged hands and feet emphasize his physical strength and endurance, while the beard conveys his wisdom as an elder and ancestor.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What words would you use to describe this figure's pose? What is emphasized on this sculpture? What does that tell you about this hero figure?

Notice the shapes and details on Chibinda's face. What might his large eyes or beard tell you about him?

Describe how Chibinda might use the objects he holds. What does his elaborate hat tell you?

Look for shapes and lines in and around this sculpture. How does your eye move around the figure? Where do you see straight lines? Curving lines?

IMAGINE yourself as a legendary hero. What special skills and talents would you have? Write a story relating one of your mighty deeds.



Wen Jia, *Landscape in the Style of Dong Yuan*
Hanging scroll; ink and light colors on paper, 1577

Chinese

Wen Jia (1501–1583)

Landscape in the Style of Dong Yuan

Hanging scroll; ink and light colors on paper, 1577

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

Wen Jia, son of the Wu school literati artist Wen Zhengming (1470–1559), was a recognized poet, critic, and connoisseur of painting and a model Confucian. His paintings, the earliest of which were done when he was in his late fifties, are characterized by meticulous brushwork, cool coloring, and a conservative temperament.

This scroll is one of Wen Jia’s largest extant paintings and depicts a tall, narrow landscape crowded with wooded mountains, winding paths, torrents, and leafy trees executed in ink and pale colors. Two travelers on horseback cross a bridge to an inn, above which towers a mountain partially concealed by clouds. The rocks at upper left have no geological relationship to the mountain and appear to float above the mist.

The painting illustrates the interest of Wu school artists in the work of earlier masters: Wen Jia’s inscription states that the composition was inspired by a specific painting by the tenth-century master Dong Yuan. The bold, rocky mass that curves up the center of the painting is reminiscent of the mountains in many Northern Song (960–1127) landscapes. The use of dots for foliage, and of long hemp-fiber strokes to give texture to the rocks, recalls the technique of the founder of the Wu school, Shen Zhou (1427–1509).

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

Where do your eyes travel when looking at this scroll? How does Wen Jia create movement within the artwork?

What do you see happening in and around the building?

What types of sounds do you think you would hear in this environment? Smells? How would you feel if you were in this scene?

Describe the type of brushstrokes Wen Jia used.

Devise a new title for this artwork based on the landscape’s most important aspects and overall mood.

PAINT your own landscape. Who and what will you include? Experiment with short and long brushstrokes.



Japanese, *Genji in Exile at Suma*
Six-fold screen; ink, gold, silver, and pigments on paper, late 16th century

Japanese

Japan; Momoyama period (1573–1615)

Genji in Exile at Suma

Six-fold screen; ink, gold, silver, and pigments on paper, late 16th century

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

In this melancholy scene, the large sea of rough, billowing waves, the lone nobleman seated in a rustic hut with only his books and *koto* as companions, and the dusky tones of ink and silver and gold suggest a remote locale. A windblown visitor dressed in a straw cape, who appears to have arrived in a small boat moored at the left, trudges along the shore to the hut. The green of the *tatami* mats and the white and pink of the blossoming cherry trees (indicating springtime) provide the only brightness in an otherwise somber composition reflecting the sense of isolation and the forlorn state of mind of the nobleman.

The subject of the screen is from the classic masterpiece of Japanese literature *The Tale of Genji*, written in the early eleventh century by Lady Murasaki Shikibu. The epic novel, comprised of fifty-four chapters, recounts the tumultuous romantic life of Hikaru Genji, the son of a Japanese emperor. The dramatic yet somber scene is based on chapters 12 and 13, *Suma* and *Akashi*, in which Genji is exiled to the rural coastal town of Suma after he is discovered having an affair with the emperor's consort. The mysterious visitor may represent a messenger sent by Genji's lover to retrieve him, or he may be the Akashi Novitiate, who wishes to bring Genji to Akashi to marry his daughter. Both are described as arriving in Suma by boat in the midst of a raging storm.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

Where do you think this scene takes place? What takes up most of the picture? Describe the movement of the ocean waves and the sounds you might hear.

Would you like to visit? What colors do you notice? How would you describe the weather?

Who is in this picture? What are they doing? What will happen next?

The Japanese term for a folding screen is *byōbu*, meaning "protection from the wind." How did it earn that name? How was it used and where?

RESEARCH another famous historical event and create a picture that shows an important episode from that story.



Jacob van Ruisdael, *Edge of a Forest with a Grainfield*
Oil on canvas, c. 1656

Dutch

Jacob van Ruisdael (1628/29–1682)

Edge of a Forest with a Grainfield

Oil on canvas, c. 1656

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

Jacob van Ruisdael, one of the greatest landscape painters of all time, flourished in the latter half of the seventeenth century, Holland's "Golden Age." Born in Haarlem in 1628 or 1629, the son of a painter and picture dealer, Ruisdael was probably tutored by his uncle Salomon van Ruysdael, another landscape painter. Ruisdael began painting in his teenage years and moved to Amsterdam in 1655, shortly before he began *Edge of a Forest with a Grainfield*. Paintings from this period in his life typically emphasize the majestic power of natural forms—noble trees and cloud-filled skies—and an increased mastery of light effects to give those forms emotional resonance. A prolific artist, he completed some seven hundred paintings over the three decades of his career. *Edge of a Forest* is ranked as one of his highest achievements, from the years of his greatest genius.

A grove of old oak and elm trees stands beside a pool or a stream, at the intersection of a sandy road or path. Tall timbers reach towards a cloudy sky. Every detail attests to the artist's keen eye and his love of natural variety and incident. Everywhere he leads the viewer towards something to he thinks should be noticed: a broken branch lies bent in the lower right, pointing the way into the canvas; a puddle of water in the sandy road reflects the bark of the tree above it; delicate flowers of a water lily poke their heads above the water; a bush is in flower in the shadowy glade beside one of the trees, while silvery-green leaves shine between patches of ivy green. These myriad details, however, do not distract from the impressive unity of the whole—the sense of nature, in its grandeur, captured by a painter who truly loves it.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

Describe how your eye moves through this landscape. What details appear as you explore different areas? What do you notice about the people and animals in this scene?

Describe the textures and brushstrokes that Ruisdael used to describe the trees, grasses, water, ground, etc. Are they rough, glassy, sandy, or soft?

Where does sunlight enter the picture? Look for areas of light and dark. What effects do they create? How would you describe the mood of this scene?

COLLECT leaves, scraps of bark, rocks, and other natural objects. Use paper and crayons to create rubbings of these objects. What textures do they make?



Claude Monet, *La Pointe de la Hève at Low Tide*
Oil on canvas, 1865

French
Claude Monet (1840–1926)

La Pointe de la Hève at Low Tide

Oil on canvas, 1865
Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

This magnificent beach scene near Le Havre, where Monet grew up, was one of two landscapes that launched his career when exhibited in Paris at the 1865 Salon. Monet developed this large showpiece in direct response to similar compositions submitted to the Salon of 1864 by Charles-François Daubigny and his son Karl. Daubigny had attempted to execute his Salon painting entirely on the spot, in what would soon become the orthodox practice for Impressionist landscapes. But in 1864, Monet still worked in a more traditional fashion: he first painted *La Pointe de la Hève* at the site as a portable-scale work then enlarged it at his Paris studio in early 1865. Most impressive in this large version is Monet's rendition of the beach at low tide, the muted silvery tones of the foreground reflecting the low-hanging clouds stretching far away. The rocks at the right, described with brisk, creative brushwork, are especially indicative of Monet's unique talents, which were increasingly evident as he emerged as the leading Impressionist landscape artist.

Monet insisted that an old black-and-white photograph of *La Pointe de la Hève* be included in a 1921 book about him. Perhaps as a result, this work from his youth was tracked down, and in 1923 a dealer friend brought it back to Giverny to keep the elderly artist company as he recovered from eye surgery.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

Notice the different colors and textures in this composition. What kind of day is this? Where would you like to be in this scene? Imagine the sounds, smells, and tastes you might experience.

What kinds of movement are happening? How do diagonals help to organize the picture? What other lines does Monet use to guide your eye around this scene?

What time of day is this? What makes you say that? Where do you notice light on different surfaces?

What might this picture suggest about Monet's background and interests? Why do you think he selected this painting for the annual Salon, the largest art exhibition in Paris at the time?

COMPARE this painting with Monet's *Weeping Willow*, painted over fifty years later, also in the Kimbell's permanent collection.



Maya culture, *Presentation of Captives to a Maya Ruler*
Limestone with traces of paint, c. 785

Maya culture

Usumacinta River Valley, Mexico, Late Classic period (AD 600–900)

Presentation of Captives to a Maya Ruler

Limestone with traces of paint, c. AD 785

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

This carved and painted relief panel shows the presentation of captives in a palace throne room, indicated by swag curtains at the top. The five figures are the king of Yaxchilan, Itzamnaaj Balam III, seated at top left; his *sahal* (a military chief), Aj Chak Maax, at the right; and three bound captives in the lower-left corner. The glyphic text, which gives a date of August 23, 783, records the capture of a lord named Balam-Ahau by Aj Chak Maax and a sacrificial bloodletting three days later under the auspices of the ruler. The three prisoners may be scribes from a captured city, as the one seated in front holds a “stick-bundle” normally associated with depictions of Maya scribes and all three wear headdresses with *hun* (book) knots. All but the leftmost captive are identified by name. The inscription on the throne front beneath the seated lord is carved with the king’s name and titles, but the glyphs are inscribed in reverse order, from right to left. The name of the artist responsible for sculpting this relief appears on the vertical panel of four glyphs under the *sahal*’s outstretched arm, perhaps indicating that the *sahal* was himself also the creator of this work.

The Kimbell relief, which comes from an unidentified site named Laxtunich, probably served as a wall panel inside a Maya building or as a lintel over an entrance. Lintels as large as this often recorded significant dynastic events. It is assumed that their placement at points of transition between the outside, secular world and an inside, more sacred realm was of primary importance.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What do you see happening here? Where is this place? Who is the most important person? How can you tell?

What differences do you notice in each figure’s clothing? What is happening to the figures at the bottom? Describe their gestures and expressions.

Where do you see Maya writing or glyphs? What information would be useful for understanding this artwork?

Where do you think this was originally placed? What message does it send?

INVESTIGATE how the Maya used glyphs to represent words and sounds.



Caravaggio (Michelangelo Merisi), *The Cardsharps*
Oil on canvas, c. 1596–97

Italian

Caravaggio (Michelangelo Merisi) (1571–1610)

The Cardsharps

Oil on canvas, c. 1596–97

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

Caravaggio was one of the pivotal figures in the history of Western art. In his short lifetime, he created a new, theatrical style that shocked some and inspired others to probe their subject matter for the drama of psychological relationships. Apprenticed in Milan, Caravaggio came to Rome in the early 1590s. There, his early masterpiece *The Cardsharps* came to the attention of the influential Cardinal Francesco Maria del Monte, who not only purchased it but also offered the artist quarters in his palace and introduced him to the elite stratum of Roman ecclesiastical society, which would lead to his first significant large-scale public commissions.

In *The Cardsharps*, the players are engaged in a game of primero, a forerunner of poker. The dupe, engrossed in his cards, is unaware that the older cardsharp signals his accomplice with a raised, gloved hand (the fingertips exposed, better to feel marked cards). The young cheat looks expectantly toward the boy and reaches behind his back to pull a hidden card from his breeches. Caravaggio structures the picture to allow us to witness everything, implicating us in the trickery. He has treated this subject not as a caricature of vice but in a novelistic way in which the interaction of gesture and glance evokes the drama of deception and lost innocence in the most human of terms. *The Cardsharps* spawned countless paintings on related themes by artists throughout Europe—including Georges de La Tour's *Cheat with the Ace of Clubs*, also in the Kimbell's collection. *The Cardsharps* was stamped on the back with the seal of Cardinal de Monte and inventoried among his possessions after his death.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What is happening in this picture? What do you notice first? Follow the eyes and gestures of each figure. How does your eye move around the painting?

Compare the characters and describe their actions and expressions. What is each man's role? What do you notice about their costumes?

Where do you see light and shadow? What other details catch your eye? What kind of game are they playing? Describe the space. Where are they?

What do you think will happen next? What would you do in this situation? How does Caravaggio create a sense of drama?

WRITE a story from the perspective of one of the characters.



Thomas Gainsborough, *Going to Market, Early Morning*
Oil on canvas, c. 1773

British

Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788)

Going to Market, Early Morning

Oil on canvas, c. 1773

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

This painting is a treasured example of a new type of British landscape painting invented by Thomas Gainsborough. The artist shows figures on horseback near the brow of a hill at the break of day, outlined against a misty sky. At the front of the group is a beautiful girl, riding sidesaddle, and a young man, both of whom have baskets of farm products to sell—eggs nestled in straw. Seated beside a stream, a poor woman with two children looks up at the passing riders. Gainsborough was born in the countryside but trained in London before settling in the fashionable city of Bath, where he was acclaimed, along with Sir Joshua Reynolds, as the leading British portrait painter of the age. At the same time, however, he pursued his passion for landscape painting, and in the last decades of his life, working through observation and memory, created imaginative compositions that appeal to the viewer’s sentiments.

Gainsborough’s early works were inspired by the old masters—the naturalistic landscapes of Dutch painters such as Jacob van Ruisdael, the vibrant color and fluent brushwork of Peter Paul Rubens, and the captivating Italianate light effects of Claude Lorrain. In his maturity, he worked on a large scale and introduced a modern element to the landscape: the contemporary social life of the countryside, observed firsthand. In *Going to Market*, the girl’s auburn ringlets and fine necklace might seem romanticized but may have been donned to attract customers. The shadowy riders in the background fit descriptions of colliers carrying sacks of coal by pack pony from coalfields nearby. In this magical picture, Gainsborough has reimagined the classical landscape tradition, enriching its dreamlike serenity with the vivid life-force of the English countryside.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What is happening in this painting? What do you notice first? Follow the eyes and gestures of each figure. How does your eye move around?

Compare the characters and describe their actions and expressions. How are they feeling? What is each person’s role? What do you notice about their attire?

How does the artist suggest time of day? Describe where you see light and shadow. What else can you discover about this setting?

Imagine a journey that starts early in the day. How would you prepare?

DRAW a picture that shows their destination. What will they do next?



Frederic Leighton, *Portrait of May Sartoris*
Oil on canvas, c. 1860

British

Frederic Leighton (1830—1896)

Portrait of May Sartoris

Oil on canvas, c. 1860

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

The striking portrait represents Mary Theodosia (May) Sartoris around age fifteen. She looks out of the painting with inscrutable wide eyes. As much as the sitter herself, however, the subject of the painting seems to be her extraordinary costume. Though no horse is in sight, May carries a riding crop and gathers up the skirts of her dark blue riding habit. Her hair is hidden under a broad-brimmed black hat tied at her chin in a bow and topped with an ostrich feather; her black jacket with its white lace collar is boldly accented with a long scarlet scarf.

Leighton's close friendship with May's mother, the opera singer Adelaide Sartoris, began in Rome in 1853. Leighton had spent most of his childhood in Germany and Italy, where he became committed to the revival of the Renaissance style. Indeed, he made his reputation in 1885 when Queen Victoria purchased his history painting depicting Cimabue, Giotto, and other Renaissance art pioneers. Leighton would go on to be knighted by the queen in 1878; he was elevated to the peerage in 1896, only a day before his death.

This portrait owes a debt to the art of the past—to British royal portraits by Anthony van Dyck, for example—but has numerous counterparts among the images of pensive females painted in the 1850s by such leading English Pre-Raphaelite painters as John Everett Millais. The background landscape, presumably the Sartoris family properties in Hampshire, includes a windmill, a field with rows of stacked wheat, and a country church. A felled tree behind the sitter allows Leighton to indulge in varied painterly effects, while the invocation of autumn invites meditation on the seasons and the passage of time, accentuating the fragile beauty of the young girl.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

Choose three words to describe this figure. What does her costume suggest about her? How would you describe her expression?

What colors or shapes do you notice first? How do they lead your eye around?

Where do you think this is? What details do you notice in the background? How would you describe the season and time of day? How do the textures in her costume compare to the textures in the landscape?

WRITE a story from this girl's point of view. Use details as clues to help shape your narrative.