

*Initiates of the
Forgotten Isles*

In these pages, the tales of three intuitive and determined first-year students of the University of the Adventorium are recorded. From our trials and tribulations while trapped on these Weave-forsaken islands to our successes and moments of genius, many aspects of our tenacity to endure the elements and seek rescue are brought forth. We are the *Initiates of the Forgotten Isles* and although we find ourselves without the practical experience required to utilize the overwhelming expanse of the Weave, we will still fight back our demise in whatever ways we can. We can learn. We can adapt. We must survive.

– *Viktor Markov of the University of the Adventorium*

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Author's Statement

Here, I discuss the development of this OGSD and reflect on its progress.

Author's Statement

My specific qualities as a writer can best be observed in my OGSD's script and in my ability to explain the connection between the story elements and the gameplay. I feel that my script has been developed quite well, with naturally flowing dialogue and characters with unique voices that stand out against each other. This can be best found in the interactions between Viktor and Elizabeth, showing my growing experience in dialogue. My interweaving of writing and gameplay mechanics can best be found in my "Story of Three Initiates" and "Conflict on the Isles" sections, showing the core story of the narrative while also explaining how I have built in game mechanics that will directly interact with the narrative to bring out the interaction with the narrative that only games can express.

Statement of Intention

I have added entire sections to this document throughout its creation to better express the principles of the game and express the narrative. For example, I added "The Weave of Magic" to more intimately explain the way the magic system works, giving me more context to explain how the gameplay works in "The Gameplay of *Initiates of the Forgotten Isles*." I styled the document to be on a spell book, much like the menu of the game will be. This helps connect the reader to the magical and studious aspect of the story while presenting a clean notes-like style of presenting my information. I tried to make all the text to be in a cursive style font but found it illegible and uncomfortable to read. I knew that making just my titles cursive worked when I saw how much more legible it made my document.

Statement of Purpose

My fresh blending of the fantasy world and a magic system with the often unseen “Man vs. Nature” conflict in this genre is my biggest draw to this game. Often, the inclusion of magic makes survival in the wild trivial, as magic usually must be stronger than simply performing tasks by hand in order for it to have any appeal. My game’s limiting of the power of magic but still giving it a purpose seeks to overcome this obstacle, drawing those who are interested in fantasy but want a balanced approach to a survival game where in-person tasks are also viable. *Pikmin 3* and *Magic Cat Academy* were great emulation targets, mixing their survival aspects and chain casting of spells to create an engaging gameplay loop and narrative focus.

Reflective Statement

The biggest struggle I encountered while creating this document was figuring out the best ways to interweave the narrative with the gameplay aspects. I knew what I wanted from the game but found trouble when it came to explaining it in a concise manner. I eventually pinpointed the aspects of my story I needed to expand upon while not overloading the project with needless information. I worked with my peers to help pinpoint what ideas needed to expand and what they were confused on. Specifically, when Jordan Tatum explained that he did not get where I was going with my gameplay elements, I worked with him to figure out that I needed more work on the survival mechanics and magic system. When giving feedback to my peers, I helped clarify anything that may have been misunderstood or could have been further examined. I also helped with stylistic choices, such as examining how to better break apart sections of their document. They have stated that my efforts have helped bring their ideas more into focus, allowing them to get their thoughts into a more stable structure.

Statement of Professional Development

This assignment has helped me expand my skills as a writer in a variety of ways. I got to continue practicing my dialogue while introducing on-page action sequences to my repertoire, helping me work on my prose and word choice when it comes to impactful action descriptions. I have also worked on expressing my ideas fully on the page, pinpointing where ideas need further explanation and how to express them in an understandable way. Further, I have continued to understand my method of coming up with and expanding on my ideas, where I come up with a basic premise and continue to expand on it as I write about its rules. Overall, I have learned more about my content creation methodology and further expanded on my repertoire of writing techniques.

The Story of Three Initiates

Here, the outline of the events leading up to the story's conflict are explained as well as a basic background of the characters.

The first-year students of the University of the Adventorium have finally completed their rigorous studies. Having spent their initial year learning the textbook fundamentals of magic, the students are yet to dabble in the practical usage of magic or casting of spells. Still, the class is excited to use their newfound book-smarts on an end-of-the-year field trip to a prominent site known for its history in the creation of magic. At this location, scholars commonly take pilgrimages to in order to help them become more in-tune with the magic around them. During the journey, however, the students accidentally tread into a storm, where many are blown off course or killed by storm serpents despite the best efforts of the professors. Hours later, the storm clears to reveal numerous students dead in the water, with the rest having fled for their lives with the other survivors to their destination. For three students, however, their journey is only yet beginning.

On an unpopulated and rugged island, close to where the storm serpents attacked the students, three students awaken to find themselves stranded. Viktor Markov is the top of his class, extremely knowledgeable on the fundamentals of magic but with no practical experience working with it. Maxwell West is a student who comes from a wealthy family and is trying to acquire wealth and status often comes with a Weavecasting degree. Elizabeth Nelson was an urchin who got a second start by being taken in by an abbey at a young age and yet whose street smarts never left her. These three students must set aside their differences and work together to survive the trials of nature and figure out a way to get rescued.

Conflict on the Isles

Here, the game's core conflicts are explained to give further depth and detail on the story progression of the game.

The immediate threat of dying to the elements or magical creatures of the island gives the man vs nature conflict in a fantasy magic-filled world. From having to learn even basic things like how to start a fire to more complex topics like how to defend themselves or how to call for help, the students will have to figure out how to survive on a day-to-day basis, learning more techniques along the way.

The secondary objective of learning how to use their basic knowledge of the fundamentals of magic to help them survive becomes the main gameplay loop. Because the three are inexperienced at wilderness survival, anything they do without the aid of magic is significantly more energy intensive than what they could do if they could use magic to help them. The characters will explore the island for other survivors and their notes, textbooks, and knowledge in order to gain access to more spell components that can help them survive in the wilderness.

The characters will also have to contend with each other while surviving on the island. Because resources will be scarce, especially at the beginning when the three haven't expanded their repertoire of magic, tensions will rise significantly because there isn't enough to go around. The player will have to navigate these tensions to help the three of them peacefully make it off the island or, if needed, take a side and anger the other student.

The final and primary objective of the game is to signal to someone who has the means to rescue them. This can be done through magical means such as sending large amounts of arcane power to travelers they spot or by mechanical means such as creating a deep black smoke pattern from a fire. The player must survive long enough to have someone rescue them, but they must also have the means to be spotted when rescue comes.

The Weave of Magic

Here, the magic system in *The Initiates of the Forgotten Isles* is explained, as well as its implications on the story.

The Weave of Magic is the magic system of *The Initiates of the Forgotten Isles*. It represents the methods in which humans can interact with the unseen force that is present throughout the entire world, emanating from every life force. Through centuries of trial and error, humans have created methods to inscribe runes onto this force to cause it to manifest into the visible world. While these spells began with crude etchings into the Weave with single characters, they have since progressed into spells as lengthy as a paragraph. Every character refines the effect on the weave, leading to these complex spells having more specific and efficient results.

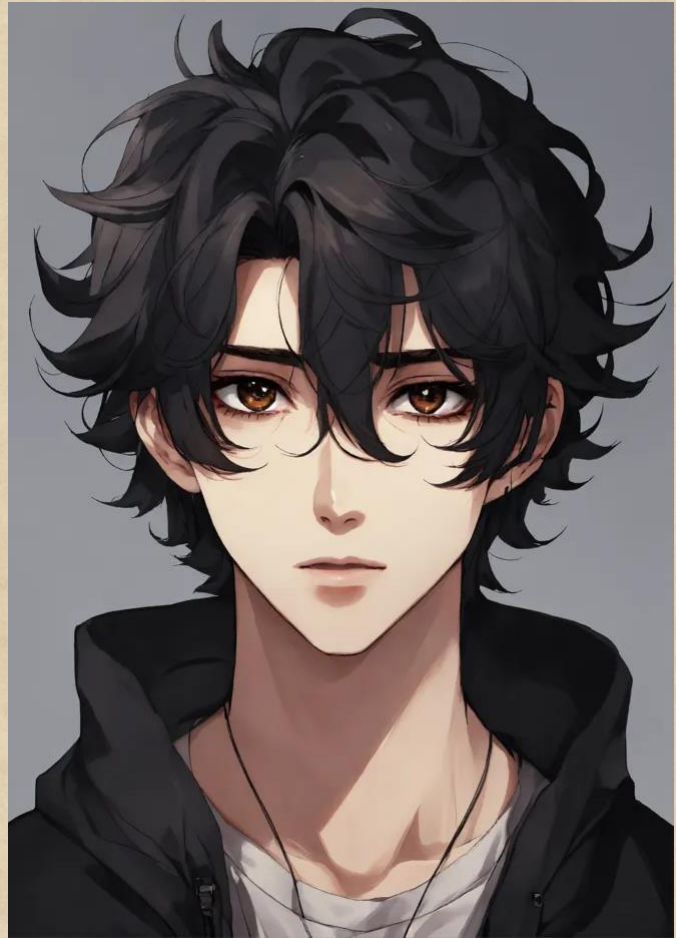
Interaction with the Weave, however, is extraordinarily dangerous, with even a slight mistranscription of complex spells possibly leading to catastrophe. Because of this, to be licensed to even begin practicing magic, a person must acquire a college education in Weavecasting. Through this education, students learn the methods of Weavecasting, such as the root characters of elements and the ways to string them together to create spells. However, due to the dangerous nature of the Weave, each student must spend their first year only learning the fundamentals of the Weave, leaving the practical experience of Weavecasting for future years.

Because the students in *The Initiates of the Forgotten Isles* have only completed their first year of university, they largely have no experience with the practical application of their knowledge of the Weave. As such, they must push their boundaries and experiment like the spellcasters of old to use their limited knowledge of the Weave to help them survive the harsh elements of the Forgotten Isles.

The Students of the Forgotten Isles

Here, the background, looks, and history of the three students will be explained to help further explain the plot.

Viktor Markov is an 18-year-old student of the University of the Adventorium who quickly became top of his class through sheer studies and determination. Despite this, he has never actually practiced the practical application of magic. Although not physically weak, he isn't strong either and has an open path ahead of him when it comes to how to tackle the challenges thrown his way throughout the course of the game. He is generally cheerful and optimistic, though his attitude and perception of the other characters of the story can change depending on the choices of the player. He is good friends with Elizabeth Nelson, having studied with her throughout the year despite her lack of natural talent in the arts of the arcane. He dislikes the "rivalry" that has formed between himself and Maxwell West because of their competitive class standings and is tired of the ego Maxwell holds himself with. His primary goal is to survive and get off the island with everyone still in one piece.



Maxwell West is a 19-year-old student of the University of the Adventorium who comes from the wealthy Griston family, the owners of many large businesses in the capital of the country. He is stuck up, egotistic, and naive, never being forced to work for anything. He is studying at the university of the Adventorium because being fluent in magic is a sign of wealth. Ranked a close second of his class behind Viktor, he breezed



through the first year of university with very little studying due to previously being tutored in the arcane arts. Here, he dabbled in the practical use of magic, learning basic spells years before being accepted into the university despite its illegality. As such, he sees himself as too important to be doing menial tasks like lighting fires by hand. Seeing magic as the most effective way to be rescued, he wants to regain his access to the Weave as soon as possible. His disdain for the other students' perceived lack of magical ability fuels his ego. He mocks Elizabeth Nelson for her inability to grasp the concepts of magic and has formed a one sided rivalry with Viktor Markov, scoffing at how much work Viktor must put in to learn what he already knows.

Elizabeth Nelson is an 18-year-old student of the University of the Adventorium who once lived on the streets. Although being orphaned on the streets was a harsh environment to grow up in, she gained many practical survival skills while doing so, becoming quite fit off the scraps she stole and handy with many of the physical means of survival. However, when she saw a way out of a life on the streets



through an offer of a local abbey to house and care for her, she jumped at the opportunity. Through many years there, she gained their trust and loyalty, but her survival skills never left her. The abbey eventually funded her studies at the University of the Adventorium to become a skilled healer. However, she would discover that she didn't quite have the same natural aptitude for learning the complex structures of magic as the other students. This demoralized her, and the bullying of Maxwell West only furthered her discouragement. Despite this, she was able to push forward and make it through her first year of university through the help of Viktor Markov's tutoring. Once trapped on the Isles with her peers, she grows frustrated with magic and her return to living a hard life, quickly falling back into her street urchin ways, seeing natural survival aspects as the path forward to survival.

The Forgotten Isles

Here, the characteristics of the Forgotten Isles are explained, showcasing their resources and unique challenges that the islands present to the survivors. Possible solutions and the requirements to these solutions are also explained.

The Forgotten Isles are a collection of previously unnamed islands deep into the sea, with nothing but ocean around it for hundreds of miles. In total, there are four islands consisting of one primary, large island with a gargantuan inactive volcano that is surrounded by three smaller and unique islands about a half mile away from the primary island each. Despite the isolation from civilization, the islands are strangely deeply interwoven with the Weave, allowing for a wide diversity of climates and environments among the islands. The students were fortunate enough to land on the primary island, giving them access to the most basic survival tools that they need to survive in the short term. To find ways to escape or signal for help, however, they will need to venture onto the other islands and expand both their survival and magic repertoire.

The primary island consists of wooded groves dotting a hilly landscape. The giant volcano in the center of the island overlooks all four islands. On this island, the initiates have access to food and water, though they have to venture into the wilderness to obtain these essential needs. Furthermore, the abundance of wood of different qualities allows the group to build the shelter, fire, and transportation that they need further in the game. The wildlife of the primary island is about an equal mix between passive prey and smaller, less dangerous predators, giving the survivors a chance against the wilderness before acquiring access to magic. Overall, the primary island gives the survivors a chance to settle into the wilderness without magic while growing their magic repertoire large enough to survive the other islands.



The first of the smaller islands consists of a mountainous, more wooded landscape. The climate is more tropical, and the predators are more difficult to overcome. In return, the island offers more types of wood, including one that bellows black smoke when burned, and more lucrative food sources that offer more food per kill. This gives the player a “hard mode” of the primary island, with harder enemies and a more intense climate that rewards them with a higher quality and quantity of resources.



The second and third of the smaller islands consists of a flat, arid desert with a hot climate and a cold, frozen wasteland with constant snow that tests the ability of the students to survive in extreme weather conditions. Each of these islands force the students to adapt to the climate either through traditional or magical means. Should they overcome these obstacles, they are be rewarded with more spells that help them survive further on these special islands and complete more tasks on the primary island, as well as further resources that are unique to these islands.



The Gameplay of Initiates of the Forgotten Isles

Here, the gameplay and narrative techniques and their display is explained to the reader.

The game will be shown through the day-to-day survival of the three students. The player must spend the day trying to not only survive but also find further means to progress towards their final objective of finding either a way of the islands or getting rescued by passing travelers. This is done by switching through control of the characters and queuing up actions for them to do throughout the day, such as collecting wood, creating shelter, or hunting for food. While the characters are performing the tasks assigned to them, the player may take direct control of a character to do their tasks more efficiently or make use of magic.

Each character has an energy, health, and mana meter that gets reduced throughout the day while they perform tasks required for survival. For example, a character walking across the beach to collect driftwood for the fire will slowly drain their energy. Once a character's energy or health has been fully drained, they must return to the camp and recover until the next day. As the characters become more skilled in their survival techniques, their energy, health, and mana maximum will increase as well, allowing them to venture further across the islands.

The player will go through the game experimenting with magic to make survival easier. Using the fundamentals of magic outlined in the magic section of this document, while the player is in control of a character, may open the spellcasting HUD by pressing Control. While this is open, the player can draw different types of spell elements onto the screen, chaining them together to form a spell with effects ranging from creating a small fire to blasting high-damage blasts of wind. The process is similar to Google Doodle's *Magic Cat Academy*, where the player can chain simple symbols together to form spells to fight ghosts. These actions are significantly faster and more effective than manually performing them, giving a reason to experiment with the spells. However, spells capped by the character's mana meter, forcing the player to be purposeful with their use of magic.

The Narrative of Initiates of the Forgotten Isles

Here, the narrative design brief will be explained, showing the methods used to provide the player with the story's narrative.

Target platform: PC

The story is communicated to the player through character interactions and cutscenes using text boxes that take place before and after each day at the base camp of the group. Through these daily interactions, the player will make decisions for the characters that will raise or lower their relationship with each other, causing future dialogues to possibly change into more hostile or friendly interactions. These decisions can range from dialogue asking if a character is okay to deciding how to split up the resources available to the characters. When the player completes story objectives, such as building a shelter, advancing their understanding of magic, or gaining the means to travel to another island, the characters will have story-relevant dialogue that can have greater impacts on their relationships with each other or impact the dialogue that will appear in future story-dialogue. This is similar to *Pikmin 3*'s method of engaging the player with its story.

Text boxes appear at the bottom of the screen with bust images of the characters appearing on the left side of the screen giving more visual context to the words they are saying. These text boxes mimic many visual novels, such as *Long Gone Days*, aiding in giving the reader a more immediate feedback into the emotions of a character. The menu will be in the form of a school spell book, where the player can flip through tabs including their quests, spell elements, and resources. Navigating these tabs will look like the player is thumbing through a notebook.



Final Report

Fruit Recovered						Total
						x00
						166
Clear Time						
Day 7 16:36						
Remaining Pikmin						Total
3	16	12	4	1	/	36
Pikmin Who Perished						Total
2	0	3	1	0	/	6

Finish

Rankings Top 5

Quests On the Isles

Here, examples of quests in The Initiates of the Forgotten Isles are explained, including their context and consequences.

The Light that Burns Brightest

Finding yourself on some forgotten isles in the middle of an ocean after a harrowing encounter with storm serpents on your class's trip to New Drictima, you have no time to waste! Find the wood you need to get a fire started and take the time to light it.

This quest is the first survival quest of the game, taking place on the Forgotten Isles. The characters must gather wood to keep themselves warm for the night and cook any food they collect. It acts as a tutorial for future quest objectives that they will need to survive on the isles, forcing them to collect resources, take time to work on maintaining their camp, and switch between characters. It also shows the types of tasks each character excels at, implicitly introducing the player to the strengths and weaknesses of each character and alluding to their background and survival skills before much of the character's backstory is revealed.

Should the player be unable to get a fire started before nightfall, the characters will be much weaker the following morning, as they will not have been able to keep warm throughout the night nor eat cooked food. However, the game will still go on, only permanently ending if every character is unable to continue their journey on the island through the total loss of their health and energy. If the player can successfully build this fire, then they are on their first steps to surviving on the isles, and the characters are able to spend the night bonding and interacting over the campfire.

Waiting for the Signal

You've survived on these isles for far longer than you ever thought you could. Now, the only thing left to do is be ready to signal anyone who may come by. Don't miss your chance, you don't know when your next opportunity may be.

This quest is the final mandatory objective of the game, though its requirements are enormous. Every previous required quest opens the opportunities for the students to grow as Weavecasters and survivalists on the isles, guiding them to long term survival. However, this quest has been the overall long-term quest of the entire game. The characters, having grown on this island together, must work together to find any way to signal that there are students in need of rescue on the island. Whether this rescue be through a physical plume of smoke rising into the air or a burst of magic towards any passersby. At this point, the character's relations with each other have solidified, either being tensely tested with every remaining night on the island or happily enjoying each other's company. However, with each passing day, the desperation of being saved only gain's momentum.

In random intervals, a form of being rescued will pass by the island. If it is spotted, the characters must quickly drop whatever they are doing and signal that they are trapped on the island. If they are successful, then rescue will come their way, they will be saved, and the game will end, displaying their final statistics and a cutscene depending on their final relationships with each other. Should they fail, they must further wait, possibly for weeks to months, for another rescue attempt to take place. This would force the player to continue surviving on an island with dwindling resources and ever disheartened survivors that lose more hope with each passing day.

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Fade In:

EXT. ISLAND BEACH SHORE - MORNING

A young man in tattered robes, VIKTOR MARKOV (18), lays on the sand next to the water, unconscious. Dark and messy hair, customary magic black robes. As the sun crests over the horizon, he awakes and stands up.

VIKTOR

Ugh... where am I? What happened?

Viktor shambles forward, looking around in search of anything he can recognize. Slowly, the realization of the storm serpent attack on his field trip group from the previous night assaults his consciousness as he begins to look around in panic.

VIKTOR

Wait, storm serpents... our drake being attacked... that can't have really happened, right? I was just having a nightmare.

Viktor's gait grinds to a halt as he quickens his anxious scanning of the surrounding beach.

VIKTOR

No, I'm still having a nightmare. I've got to be, we had the best mages of the entire nation guarding us. There's no way some lowly storm serpents could have gotten us stranded here.

Suddenly, Viktor stands motionless, his face shaped with a newfound terror. After a moment of silence, his paralysis is replaced with wicked screams of dread as he blindly sprints across the beach.

VIKTOR

Help! Please, someone help! I can't survive on this Weave-forsaken island. I still have so much to learn and experience. I haven't even gotten the chance to use magic yet!

FEMALE VOICE

Would you cut it out? You're not the only one stuck here. Besides, you sound like an idiot.

The camera pans to ELIZABETH NELSON (18), further inland. She has a shorter stature with shoulder length blonde hair tied into a ponytail. Her traditional school robes are messily thrown aside, revealing the casual blouse and jeans normally hidden underneath. She is hunched over a small pile of wood smashing two pieces of flint against each other.

ELIZABETH

Ugh, this blasted driftwood is still too wet. We're not even going to have a fire by nightfall at this rate.

She turns to Viktor in the distance and yells.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Now that you're finally awake, do you think you could get your lazy ass over here and help me figure how out to get this fire going?

Shocked, Viktor staggers towards Elizabeth. After reaching her, he kneels and looks her dead in the eye.

VIKTOR

Elizabeth, you're alive! How did you survive? Where even are we? What... what are you doing?

ELIZABETH

First of all, I'm trying to start a fire, the good old-fashioned way. Second of all, you're not even going to offer a thank you for saving your life?

She crosses her arms and scowls in false annoyance.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

(Sarcastic)

Wow, Viktor, after a year of classes together, you still haven't changed.

VIKTOR

Oh please, I'm just glad you're okay too.

Viktor throws himself into a hug with Elizabeth, causing her to drop the flint onto the ground. After a moment, the two separate and stand.

VIKTOR

Still, how did we survive? I'm nearly sure I blacked out after our drake was knocked out of the sky.

ELIZABETH

Yeah, I'm surprised we even survived the fall. The poor drake must have used its final moments to soften the impact with the water as it was falling. I was the only one conscious after the impact with the ocean, but my own consciousness was quickly failing me as well. The last thing I remember before waking up here is dragging the two of you as close to the shore as possible.

VIKTOR

Wait, two of us?

ELIZABETH

Yup, although only time will tell whether I live to regret saving him as well.

Elizabeth points towards the shore to the body of MAXWELL WEST (19) crumpled on the ground. A tall man with pitch black hair and well-trimmed beard. He lays in his robes unconscious and sprawled out in the sun.

VIKTOR

I didn't think you had it in you to save him, after how much of a prick he's been to you all year.

ELIZABETH

He may be a prick, but I don't think I could ever forgive myself if I had just let him drown.

VIKTOR

Oh come on, the thought never even crossed your mind?

ELIZABETH

(Smirking)

Well, maybe a little.

The two share a tense laugh before Elizabeth picks up the flint and begins bashing them together once again.

VIKTOR

I think it's time we wake Maxwell up, maybe he can help us with the fire. Are you coming?

ELIZABETH

No, you can do it. I'll keep working on the fire, I think I've almost got it going.

Elizabeth shifts her gaze and glares at Maxwell.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Besides, he'd probably just find some way to pin this entire situation on me if I were to be the one to wake him up.

VIKTOR

Suit yourself, I'll be right back.

Viktor stands up and trudges towards Maxwell. Upon reaching him, he leans over and checks his vitals.

VIKTOR

Okay, good. At least she didn't drag you onto this island just for you to die.

Viktor gives Maxwell a solid shake on the shoulder, to which Maxwell just waves him off. Viktor tries once again in a harder fashion.

VIKTOR

Wake up, Maxwell, you're not on a beach resort. Not the ones you're used to, anyways.

MAXWELL

(Groggy)

Ugh, what? Viktor? What are you doing here? Did we make it to New Drictama yet?

VIKTOR

Not even close, you're trapped here on this island with us for the time being.

MAXWELL

Wait, what island?

Maxwell shoots to his feet, scanning his surroundings with pure fear. Instinctively, he reaches into his robes, but his hand is still empty when it leaves.

MAXWELL

Where are we? What have you done with my wand?

VIKTOR

Well, it's a long story. Here, come over by the soon-to-be fire, I think you'll want to hear it from Elizabeth herself.

MAXWELL

Wait, Elizabeth's here too?

Viktor points over to Elizabeth, steadily pounding the flint against itself in a flurry of sparks.

VIKTOR

She's been trying to get the fire running for a while now. She'll tell you everything, then maybe we can figure out a way off this island.

Maxwell's face turns red with embarrassment, then anger, as he begins marching towards Elizabeth.

MAXWELL

Of course, I've got to be trapped on an island with both the nerdiest and dumbest students of the class. Riding with you two was the worst decision of my life.

Viktor raises his hand to respond before he slowly lowers it, mouth still agape. He makes his way to the pair, shaking his head.

FADE OUT:

THE END