

# **Investigating New Approaches of Visual Storytelling Through the Deconstruction of Story**

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## Abstract

Stories are a unique human creation that fosters emotional connections and have been developed and refined by writers and storytellers throughout history. This thesis aims to explore the creation of new systems for visual storytelling by deconstructing existing works of literature and interpreting them through a series of graphic design methodologies adopted from a variety of visual media like film, comics, and design. This is achieved through a “Research Through Design” process, an iterative practice of deconstructing narratives and literary research, followed by the development of visual language and deliberations. This thesis conceives of three new systems for adapting written stories into visual forms: “The Unrecognizable Patterns of Overhearing,” “Documentation of the World of Story,” and “Parallels, Perspectives, and Subjective Views.” These systems are applied to design and produce new visualizations that represent abstract ideas found in literary narratives.

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## Introduction

By analyzing story structures, deconstructing written narratives, and incorporating visual storytelling influences from film and other media, this thesis project is an investigation of developing new storytelling methods. The culminating approach involves “Research Through Design,” by examining narratives and dissecting them to analyze their content and translate them into visual adaptations. I deconstruct a variety of stories from Western culture, investigating elements such as plots, characters interactions, locations, props, and other world-building techniques present in various formats. Utilizing these insights to design and propose three new story systems: “The Unrecognizable Patterns of Overhearing,” “Documentation of the World of Story,” and “Parallels, Perspectives, and Subjective Views.” With this thesis, I aim to explore and develop new systems for visual storytelling by deconstructing existing narratives and interpreting them through a series of graphic design methodologies.

Stories are unique human creations that foster emotional connections, having been developed and refined by storytellers, theorists, and writers throughout history. As graphic designers, I believe we can enhance storytelling by exploring the relationship between words and visuals through narrative world-building using design principles. My research builds upon existing frameworks of storytelling systems, aiming to investigate how new models and rule sets can be generated and used to transform written words.

I examine how interpreting patterns in stories contributes to world-building through graphic design. I ask: in what ways can various media formats, such as novels, short stories, films, poetry, etc, be translated into graphic design through the development of a visual language? And how can design principle choices be informed by the different aspects of storytelling? Lastly, this research touches upon the broader conversation of adaptation, particularly examining how the process of translating narratives from written to visual form through graphic design can alter and/or enhance the narrative across different storytelling mediums. “The book, like other vehicles of narration, is a representational artifact; it is something made for the purpose of telling a story, and it does so by being a representation of the story's events and characters” (Currie, 2010, pg 5).

# 1 Conceptualization of Visual Storytelling Methods

## 1.1 Research Through Design

My thesis draws on the knowledge, theories, and practical methods examined in deconstruction and story structures, alongside the literary research of visual storytelling methodologies in comics, films, and graphic design. I utilize “Research Through Design” methodologies to create strategies for adapting written narratives into visual forms. Each adaptation is distinctly shaped by the deconstruction of the written story and third-party research on the authors, narratives, and writing styles involved. Additionally, I incorporate knowledge and methodologies of visual storytelling techniques from various mediums in an iterative process to create design projects. Throughout the design process of my thesis, I deliberate and critically assess my choices. I continuously question how the deconstruction of story informs the design decisions, methodologies, objects and whether they effectively achieve my goals for each adaptation. The primary focus is on short stories by a varied group of writers, including *Hills Like White Elephants* by Ernest Hemingway, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League* and *The Irish Wedding* by Elizabeth McCracken. The final design explorations for the three stories can be found in Appendix A. Additional films and stories are used in the initial research phase and early design process; ultimately, they are set aside. However, these stories, their adaptations and findings inform many of the explorations, concepts and story systems that I make

during the design process. These design explorations can be found in Appendix B of this document.

## **1.2 The Stages of Research Through Design**

**Deconstruction of stories** involves breaking them down, analyzing and understanding their components. I explore the plots, character interactions and other conventional world-building techniques in several texts. This analytical process guides my design decisions when creating visual storytelling pieces; it is instrumental in developing new storytelling systems.

**Research of storytelling methods** is the process of literary exploration of how conventional storytelling in films, comics, illustrations and written work is done. The aim is to gain an understanding of alternative methodologies for adapting written narratives into visual storytelling through graphic design. This insight is crucial in the subsequent stages of the designing and deliberating process.

**Research of the materials being adapted** is the process of researching the authors and the texts' cultural significance from third-party sources. This approach is to help educate myself to be able to respect and honour the narratives. In addition to deconstruction of the story, I am gaining insight into the authors' intentions in their writing and critical analysis of their work to help make informed decisions with the design work I am creating.

**Developing visual language** is the process of creating various storytelling systems and designing objects that serve as vehicles for visual storytelling. This is the

stage of applying the methods from the literary research of narrative patterns, visual storytelling, graphic design principles, deconstruction of the stories as well as the research of the narratives being adapted.

**Deliberation** is the iterative process of analyzing the successes and shortcomings of the design work I create, which helps inform the new designs I work on as well as revisions on the works in progress.

### **1.3 The Story Systems Conceptualized in this Thesis**

Using knowledge, theories and practical methods from literary reviews in this paper and the process of researching through design, I devise three different story systems. Each system focuses on bringing a unique aspect of visual storytelling to the forefront to guide the design forms.

**Unrecognizable Patterns of Overhearing:** The first story system embraces the unstructured nature of everyday conversations; this idea is brought forth by examining stories written as conversations (Figure 1). This system infuses the “randomness” found in the overwhelming noise and the unpredictability that envelops us, where the design visualization adheres to the chaos of overhearing conversations, embodied through the type selection, placement, layering, contrast, balance, emphasis, hierarchy, repetition, rhythm, negative space, movement, legibility and other design principles.

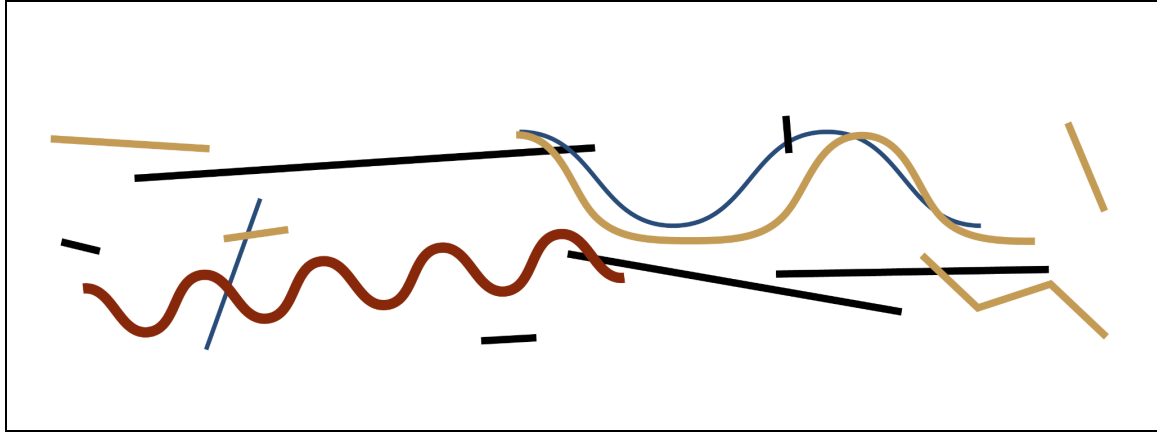


Figure 1. Visualized Diagram of The Unrecognizable Patterns of Overhearing Story System (2025)

**The Documentation of The World of Story:** The second system focuses on storytelling through the objects of relevance within the world of the narrative being adapted (Figure 2). Rather than adhering to a linear story structure, this approach documents the objects and how they are observed and interacted within the story. This is achieved by designing and creating objects, similarly done in fictional filmmaking for world-building, and then using these props to visualize the narrative. The objects are documented and then showcased as the story occurs around them. In this system, the presentation and design choices play a crucial role in visual storytelling as they guide the viewer through the world of the narrative.

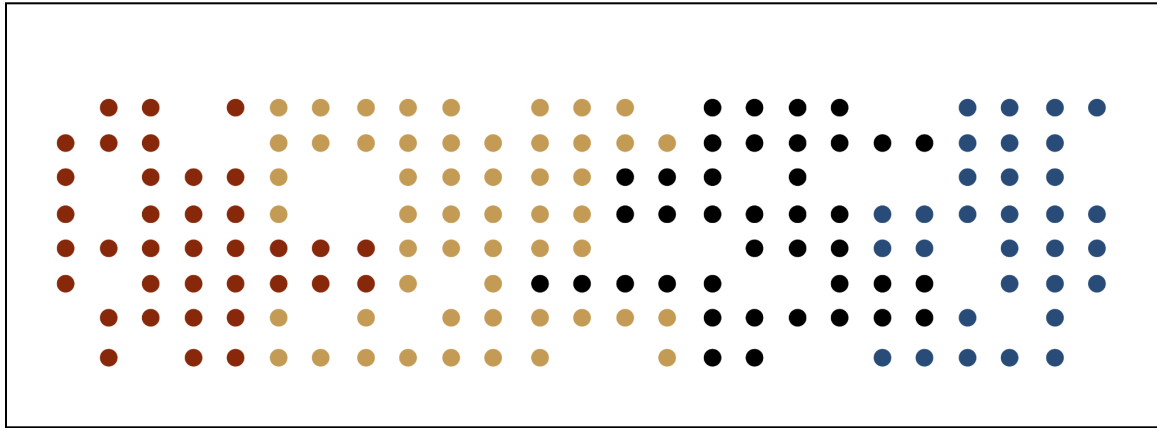


Figure 2. Visualized Diagram of The Documentation of The World of Stories System (2025)

**Parallels, Perspectives, and Subjective Views:** The third and final system focuses on subjective truths and how characters experience the world, interactions and others in their own way (Figure 3). This system focuses on visualizing the subjective views present in the stories being adapted in a parallel manner. This is conveyed through repetition, typography choice, colour, and legibility. The system involves recounting the same story from different viewpoints, resulting in altered narratives.

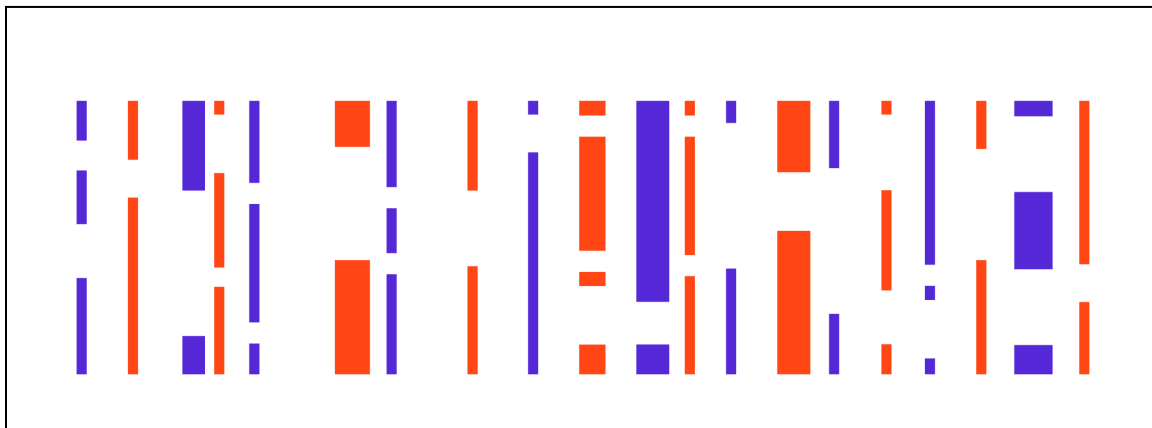


Figure 3. Visualized Diagram of Parallels, Perspective and Subjective Views Story System (2025)

The three-story systems serve as a general framework for adapting written narratives into visual storytelling through graphic design. The stories and their deconstruction drives the design process, which involves the examination of the writing styles, the authors, the story's contents, patterns and supplementary third-party research to conceptualize and create visual adaptations of the written work. In this thesis, these frameworks are derived from the "Research Through Design" process, the design explorations and the deconstruction of a variety of stories. This is achieved through the representation of the story's tone of voice, content and writing through

visuals by using design elements, principles, and techniques which are guided by the narrative being adapted.

#### **1.4 The Design Projects: Quick Overview**

The following three written short stories are adapted into new visual forms during the “Research Through Design” process of this thesis; this involves deconstructing each narrative and utilizing the systems outlined in the previous section as a guiding framework. Additionally, practical applications of the literary research conducted in the upcoming sections of this paper inform the design of each visual story.

*Hills Like White Elephants* by Ernest Hemingway (1927) is adapted into System One titled “The Unrecognizable Patterns of Overhearing.” The story visualization is presented in a saddle-stitched book format similar to a magazine, depicting the act of overhearing the conversations between the two main characters in the written story (Figure 4). This design employs the use of typography and shapes to capture the essence of overhearing, additionally using illustrations to anchor them to certain settings where the discussions occur. The legibility and illegibility of design elements emphasize the chaos and ambiguity of listening in on discussions. The visualized book does not follow conventional storytelling patterns; instead, the layout design intentionally evokes the disarray and overwhelming sensation associated with the act of listening in on a private conversation.



Figure 4. Book Design of *Hills Like White Elephants*. Front cover, Sample Interior Spreads and Back Cover of (2025)

The second adaptation of *Hills Like White Elephants* (1927) adheres to System Three, named “Parallels, Perspectives, and Subjective Views.” This design visualization takes the form of a modified accordion fold zine; I present the story twice from the different perspectives of the two main characters. Throughout the story, the two main characters engage in various arguments and conversations that are unrelated to the main topic of contention, which remains unrevealed in the written story. The conversations feel organic, circling around the topic and conveying both characters’

perspectives without directly confronting them. This dynamic is a driving factor in the visual design, where aspects of the narrative are redacted according to the opposition's perspective and interactions where crucial elements are removed to illustrate the subjectivity in every viewpoint (Figure 5). The overlapping conversations are highlighted through the cutout of the redacted sections on each page. In this zine, only by reading the two perspectives together can the full story be examined and understood.

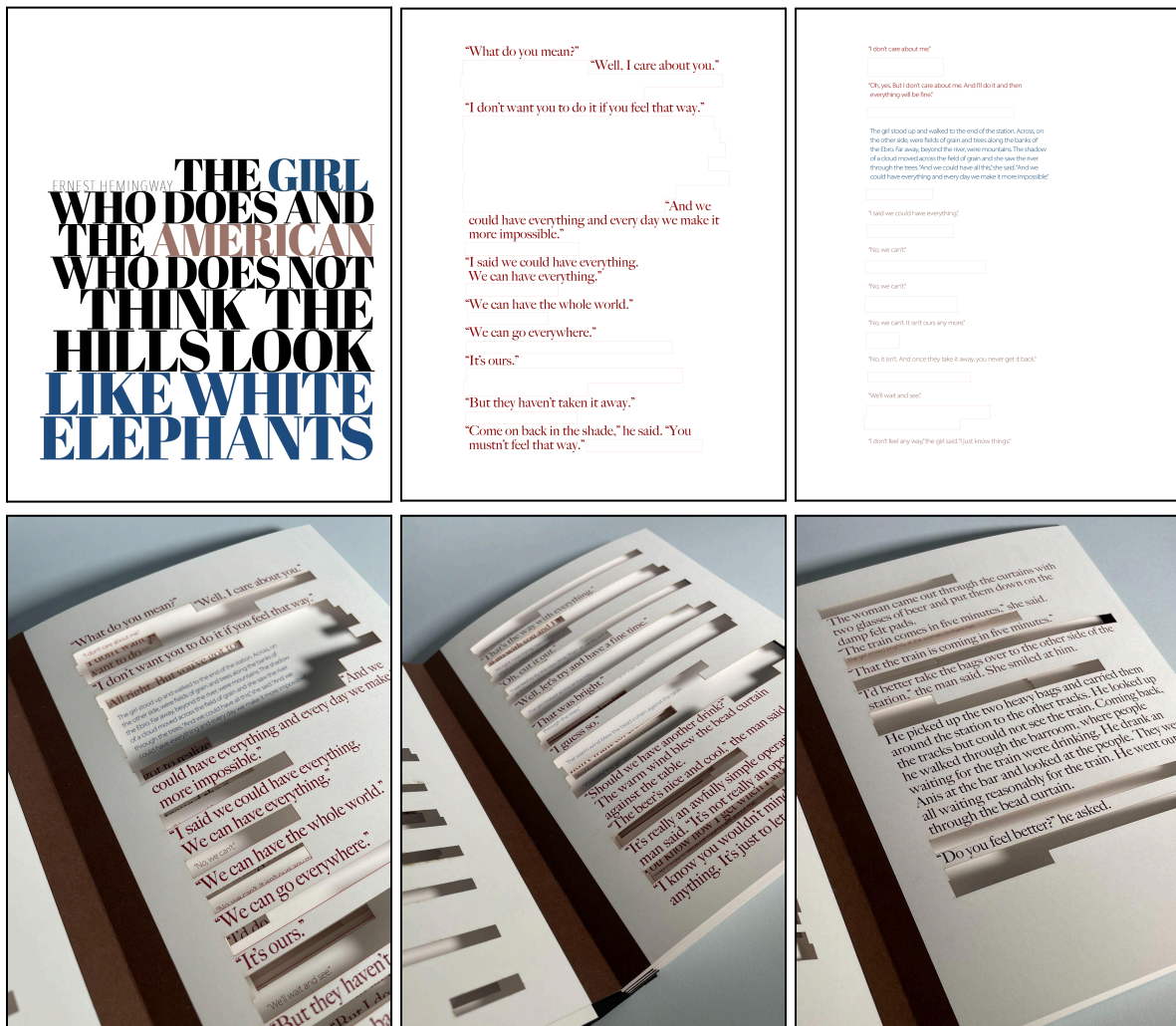


Figure 5. Zine Design of *Hills Like White Elephants*. Front Cover and Sample Interior Pages (2025)

*Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League*, a short story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1892) adheres to System Two titled “Documentation of the World of Story.” Given this is a detective mystery, the adaptation takes the form of a perfect bound coffee table book that highlights all the key objects within the story and the events surrounding them (Figure 6). Rather than adhering to a traditional story structure, which consists of a beginning, middle and end, the focus of this adaptation is to explore the events and the context as they unfold through objects. This is achieved by creating props similarly done in fictional filmmaking and documenting them in alphabetical order within the book. The primary emphasis is on the world of the story, with the plot serving as a secondary aspect.

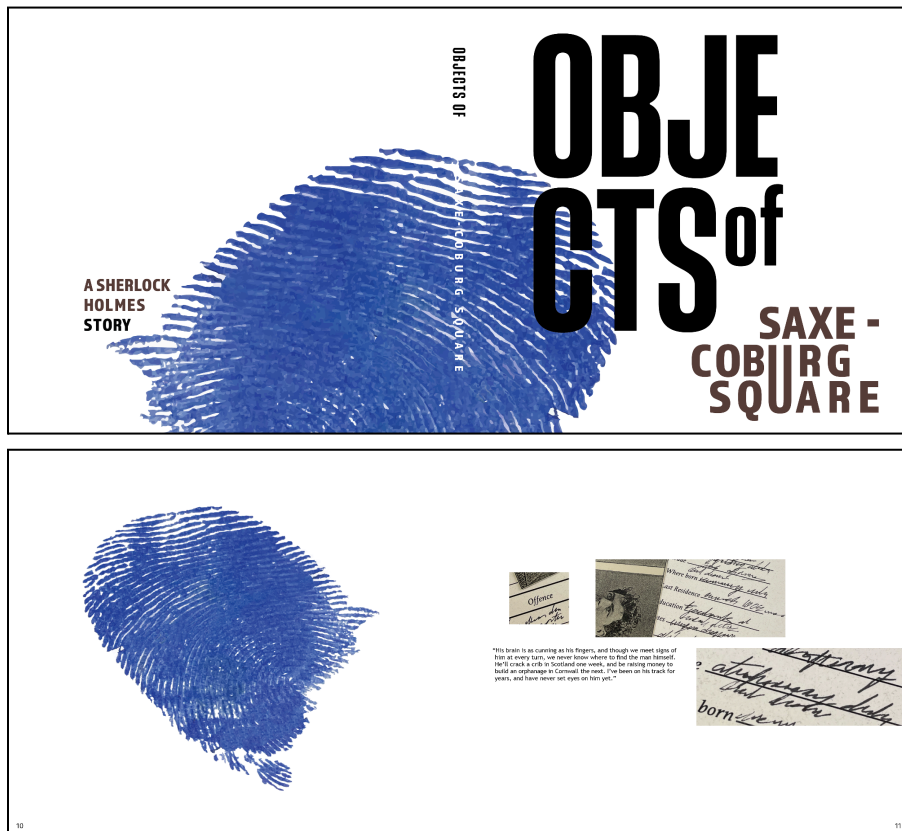


Figure 6. Coffee Table Book of *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League*. Cover and Sample Spreads (2025)

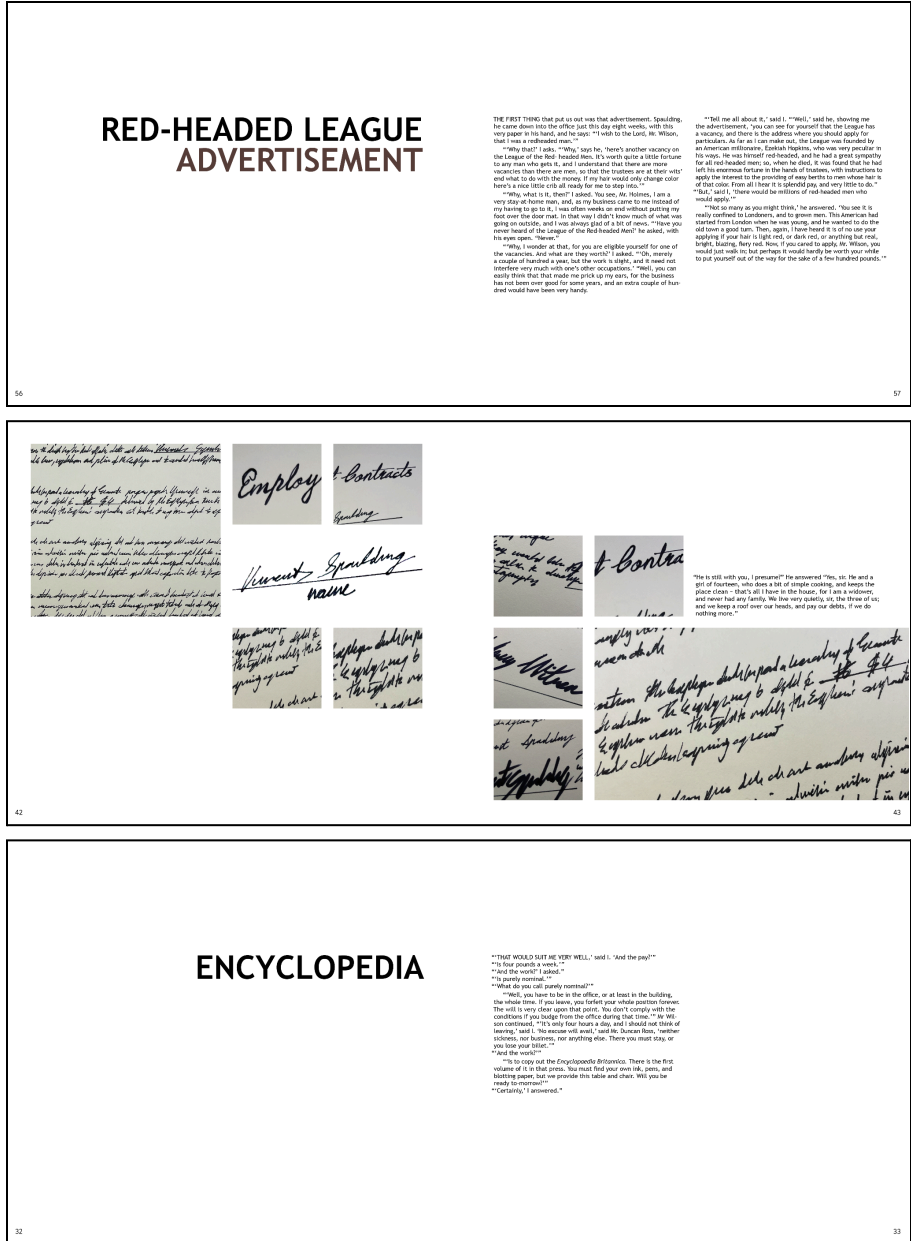


Figure 6. Coffee Table Book of *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League*. Cover and Sample Spreads (2025)

*The Irish Wedding*, a short story by Elizabeth McCracken (2021), is adapted into System One: “The Unrecognizable Patterns of Overhearing.” This project takes the form of an interactive time-based media to present a catalogue of events that can be experienced in any chosen order (Figure 7a). The story is written from the perspective of an American woman as she navigates her first encounters with her boyfriend's

British family members at a wedding. At the conclusion of the story, she recaps the events and encounters she had to her boyfriend. This visual adaptation takes those different events from the perspective of the main character and recaps them. Using motion graphics to express the events through the use and motion of typography, images and sound (Figure 7b). Additionally, featuring an interactive display that allows viewers to select which parts of the story they wish to experience in any order they choose.

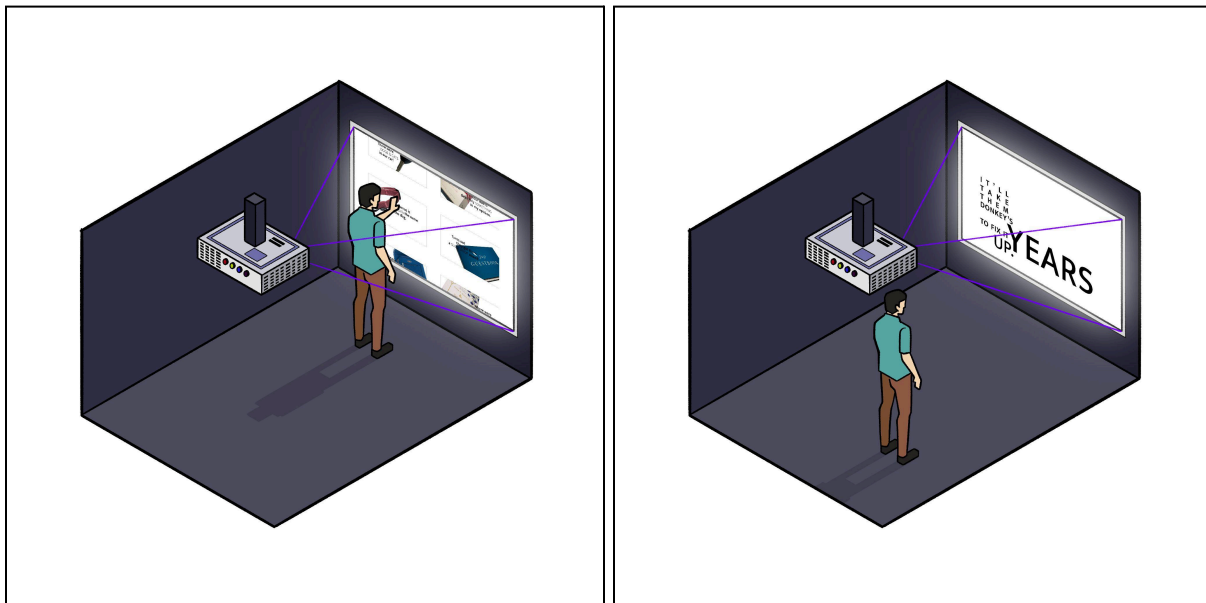


Figure 7a. Concept Diagram of Interactive Time-based Media (2025)



Figure 7b. Motion Graphics of *The Irish Wedding*. Sample Stills and Story Events Selection Menu (2025)

Each visual storytelling project in this thesis is created by deconstructing written stories, analyzing them and interpreting them through graphic design. This approach enables style to work with content, helping develop new visual storytelling language and systems. Lewis Blackwell, an author with experience in photography and film, is a prominent voice in design with his written contribution to the book *The End of Print: The Grafik Design of David Carson*. In connection with David Carson's design philosophy, which emphasizes the visual aesthetics of a page over the content of the

text itself. Blackwell argues, “The approach would not be about imposing a style, but about evolving a conceptual path to communicating the necessary and the desired. Style is in itself a concept, and made up of a synthesis of concepts. It is a shorthand, a reference to other ideas.” (2012, pg 8). Suggesting that design visualization carries profound meaning and references, thus it can be used to communicate ideas when utilized correctly. The content and the visuals must work together to convey meaning. Therefore, I carefully examine and extrapolate the written work in order to preserve plot, characters and word-building when translating written stories into designed visuals. In this thesis, the process of deconstructing existing stories and building upon their foundations fosters the innovation of narrative systems to create new forms of visual storytelling.

## 2 Deconstruction and Story Structures

### 2.1 The Concept of Deconstruction

Jacques Derrida, a French-Algerian philosopher, is known for his approach of analyzing written texts and ideas and challenging traditional notions of truth, meaning, and language. This method of critical analysis emerged in the 1980s and is known as deconstruction (Lawlor, 2023). Derrida's methodologies involve interrogating text to identify patterns and oppositions, as well as exploring the differences within them. This practice is conducted to expose contradictions and oppositions within literature and philosophy, seeking to demonstrate how foundations are unstable, complex, or impossible to define. (Derrida, 1981, pg 90). His work highlights the complexity of written language, allowing for a deeper exploration of meaning.

The term "deconstruction" was not originally coined by Derrida himself; it has become the definition of the systematic approach of breaking down text to uncover meaning and understanding (Royle, 2003, pg 23). Ultimately, deconstruction is a comprehensive philosophical practice that questions all structures and foundations to understand language, patterns, truth and thinking. In this thesis, while acknowledging Derrida's philosophical contribution, I employ deconstruction methods to analyze stories, identify patterns and meaning within text, then translate these elements into visual forms through graphic design.

## 2.2 History of Recognizing Patterns Through Story Dissections

Narratives are structured accounts of events in a story, formulating how characters, incidents and settings are sequenced and communicated. Narrative structures are not set in stone, as the manner in which they are presented varies across cultures, historical periods and story systems. As narratives have developed over time and are influenced by history, individuals, social change and artistic expressions, they are an evolving method of communication (Bal, 2017, pg 4-6). Understanding shifts in narrative structures throughout history provides deeper insight into how storytelling is implemented, adapted and evolved. Comprehending this allows insight into why narratives are told the way they are, what patterns they follow and how those frameworks have been derived and developed, all of which guide my design process of adapting existing written stories into new visual forms.

One of the most common techniques to understand storytelling structures is through the dissection and analysis of existing narratives, where writers, theorists and storytellers have documented common patterns and present them as structures stories should follow. This process of deconstruction uncovers their basic form and allows for the understanding of what makes them work and their components. One of the earliest examples of this is the Two-Act Structure proposed by Aristotle before 300 BC. Much like his examinations of birds, insects, mammals, and fish through autopsy to determine what commonalities they share, through dissection of some of the earliest Greek Tragedies such as *Oedipus the King* by Sophocles, poetry like *The Odyssey* by

Homer and many others, Aristotle found common features. Determining the pattern for story creation to follow includes a beginning, middle, and end. “A *beginning* doesn’t necessarily follow from anything before, but other events naturally follow it and proceed from it. And *ending*, on the other hand, naturally or in general follows from something else that comes before it, but has nothing that comes after it. A *middle* follows from some other event and also has things that occur after it. A well-constructed plot must therefore not begin or end at some arbitrary point but follow this pattern” (Aristotle, 2022, pg 51). This framework is commonly referred to as the Two-Act Structure (Figure 8).

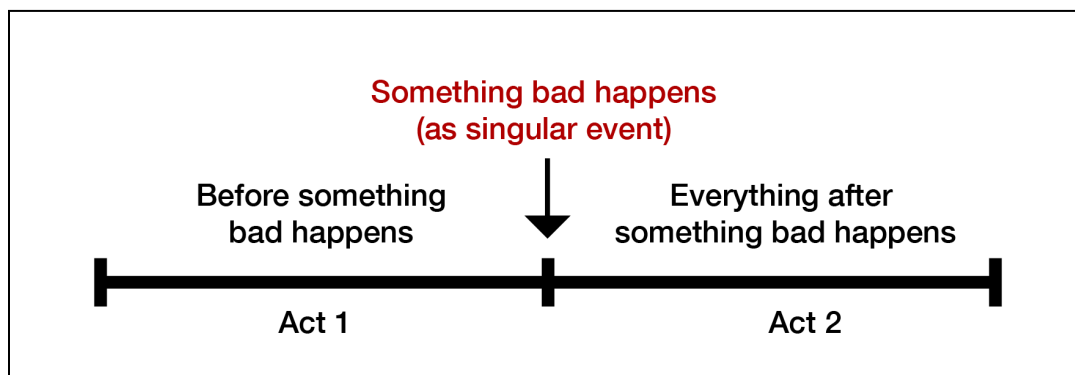


Figure 8. Interpreted Diagram of Aristotle’s Two-Act Structure Based on his Written Descriptions (2025)

Aristotle's proposition of this structure suggests that all stories should follow a set of guidelines. According to him, the order of importance is as follows: melody, events, diction, character, and spectacle strung together to make a story. “When Aristotle refers to plot, he means events, since he separates plot and characters as different things, but doesn’t talk about events as separate from the plot. The plot to him is more like the event chain, absent of character. The character is more of an avatar for

the audience” (Price, 2017, pg 8). Aristotle’s findings have a significant influence on story writing in Western culture, leading to the refinements and development of his proposed frameworks as well as new ones developed by others.

In the 1800s, more than two thousand years after Aristotle proposed the two-act structure, Gustav Freytag, a German novelist and playwright, constructed the plot structure of stories in the shape of a pyramid (Alison, 2019, pg 10). Using a similar process of dissecting stories like Aristotle, Freytag examines classical literature and tragedies, such as Homer and Shakespeare, to identify patterns. Through analysis, he determines, “The plot of the drama is the event arranged according to an idea, the content of which is presented by the characters. It is composed of many details and consists of a number of dramatic moments which take effect one after the other in a legal structure” (Freytag, 1905, pg 26). The pattern of storytelling by that Freytag is shaped like a pyramid; structurally, it is similar to the one described by Aristotle which includes a beginning, middle and end. The difference is Freytag’s Pyramid is primarily for tragedies and comedies with three units of time, event and place. Shakespeare’s comedies also follow this five-act structure, a kind of the inverse of the tragedy while maintaining the same structure. Freytag details and outlines that stories follow the Five Steps of the Pyramid (Figure 9).

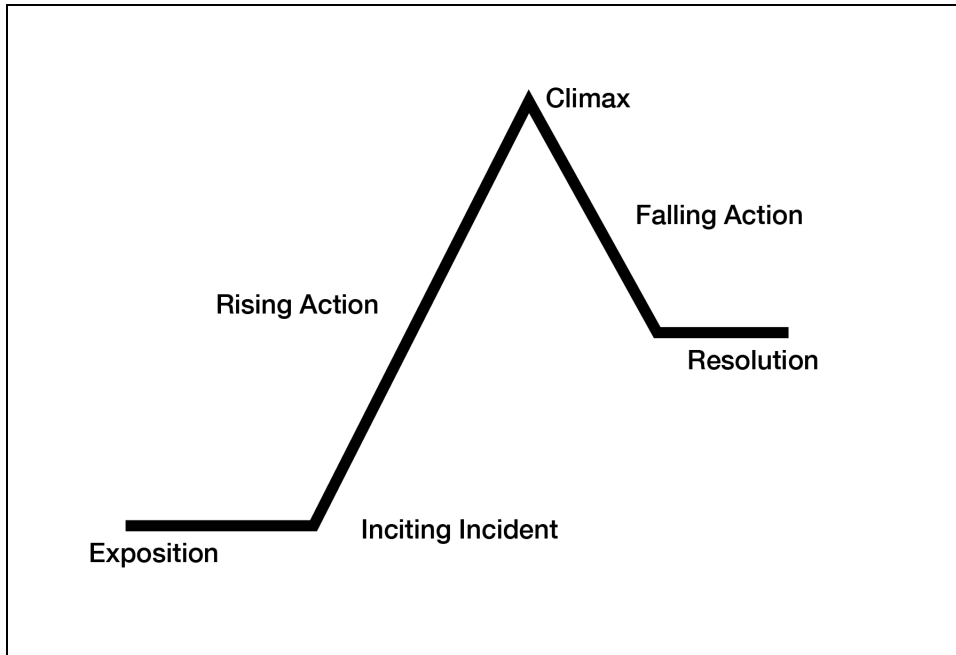


Figure 9. Interpreted Diagram of Freytag's Pyramid, Outlining The Five Steps of a Story (2025)

A summary of the stages of Freytag's Pyramid, which is commonly found in many of the stories analyzed in this thesis, is as follows:

“Exposition establishes the status quo, and explains the starting situation. The step ends with the inciting incident. Rising action: just like in the Fichtean Curve, rising action features the main character pursuing their goal while the stakes heighten. Climax: this is a moment in the center of your story that acts as the point of no return. Falling action: we see the consequences of the climax and the decisions that the protagonist has faced so far. In a tragedy, falling action is when we see things start to spiral out of control. Resolution or catastrophe: in the final step, everything is tied up, and the character reaches their lowest point.” (Ciğerci, 2024, pg 24).

Analyzing and deconstructing stories to find patterns is a common practice throughout history, with notable contributions by Aristotle and Freytag. Their analysis of early Greek literature and tragedies to recognize patterns is the reason frameworks such as The Two-Act Structure and Freytag's Pyramid are used with the emphasis on plot, character, and theme, along with exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution as components to tell stories. The previously mentioned frameworks influence storytelling techniques across Western literature; hence, these patterns are present in the stories deconstructed in this thesis. Sydney Alvin Field, an American author, in his book *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*, suggests that these story structure's influence extends beyond written literature into fictional films and comics, which employ modified versions of the Two Act Structure and Freytag's Pyramid of beginning, middle and end as the underlying building blocks for stories (1994, pg 44). By utilizing methodologies of examining and deconstructing text to identify patterns similarly done by Aristotle and Freytag, this thesis investigates various stories by analyzing their content, writing style, plot, characters and other components to translate them into visual forms through graphic design. This analytical approach helps contribute to the creation of the three different story systems mentioned in the previous section. While Aristotle and Freytag are prominent figures in Western culture, the practice of dissecting and analyzing stories to find patterns is also used in other cultures around the world and serves as building blocks for storytelling.

## 2.3 Story Systems Outside of Western Culture

Kishōtenketsu is a Japanese story structure that doesn't rely on conflict. It's the guiding structure behind popular urban legends, jokes, comic strips, as well as video game design. It originates in ancient China, where it was first used in four-line poems and is also evident in classic and contemporary Korean narratives. Over time, the concept began to be adopted and popularized in Japanese literature. Unlike Western narratives, which emphasize conflict and resolution, Kishōtenketsu relies on cyclical patterns and shifts in perspective to guide the story (Figure 10). The plot of a Kishōtenketsu story relies on the third-act twist, which puts the whole narrative into context. The stories are primarily set up to build towards the story's major twist. (Alzhanov, Mashurova, Kulshanova, Gulnara & Jumabekov, 2024, pg 401). This structure differs from the organized structural principles that are time-based, direction-oriented, and logically coherent principles of the Western narrative, where conflict is introduced at the beginning and builds to a climax. “Ming Dong Gu explains that Chinese fiction grew with an emphasis on lyricism, not constrained by ‘the Platonic-Aristotelian restriction of poetics to imitation and narration.’ Where the pattern of Kishōtenketsu relies on repetition, and rhythm” (Alison, 2019, pg 17). Patterns in storytelling are recognized through the process of analysis and finding commonalities within them.

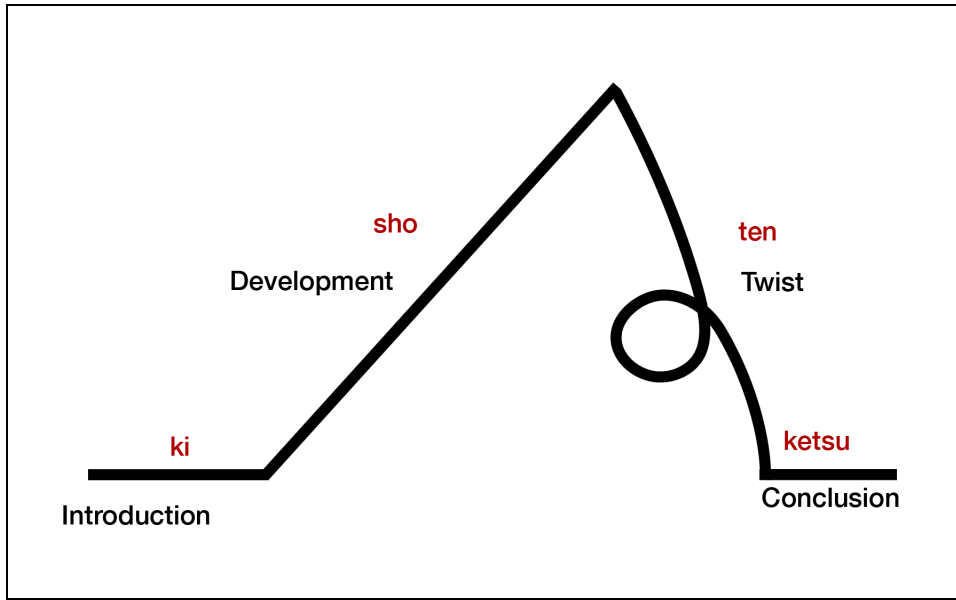


Figure 10. Interpreted Diagram of Kishotenketsu (2025)

Through the analysis of the body of work of Li Bai, an ancient Chinese poet, the origins of the Kishōtenketsu story structure can be traced back to its conception and subsequent implementation into storytelling, which has evolved with time. One prominent example is in contemporary Japanese culture. Filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki blends a mix of Western influences, the story pattern of the Hero’s Journey and traditional fairy-tale tropes, as well as the embedded Kishōtenketsu, thus expanding the system, creating a complex hybrid pattern of storytelling (Arnavas & Bellini, 2024, pg 29). The evolution of narrative systems is driven by deconstruction and evolution through blending and creating new forms of storytelling. Deconstructing stories to identify patterns is a common practice seen throughout history and different cultures used to create new narrative frameworks. This process leads to the development of diverse and unique storytelling structures, as noted in different cultures with unique patterns that have been deconstructed and rebuilt.

## 2.4 Building Upon Existing Patterns of Storytelling

A major influence in Western literature comes from American writer Joseph Campbell and his story structure of *The Hero's Journey*. Campbell brought this forth by studying myths and legends from various cultures around the world in the 1980s and 1990s. His findings identify several unique steps used in almost any heroic story found in mythology. The Hero's Journey consists of 12 steps (Figure 11), where the basic structure is applicable to a variety of genres and is most commonly used in fantasy, science fiction, and superhero narratives. It follows a series of patterns that guide the journey to establish world-building, character development, conflicts and adventure (Campbell, 2008).

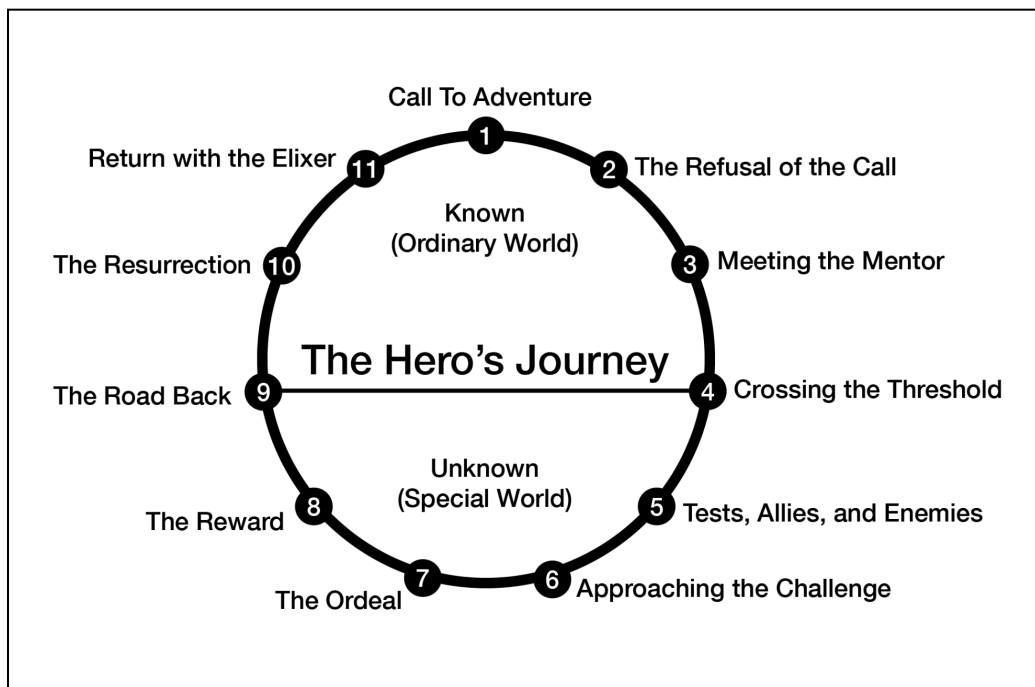


Figure 11. Interpreted Diagram of The Hero's Journey (1991)

Based on the book *The Hero's Journey*, the system can be divided into three acts. In Act One, the world is established, then an inciting incident where the hero is

reluctant to answer the call to action. The protagonist usually meets a wise mentor who prepares him for the journey ahead. The first act concludes when the hero steps outside his comfort zone, leading into Act Two, where he faces increased challenges and gains allies against new enemies. Then the hero approaches his goal, followed by a significant challenge and overcoming it brings a reward to help them in the future. Act Three begins with the hero achieving his goal, only to discover his achievements may have made things worse. The climax is the culmination of everything established in the story so far. Thus, the protagonist faces his greatest challenge. Finally, the falling action resolves all loose ends as the hero returns to his ordinary world, transformed by his experiences (Campbell, 1990). Campbell's story structure shares established patterns found in the Two Act structure and Freytag's Pyramid.

Maureen Murdock, author, psychotherapist and a former student of Campbell, believes "Women do have a quest at this time in our culture. It is the quest to fully embrace their feminine nature, learning how to value themselves as women and to heal the deep wound of the feminine" (1990, pg 2). Campbell's framework is rooted in male-centred narratives and the belief that women can not be the center of the story. The Hero's Journey pattern faces criticism for its lack of female perspectives, Murdock emphasizes, "The female void cannot be cured by conjunction with the male, but rather by an internal conjunction, by an integration of its own parts." (1990, pg 1). Murdock offers a counterpoint with the Heroine's Journey (Figure 12) in her book *The Heroine's Journey: Woman's Quest for Wholeness*. As a former student of Campbell, Murdock

draws inspiration from his work, her own workshops and interviews to present a new intersectional story structure where “gender, culture, economic background, and religious beliefs inform our personal mythology and the symbols and rites that carry our myth forward. In a time when cultural myths about women and men are being challenged on every front and there is a political and religious impetus to return to scripts of the past, many people are searching for a deeper understanding of their own story” (Murdock, 1990, pg 2). Similar to her predecessors, Murdock examines written stories to find meaning while crafting a counter framework to existing storytelling patterns, ultimately creating something new. She outlines three acts but with ten stages as a cycle, driven by conflict and transformation. This new pattern mirrors existing ones but centres on a female protagonist and follows a circular story structure.

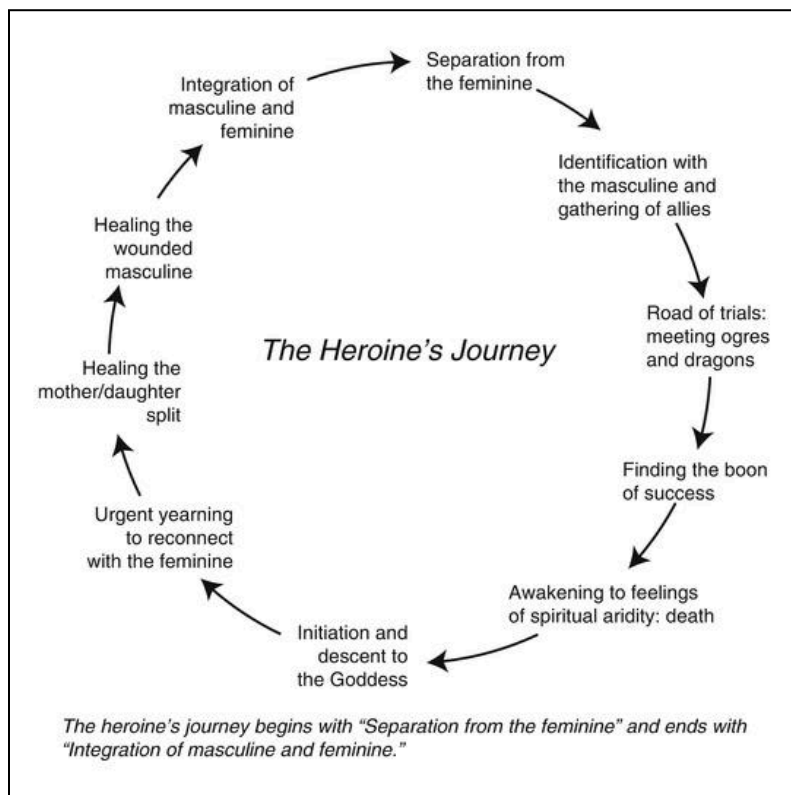


Figure 12. Murdock’s Diagram of The Heroine’s Journey (1990)

*The Heroine's Journey* starts with the Departure known as “Separation from the Feminine” where the heroine separates from the traditional feminine role. Followed by “Identification with the Masculine and Gathering of Allies,” during which she embraces a new way of life, different from prescribed gender societal roles. The third stage, known as the “Road Of Trials,” sees her encountering trials and meets individuals who attempt to dissuade or destroy the protagonist. This is then followed by, “Boon of Success” where the heroine overcomes the obstacles she faces. However, the next stage is called “Awakens to feelings of spiritual aridity: death,” revealing that her success in this new way of life is temporary. The heroine then faces a crisis in her new way of life known as “Initiation and descent to the goddess.” Steps eight and nine are “Healing,” where she first reclaims her initial values and then makes peace with the “masculine” approach to the world. The tenth and final step “Integration of masculine and feminine” involves the protagonist integrating the masculine and feminine qualities and perspectives, allowing her to transform and be prepared to interact with the complex world larger than her and her lifetime. Through these ten steps, conflict and transformation drives the story (Murdock, 1990). The development of this pattern comes from the need for the representation of women as the protagonists, diversifying narrative patterns and evolving the known conventional methods of storytelling structures.

Examining existing story patterns and identifying their shortcomings to develop something new is a key component of this thesis. To break away from conventional

forms of storytelling structure, one must first unpack them. In this thesis, examining existing patterns contributes to recognizing what is lacking and that methods of visual storytelling can be introduced. A prime example is Murdock's *Heroine's Journey*, where the absence of representation of female protagonists brings forth the creation of a feminist story pattern highlighting her trials, tribulations and personal stories. This approach is an example of how analyzing and understanding existing patterns can lead to the reimagining and creating of new forms of storytelling.

## **2.5 Examining Patterns Outside of Narratives to Create Structures**

Throughout the history of storytelling, deconstruction is used to deepen storytelling by uncovering underlying patterns within it. However, there are writers and storytellers whose approach differs. A contemporary example is Jane Allison, in her book, *Meander, Spiral, Explode: Design and Pattern in Narrative*, she examines stories and draws parallels to recurring motifs found in nature to formulate new methods of storytelling structures. Alison asserts, "To find patterns in life and recreate them in words. Memoirists know that they must 'look' back over life to find patterns that give order. We use visual and spatial terms so easily: look back. But this is true for anyone writing any kind of narrative. And how curious that a single shape has governed our stories for years" (2019, pg 11). She analyses existing written stories throughout her book and relates them to patterns found in nature to propose eight storytelling methods that deviate from traditional linear three-act structures, delving into more complex, non-traditional narrative forms. With these proposed patterns, Alison

encourages writers to explore non-linear forms of storytelling, embracing the creative freedom that following sequences such as “waves, wavelets meanders, spirals, radials or explosions, networks and cells, fractals and tsunamis offer” (Alison, 2019). Her approach, which combines story analysis with the practical application of unconventional and non-linear recurring elements in storytelling, aims to encourage storytellers to experiment beyond conventional structure and consider new ways of building narratives in our own lives and in writing.

Understanding shifts in narrative structures throughout history offers deeper insight into how storytelling is implemented, adapted and transformed. Integrating new ideas and structures expands how stories can be told and delivered. My thesis builds on this approach through a series of graphic design projects. By examining conventional rules and frameworks of narratives, I am able to challenge them and create new methods of visual storytelling that move away from it. In the book, *The End of Print: The Grafik Design of David Carson*, Tom Wyatt, in his contribution, argues that “the success of Carson's work was the seed of its own growth into something very different. The commitment was to original expression, ceaseless exploration, an unending quest to originate and assimilate, and to change what you were doing if you recognized it was looking rule-bound.” (2012, pg 12). The knowledge gained here in the literary review helps facilitate the development of my three new story systems first by investigating the building blocks of narratives and then by reinterpreting them through a series of graphic design explorations. The systems outlined in this thesis are: “The

Unrecognizable Patterns of Overhearing,” “The Documentation of The World of Stories,” and “Parallels, Perspectives, and Subjective Views.” These new systems serve as guidelines for transforming written stories into visual representations.

## 3 Visual Storytelling Methodologies and Implementations

### 3.1 Visual Storytelling: Designing How Stories Look

#### 3.1.1 Design Elements as Visual Language

While written and visual narratives may differ in their presentation, each storytelling medium has its own unique set of tools to communicate meaning. In graphic design, elements such as typography, shapes, space and composition can be leveraged to transform written stories into visual forms. Returning to Blackwell's ideas in the book *The End of Print: The Grafik Design of David Carson*, he addresses the importance of visual aesthetics in graphic design and the role it plays in communication. In his contribution to the book, Blackwell argues, "Style-over-concept thoughts: let's not forget that style is in itself a concept and made up of a synthesis of concepts. It is a shorthand, a reference to other Ideas. Used carelessly, it becomes meaningless, but if stylistic elements are part of a conceptual solution, then you can feel virtuous" (2012, pg 8). For this thesis, I create design work where visuals are driven by the written story, enabling me to adapt narratives in a new way, different from conventional methods. Emphasizing the style within the visual communication of written content fosters a deeper connection between text and design. As Blackwell further elaborates, "The debate of 'style-over-concept' is a false one. It comes down to this: style that works is a concept, and a concept that doesn't work has not been styled effectively" (Blackwell, 2012, pg 9). Through the process of deconstructing

written stories, this thesis explores how to make informed design decisions, while considering what methodologies best align with the stories being adapted. Thus, the visualization of the designs are aesthetically unique and pleasing while aligning with the elements of the written story, informed by thoughtful design decisions.

In the following section, I describe my research into methods of visual storytelling found in comic making, filmmaking and designing and how I implemented these approaches into the visual adaptation of written stories through graphic design. Additionally, I present specific examples illustrating how I apply these methodologies to my design projects.

### **3.1.2 Tools of Design for Visual Storytelling**

In his book *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, Scott McCloud outlines visual storytelling as the process of using images to convey a narrative. This storytelling approach exists in various mediums throughout history, ranging from early cave paintings and the Bayeux Tapestry to contemporary forms such as films, photography, illustrations, apps, memes, comic books and video games (McCloud, 1994, pg 13). This thesis borrows some of McCloud's visual storytelling methods and explores how to apply them through graphic design. By using typography, composition, lines, shapes, form, pacing, colour, texture, and other design elements in my work, I reinterpret written narratives to generate new systems for visual storytelling.

My adaptation of Ernest Hemingway’s *Hills Like White Elephants* into System One emphasizes typography as a key element of the overall design to carry the content, pace, tone and mood of the story (Figure 13). The selection and treatment of typefaces are representative of the characters’ actions, their tone of voice and the nuances of their interactions with each other. The choice between serif and sans-serif typefaces, along with their line weights and overall construction, helps establish the written tone. Sharp angular design elements represent confrontation and conflict, while soft curved typefaces portray delicate actions. The varying sizes of typefaces juxtaposed with each other are to emphasize key phrases and topics. The legibility of texts in the compositions are deprioritized in order to evoke the experience of overhearing conversations in visual form. Additionally, the use of lines, shapes and illustrations ground the typographic groupings, anchoring them to specific moments in the story. The harmony of typography, lines, shapes and visuals all work together to portray an immersive visualization capturing unidentifiable patterns of overhearing.

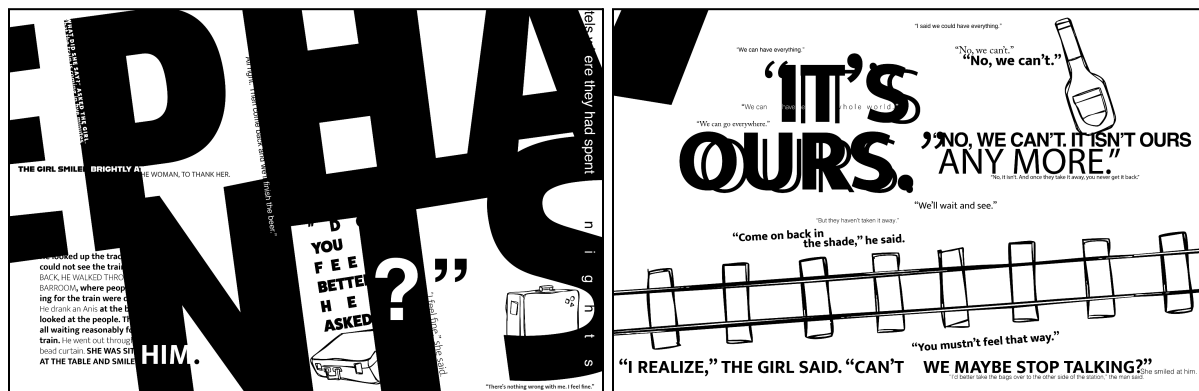


Figure 13. Sample Spreads of *The Hills Like White Elephants* Adaptation into System One (2025)

Similarly, in my second adaptation of *Hills Like White Elephants*, the typography selections are deliberately made to emulate each character’s personality. I use a large

and dominant serif type, Big Caslon (medium line weight 16pt size), for the male character to emphasize his dominant personality. While using a small, soft, light and rounded sans-serif typeface with tight tracking, Myriad Variable (light semi-extended line weight, 8pt size) for the female character to represent her personal conflict she expresses throughout the narrative. Furthermore, the use of colour in this adaptation conveys their tone of voice, which changes throughout the story as the characters interact. Each design element is selected and composed, informed by the deconstruction of story, translating written text and subtext of conversations into a visual representation. Capturing the multiple viewpoints, character traits and emotions through visual elements emulates the different perspectives and subjectivities that exist during the interactions in this story (Figure 14).

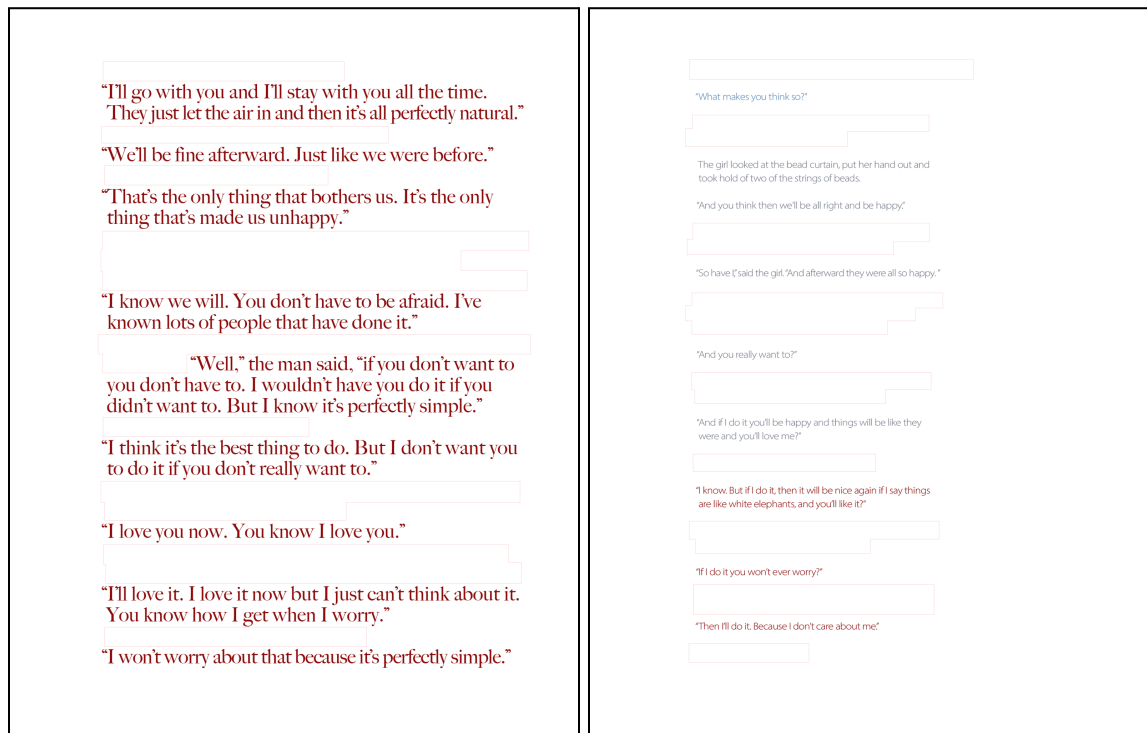


Figure 14. Sample Pages of *The Hills Like White Elephants* into System Three (2025)

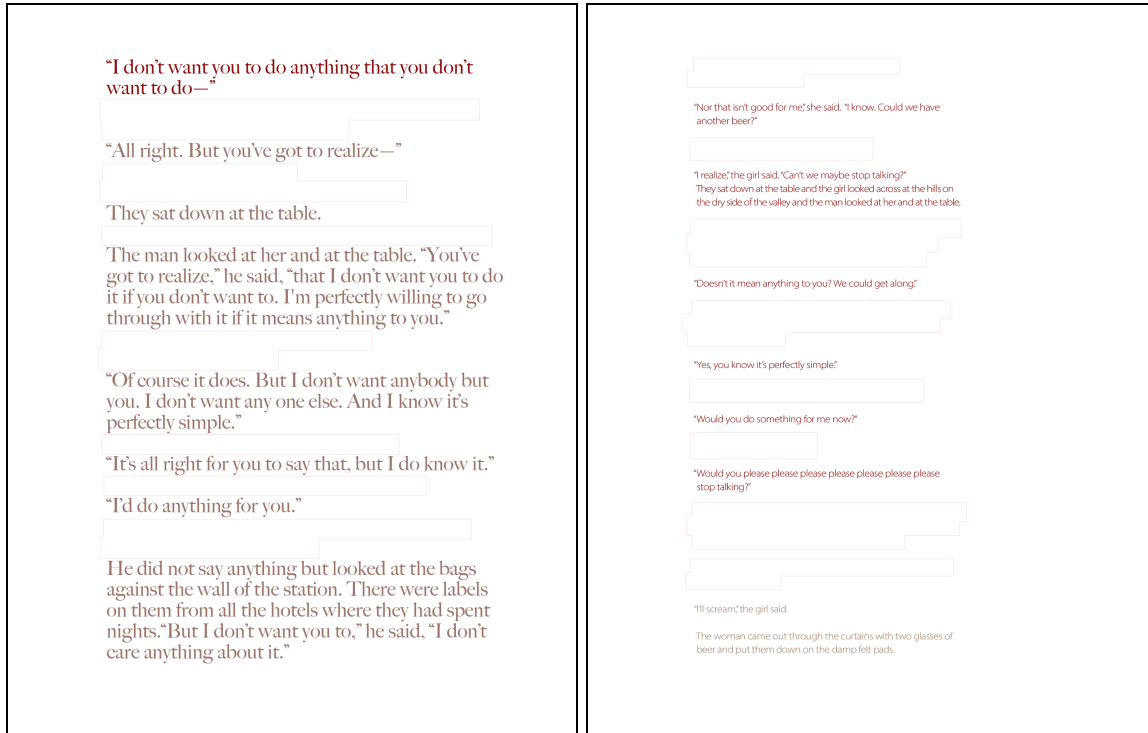


Figure 14. Sample Pages of *The Hills Like White Elephants* into System Three (2025)

Paul Rand, a renowned art director and designer known for his logo design work, expresses that design choices are diverse, allowing designers to explore various options to create work using typefaces, geometric patterns and abstract shapes. In visual storytelling, elements like lines, shapes, and colours are used to evoke the viewer's senses and emotions (Rand, 1985, pg 48). A key aspect of expressing emotions is done through the tone of voice in a design piece, where elements are leveraged to set a tone and communicate feelings. In relation to creating visuals, McCloud identifies that "Certain patterns can produce an almost physiological effect in the viewer. But for some reason readers will ascribe those feelings, not to themselves, but to the characters they identify with" (McCloud, 1994, pg 132). Similarly, a graphic designer's choices in typography selection, placement, lines, textures and other

elements reflect their unique perspective and express relatable characteristics that are identifiable. Throughout this thesis process, my goal is to ultimately create something new using design elements rather than just retelling an existing written story. Thus when designing, I am able to take creative liberties and transform an author's writing into new forms of visual storytelling.

### **3.1.3 Visually Telling Stories**

Using design elements to translate and visually represent stories allows for a different engagement with the characters, plot and world of the narrative in ways written stories may not. Jane Alison references Northrop Frye's ideas in her book, "We hear or listen to a narrative, but when we grasp a writer's total pattern we 'see' what he means" (Alison, 2019, pg 11). She also emphasizes John Berger's point of visualization of story and the impact it can have as "seeing comes before words" (Alison, 2019, pg 12). This visualization process introduces new methods that move away from traditional written stories. McCloud explains, "The way readers relate to comics depends on the level of abstraction and realism that an artist employs. Artists can use a combination of simple, iconic characters and realistic backgrounds (like those used in Hergé's Tintin) to help readers identify with the main character" (McCloud, 1994, pg 42). By applying this approach in the development of the visual language in this thesis, story elements like characters, setting, props, plot and conflicts are conveyed through graphic design elements such as typography, its treatments, composition and its interaction with other design elements.

The writing unfolds as a series of events made by multiple character interactions in Elizabeth McCracken's short story *The Irish Wedding*. This prompts the use of System One, “The Unrecognizable Patterns of Overhearing,” as the guiding framework for its visualization. The narrative is written from the perspective of the main character, so my adaptation visualizes the story from her point of view as she recounts all the different interactions the protagonist has with her boyfriend (Figure 15). Here, the typography, composition and movement are embodied through her characteristics. Where the main characters' voices serve as the lens through which all interactions with other characters are recapped. Thus, the dialogue and subtext are expressed with a careful selection of the rigid typeface Mukta (extra light to extra bold, various pt sizes), along with its placement, rhythm and movement.



Figure 15. Key Frames From The Motion Graphics Adaptation of *The Irish Wedding* into System One (2025)

In my adaptation of *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League*, my approach is slightly different from the other three methods as typography is used as an element in creating objects from the story rather than being the representation of characters and their interactions. These objects are props designed and made to illustrate the world in the story that occurs around them (Figure 16a). The aim is to design the objects as accurately as possible based on the descriptions in the written story as well as additional research of typography design, handwritten, calligraphy and printing press during the Victorian Era. In this context, the design elements play a role in world-building, enabling an immersive exploration of the story's historical setting. Furthermore, the overall book design encompassing typography, framing and composition is crafted to curate a story that documents the objects and the events surrounding them (Figure 16b). The framing emulates how the characters interact with the objects, focusing on little details which alludes to a bigger picture.

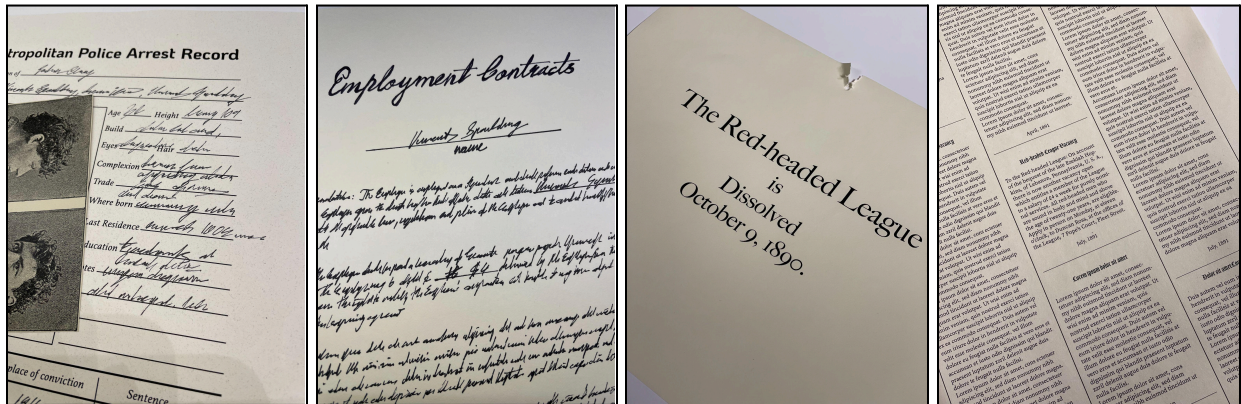


Figure 16a. Prop Design of The Adaptation of *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League* (2024)



Figure 16b. Sample Spread of The Adaptation of *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League* into System Two (2025)

As visual representation has the ability to convey the abstract into ideas, McCloud notes, “Our identities are aware we are invested in many inanimate objects every day. Our clothes, for example, can trigger numerous transformations in the way others see us and in the way we see ourselves... In every case, our constant awareness of self, flows outward to include the objects of our extended identity. And just as our awareness of our biological selves are simplified conceptualized images” (McCloud, 1994, pg 38). This approach allows abstract visuals to work together to illustrate meaning and communicate plot, world-building and feelings through representation. This is employed with graphic design in this thesis, where design elements reflect familiar feelings and are sequentially laid out to communicate meaning

through visuals. For instance, in most of the design projects in my thesis, the typography selection and treatment evoke character representation, moods and conflicts. The depiction of shapes, illustrations and objects helps establish the environments and settings while framing and composition assist in conveying the mood, pacing and structure of the visual adaptation.

### **3.1.4 The Designed Objects as Vehicles for Storytelling**

The visualization of written content can take different forms, such as book design, motion graphics, posters and more, all serving as vehicles for visual storytelling. Each of these forms comes with its own set of unique elements and processes, which is leveraged in this thesis to enhance storytelling and plays a critical role in shaping how stories are communicated visually. McCloud in his other book, *Making Comics: Storytelling Secrets of Comics, Manga, and Graphic Novels* states the importance of clarity in storytelling, “We want them to understand what we have to tell them - to achieve that goal first, you’ll need to learn the principle of communicating with clarity” (2006, pg 38). McCloud outlines five stages of visual communication: frame, movement, image, word, and flow (2008, pg 10). These principles of communication design, when applied to adapting written stories into visual forms, contribute to the flow and structures of the methods I explore in this thesis.

Throughout the exploration of this thesis, the written story and its content shape my design decisions, including the final output. The adaptation of *Hills Like White Elephants* into System One is contained in a magazine-like saddle-stitched book to

emulate the act of observation of conversations from a distance. Here, each page invites the viewer to glimpse different parts of the story, which adds depth and complexity to the already complex content of the written work (Figure 17a). In contrast, the story *The Irish Wedding* by Elizabeth McCracken, although the adaptation is in the framework of System One, is better suited as a time-based media. The shifting location of each conversation in the written story is best captured through movement and rhythm. Audio cues used with motion graphics replace written exposition, providing context into when and where the interactions occur (Figure 17b). My work with *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is processed using the framework of System Two with the final output in the form of a coffee-table book. The emphasis is on the content of the book as a documentation to observe and emphasize the specific objects that help tell the story (Figure 17c). The second adaptation of *Hills Like White Elephants*, this time into System Three, is in the form of a modified accordion-fold zine and is designed specifically for this story. The construction of the tangible zine facilitates the physical act of reading the story multiple times through the cut-out on each page that depicts the subjective views within the character's conversations (Figure 17d).

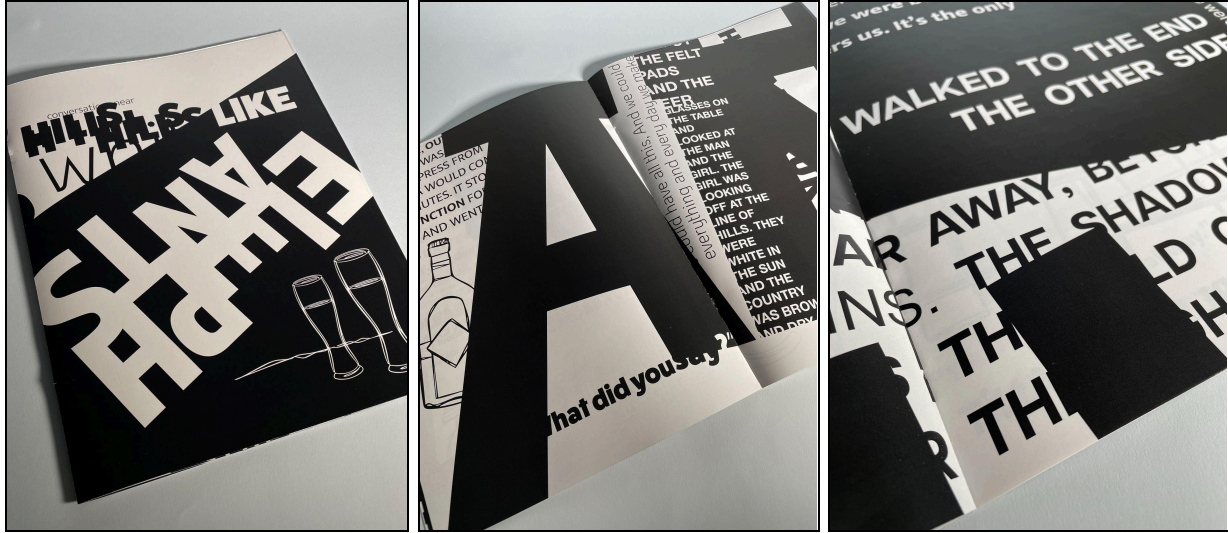


Figure 17a. Saddle Stitch Book The Adaptation of *Hills Like White Elephants* (2025)



Figure 17b. Motion Graphics Stills of The Adaptation of *The Irish Wedding* (2025)

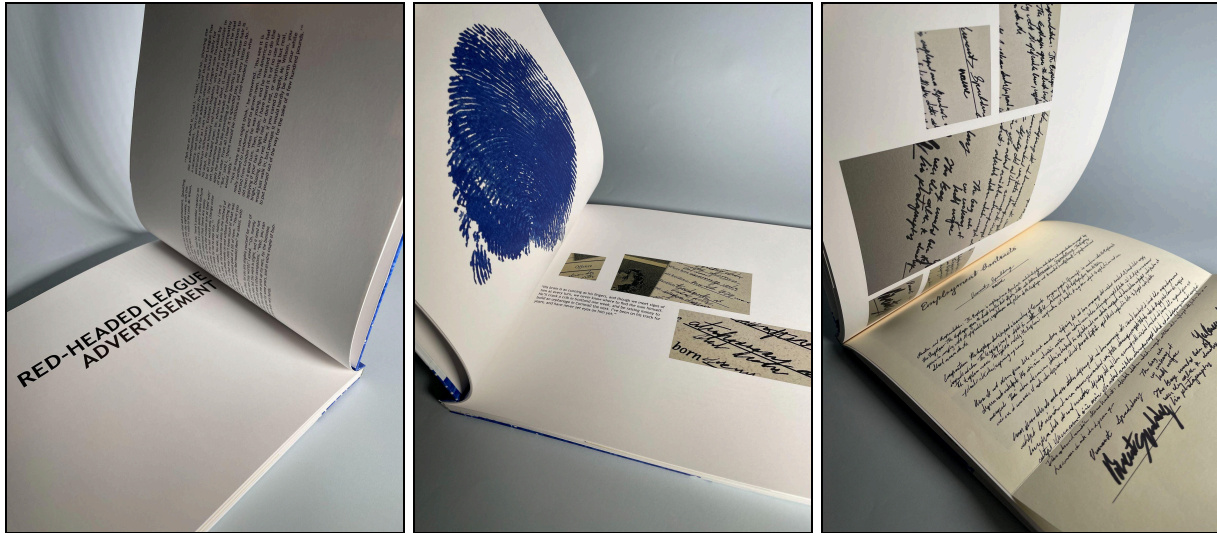


Figure 17c. Coffee-Table Book of The Adaptation of *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League* (2025)



Figure 17d. Modified Accordion-Fold Zine of The Adaptation of *Hills Like White Elephants* (2025)

The designs that are created for each adapted story are unique and determined by the content and deconstruction of the written narrative, with the sole objective being to create the appropriate vehicle for visual interpretations. “Although we think of narrative as a temporal art, experienced in time like music, of course, it’s interestingly visual, too; a story’s as much house or garden as a song” (Alison, 2019, pg 11). Written stories naturally lend themselves to visualization through descriptive choices made by

the authors. These written descriptions inform the overall form factor and visualization techniques of each adaptation. By employing deconstruction and responding with appropriate graphic design techniques, narratives can be adapted into new forms of visual storytelling that go beyond the written word.

## **3.2 Storytelling Cues From Normative Fiction Filmmaking for Graphic Design**

### **3.2.1 Fictional Filmmaking Techniques**

In addition to design methodologies, throughout this thesis, I also researched established methods of normative fictional filmmaking and to integrate them into my design work. I specifically examine aspects such as visual texture in scenes, art direction, production design and editing sequences. These world-building and editing techniques are integrated into my graphic design process during the development of new forms of visual storytelling.

Fictional Filmmaking utilizes visual language that is not possible through writing. “This inherent tendency is precisely what film directors exploit to elevate their storytelling beyond mere images and dialogue. They paint with light, not just scenery, and employ potent visual metaphors to imbue their movies with deeper layers of meaning” (Brown, 2025, pg 12). These visual tools enhance storytelling, allowing filmmakers to communicate ideas that words cannot convey. Brown also cites Thomas Elsaesser, who expresses that visual metaphors “offer a way of thinking through

images, a way of making ideas visually tangible” (2025, pg 12). This concept of transforming conceptual ideas into tangible visuals is explored throughout this thesis with text, images, graphic elements, and illustrations to convey meaning through visual metaphors. I focus on translating written content into compelling visuals with an emphasis on mood, feeling and subtext.

The use of texture in filmmaking is different from the term texture in graphic design. In film, “here we are talking about it in the broader sense of visual texture, encompassing lighting, locations, choice of film stock, effects such as rain and fog, makeup, hair, and wardrobe” (Brown, 2025, pg 126). Textures contribute to world-building by visually presenting what exists on screen, providing the abstract with a sense of form through visual representation. Although graphic design may not have makeup, hair or wardrobe to work with, character portrayals and environments can be depicted through typography selection, treatment, colour, balance, space and other compositional choices.

This is particularly evident in my adaptation of *Hills Like White Elephants* with System One and Three. The adaptation into System One, the variety of typefaces and the manner in which they are composed on each page is a reflection of the range, tone and behaviour of each character. These function as visual metaphors representing the characters' actions in a scene, with typography illustrating the dynamics between them (Figure 18). In contrast, in the adaptation using System Three, a specific typeface is assigned to each character, which acts as a form of character design visually



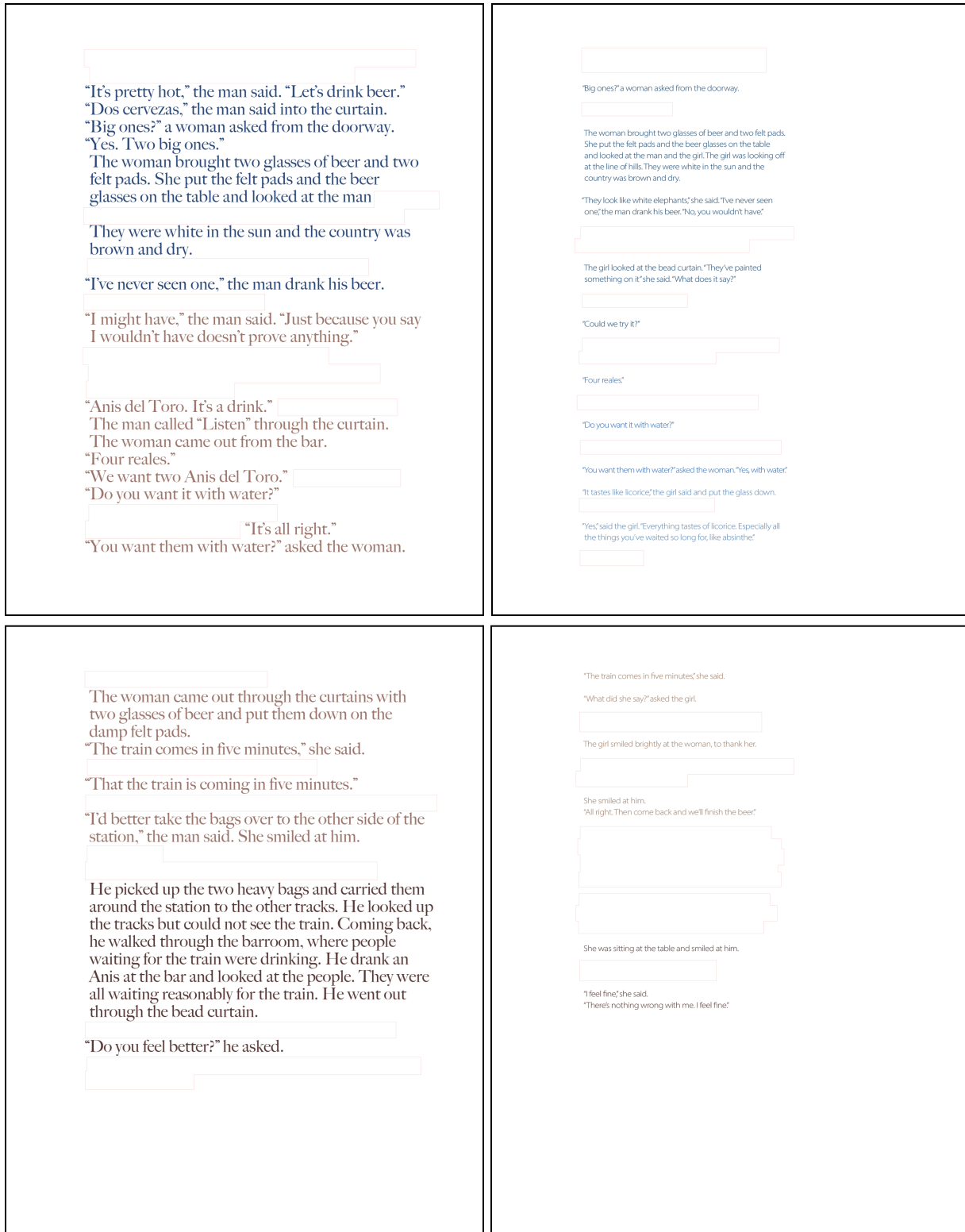


Figure 19. Male Character Pages (left) vs. female Character Pages (right) from The Adaptation of *Hills Like White Elephants with System Three* (2025)

Blain Brown emphasizes that “visual texture serves as a subtext, providing layers of information that enrich the storytelling.” (2025, pg 127). He then reiterates that David Lynch, the director of many surreal and textured films, emphasizes, “Texture isn’t just a visual element; it’s a narrative tool. It communicates the history, the emotions, and the unseen layers of the story.” (Brown, 2025, pg 127). Through this thesis, I research and mimic film techniques like the implementation of filmmaking texture into the graphic design work I create. Where typography selection, treatment, colour, balance, space and other compositional choices are used to portray characters and environments, transforming the written word into visuals. Positioning it as an effective method for evolving storytelling and creating new approaches to interpreting written narratives into visual forms through graphic design.

### **3.2.2 Art Direction and World Building to Tell Stories**

A key aspect of fictional filmmaking is art direction and production design, which involves creating a visual language to establish the mood, tone, and atmosphere of a story. This process begins by understanding the subtext of a written story and translating it from descriptions on a page into a visual statement. In film, this is done by creating and sourcing sets, props and environments. These components play a key role in shaping the visual language of stories, as art, dressing, costume, and location must come together cohesively to create a successful world of the story (Doyle, 2019, pg 35-36). In filmmaking, props can either be repurposed found objects used or new objects created for the specific production and important components of

world-building. They are categorized into two types. The first is hand props, which are handled by actors and are frequently mentioned in the written story, with detailed descriptions of their appearance and function. The second is set props, which are objects present in the environment of the story, items for the set, like furniture, rugs or any other distinct items on the floor, walls, or ceilings that contribute to the atmosphere (Hart, 2024, pg 4). Both types of props contribute to visual storytelling through world-building, dictated by the written story, translated from description to physical forms.

I utilize this method in the adaptation of *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League* into System Two, The Documentation of The World of Stories. In this design, the story unfolds through the objects of importance to the plot and how the characters observe and interact with them. This approach requires the creation of items based on the written description that lays out the groundwork for what they look like. This story, a detective mystery, includes detailed descriptions of items like newspapers, signage, and other documents (Figure 20a). Additionally, other objects are referenced in the written work, which is central to the plot but lacks descriptive detail. This gives space for additional literary research on the objects to stay faithful to the written work and offers me creative liberty when designing the props.

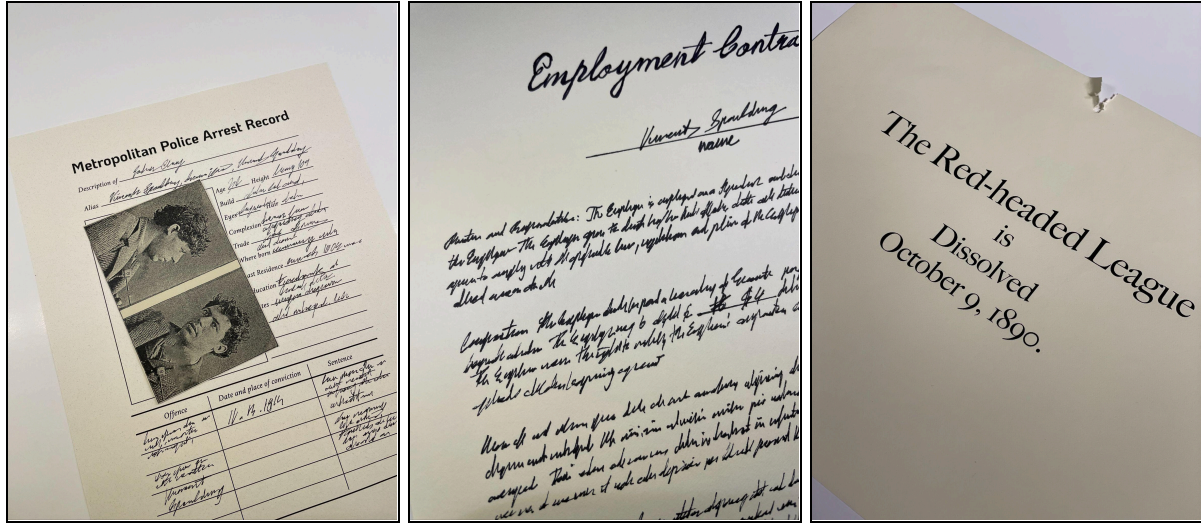


Figure 20a. Arrest Record, Contract and Paper Sign Props of The Adaptation of *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League* (2025)

When creating props for films, it is important to conduct research on what is to be made. “It helps ensure historical accuracy and possibilities. It can also define different details, such as fabric, hardware, and materials. The designer often commences research when developing a design, while the props department continues research to ‘fill in the gaps’ of an existing design. A good props builder must know how to research” (Hart, 2024, pg 86). Researching the history of the objects in the written story allows prop designers to more accurately create authentic forms. Doing this work helps to establish a more precise world-building, “as this aspect of the job parallels the work of historians of culture, art, or cinema. Establishing the period (or periods) in which a film is set and whether it involves realistic or fantastic spaces, the designer must come up with the relevant ‘look’ for sets that need to be constructed or dressed” (Fischer, 2015, pg 12).

In addition to the creation of props that closely adhere to the description of the written story, research on Victorian Era objects and technologies is conducted for the

adaptation of *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League*. For example, one area of research is the printing presses and paper making during the 1880s-1890s, the time period the stories of *Sherlock Holmes* are set. Since a majority of the props in this adaptation are paper-based, such as invoices, business cards, book covers and newspapers (Figure 20b). This historical research is crucial for understanding how these items were manufactured and what they should look like for my design work in this thesis. For example when researching the process of making newspapers in the late 1800s, “A newspaper of any considerable circulation at the present day is not printed by a flat-bed machine, and on sheets of paper, each carefully damped before being fed into the machine. There are a few machines of the rotary kind which print from movable type, in order to save the expense of stereotyping, but they are quite exceptional.” (Southward, 1897, pg 19). Researching the objects, time periods, and techniques not only helps for more accurate historical representation but also the limitations I may face when designing and making them.

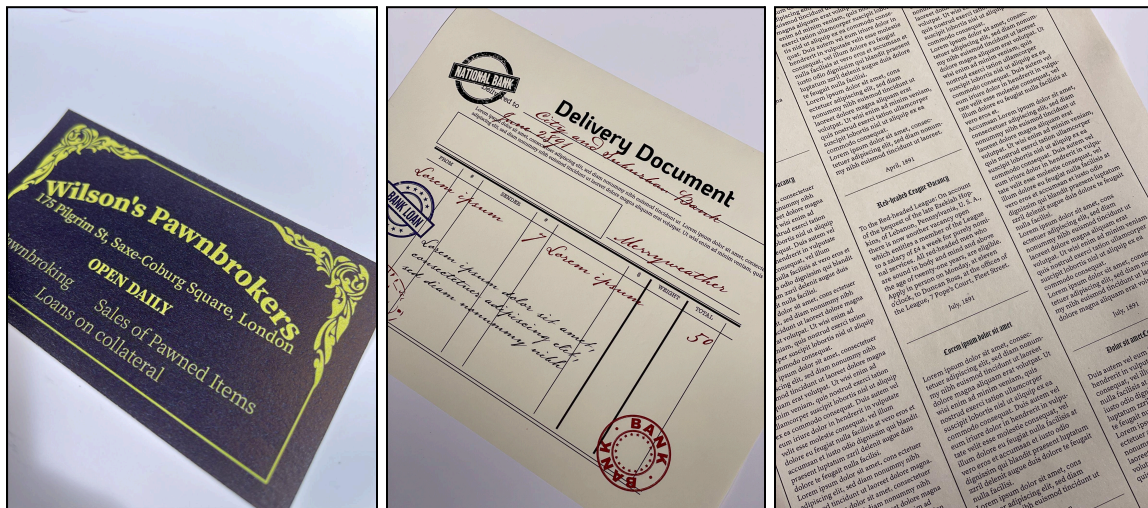


Figure 20b. Invoice, Business Card, and Newspaper Props of The Adaptation of *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League* (2025)

The knowledge I gain through historical research like this provides me with a better understanding of the limitations of making these props and potential workarounds thus, I am able to take some creative liberties during the design and production process. Taking the example of the newspaper prop and the research of printing methods during the Victorian Era, “- the printing of this kind is done from stereotype plates cast either from movable type or linotype bars” (Southward, 1897, pg 19). While designing, I do not have access to the same machines; the workaround is to print on newsprint paper with black and white inkjet printing using typefaces similar to the ones on linotype bars during the 1890s. By understanding the process, materials and limitations, I am able to find a workaround to make visually accurate-looking props for storytelling, contributing to better world-building.

In this thesis, other story adaptations include a similar approach to prop-making for accurate world-building. In *The Irish Wedding* adaptation, for the creation of objects like dog tags, cigarette packaging, car rental agreements, and wedding invitations, additional historical research is conducted to stay true to the visuals of the story as well as the location of Ireland where the story takes place (Figure 21). For the adaptation of *Hills Like White Elephants* with System One which includes illustration, research into the location of Spain's Ebro Valley, as well as the use of alcohol bottles in Spain during the 1920s and other relevant aspects of the story, is conducted to better the story's historical context. This research on the creation of props and visuals for world-building provides a level of visual tangibility when adapting stories.

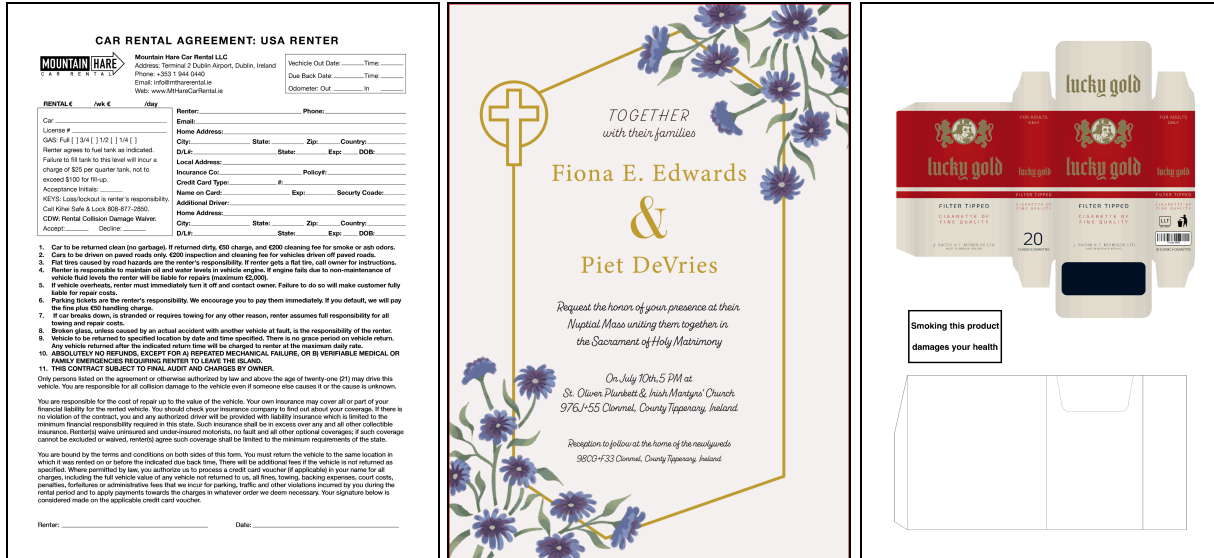


Figure 21. Props Designed for The Adaptation of *The Irish Wedding* (2025)

### 3.2.3 Editing and Sequencing

The last of the filmmaking techniques I examine and implement into my design work is the process of editing sequences. This practice is common in both graphic design and film, providing a valuable method of communicating visuals sequentially to tell stories. “In simplistic terms, human beings order the world dialectically. Incapable of perceiving randomness, we insist on imposing order on any observed phenomena, any new information that comes our way” (Yorke, 2013, pg 69). Stories can follow specific patterns, and when translating them into visual forms, elements such as movement, rhythm, and timing needs to be considered. I apply these principles in the designs I make in this thesis, regardless if the design piece is in motion or stationary book format. Brown describes the process of editing stories in film as “We are breaking it up into little pieces from different viewpoints. The magic is that we can put them back together any way we like! This is editing, and we have enormous latitude in rearranging

the pieces of each scene, as well as the sequence of scenes overall. We can reconstruct the space for different understandings, emotional effects, and perceptions” (2025, pg 72). Graphic designing shares this ability with filmmaking, particularly how design elements flow within a layout, time and space. In book design, the sequence of pages and how design elements are arranged is key to translating the flow of the narrative. In this thesis, an understanding of the principles of editing, such as movement, rhythm, and timing, have informed how stories can be rearranged and restructured when transforming writing into visuals. Each adaptation requires the disassembly of the original structures as well as original presentation formats and the reconstruction into a series of sequentially designed visuals, which contributes to the development of new storytelling systems.

*Hills Like White Elephants* and its adaptation into System One, titled “The Unrecognizable Patterns of Overhearing,” as the title suggests, is meant to provoke unpredictability, illegibility, and a chaotic pattern. Which is different from the linear sequence of events that transpires in the written story. This adaptation is initially designed as a large format poster where all the conversations and interactions are anchored to the large titles that encapsulate the whole composition with no beginning, middle or end (Figure 22). Breaking the poster into spreads and adjusting the compositions accordingly allowed each page to flow into the next, enabling a more intimate examination of the content of this book.

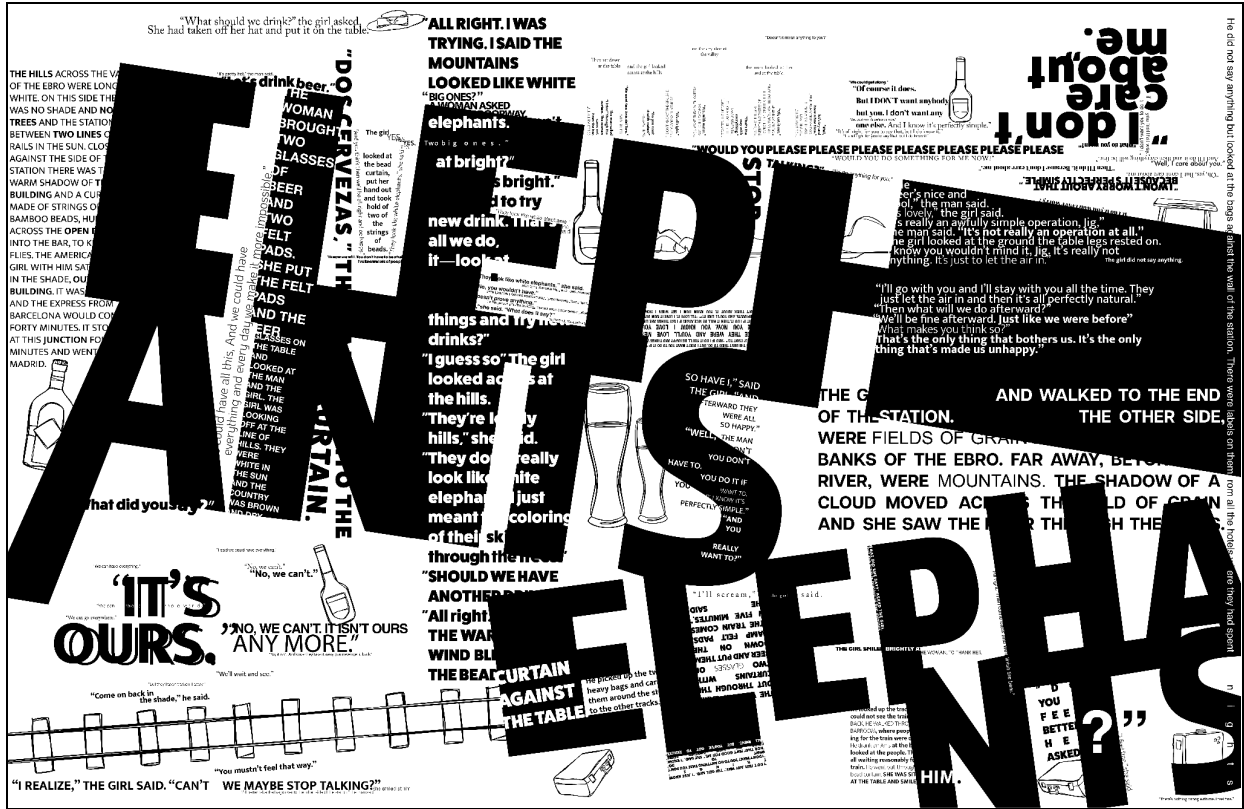


Figure 22. Poster of The Adaptation of *Hills Like White Elephants* (2025)

System Two is an adaptation of *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League* that explores a different sequencing and is organized in alphabetical order of the objects. This changes the story from resembling the traditional Freytag's Pyramid structure and transforms it into a documentation; coincidentally, the conclusion is located at the beginning of the book due to the Arrest Record prop being the first object documented. The inciting incident appears at the end of the book as the newspaper prop that sets the story's conflict in motion, and it is the very last object documented. The content that fills the pages in between serves to explore the story and the series of events that unfold (Figure 23). Each design I create translates written narratives by

disassembling and reconstructing the original structure into a series of visually sequential designs.

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrest Record 5</li> <li>Business Card 15</li> <li>Closure Notice 21</li> <li>Invoice 27</li> <li>Encyclopedia 33</li> <li>Encyclopedia Transcribed 37</li> <li>Employment Contract 41</li> <li>Red-headed League Contract 47</li> <li>Maps 53</li> <li>Red-headed League Notice 57</li> </ul>
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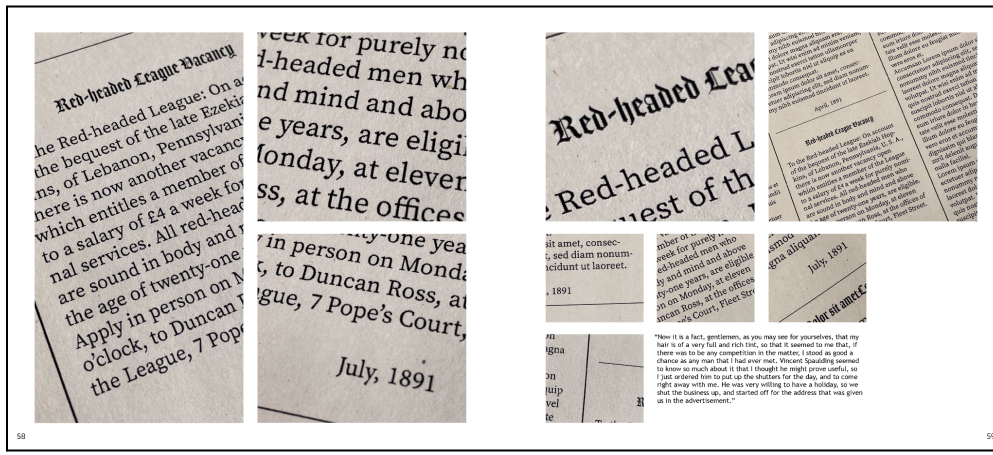


Figure 23. Table of Contents and Sample Spreads from The Adaptation of *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League* (2025)

Understanding visual storytelling techniques from different mediums such as comics, fictional filmmaking, and design enhances the process of how written stories can be adapted into visual form. By deconstructing existing stories and building upon their foundations with methods of visualization, designers can adopt and adjust the methodologies discussed in this section. The design pieces created in this thesis all borrow and expand on these visualization approaches of using design principles, filmmaking texture, art direction, production design and editing sequences through a series of graphic design processes to develop new forms of visual storytelling.

### **3.3 Third-Party Literary Research to Inform the Designs**

During the design process of this thesis, I conduct third-party literary research to gain deeper insight into the stories, the writers, their writing style and the critical analysis of their work. This is the “Research of the Material Being Adapted” stage in the creation process done to educate myself as the designer to be able to respect and honour the stories while I consider what new visual storytelling forms could emerge. This research also provides assistance during the deconstruction stage, allowing me to better understand the stories, their subtext and the writing style that I may overlook in my initial analysis of the written stories. By understanding the author's intentions and the critical discussion surrounding their work, I am able to use that knowledge to guide my design conceptualization and decision-making.

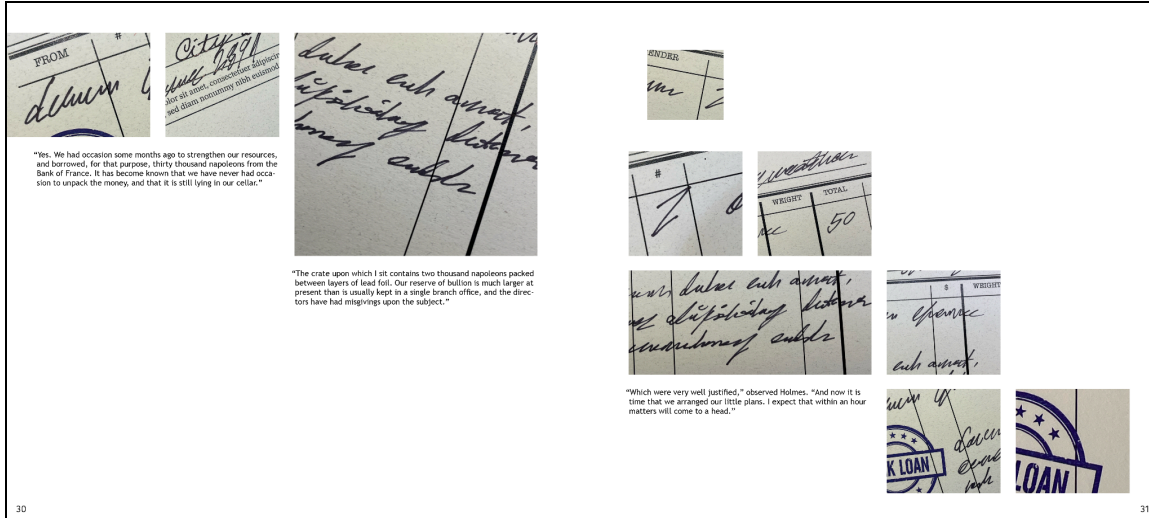
Some of the literary research I explore, which gives significant insight for my designs, focuses on American author Ernest Hemingway and his writing. In a letter

written to his father, he states, “I’m trying in all my stories to get the feeling of the actual life across—not to just depict life or criticize it—but to actually make it alive so that when you’re reading something by me you actually experience the thing.” This letter is found in the exhibition *Ernest Hemingway – Between Two Wars*. When analyzing various works by Hemingway, a common evaluation is that he focuses on the feeling of life and capturing moments of it in his stories. This leads to the notion that his writing has “this desire to incarnate experience in language, to enable the reader to feel the sensation of life on her pulses—to live vicariously through the writing and through the writer, who serves as mediator, conduit and secular priest—is a reflection of Hemingway’s deep hunger for and abiding love of life” (O’Donnell, 2021). Conducting additional research into Hemingway and the critical opinions that surround him reveals how he wants his readers to engage in his writing. The visual adaptation of his work in this thesis is grounded in patterns outside of writing and conventional story structures, rather than expressing the feeling of lived experience. The design visualizations of his story are representative of abstract ideas of overhearing and subjectivity translated into visual form.

Additionally, when researching Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the author of the *Sherlock Holmes* stories, I discovered that the commercialization of those stories in the 1970s changed scholars’ attitudes toward Doyle’s detective stories. Based on additional research, as countless stories and many adaptations took form,

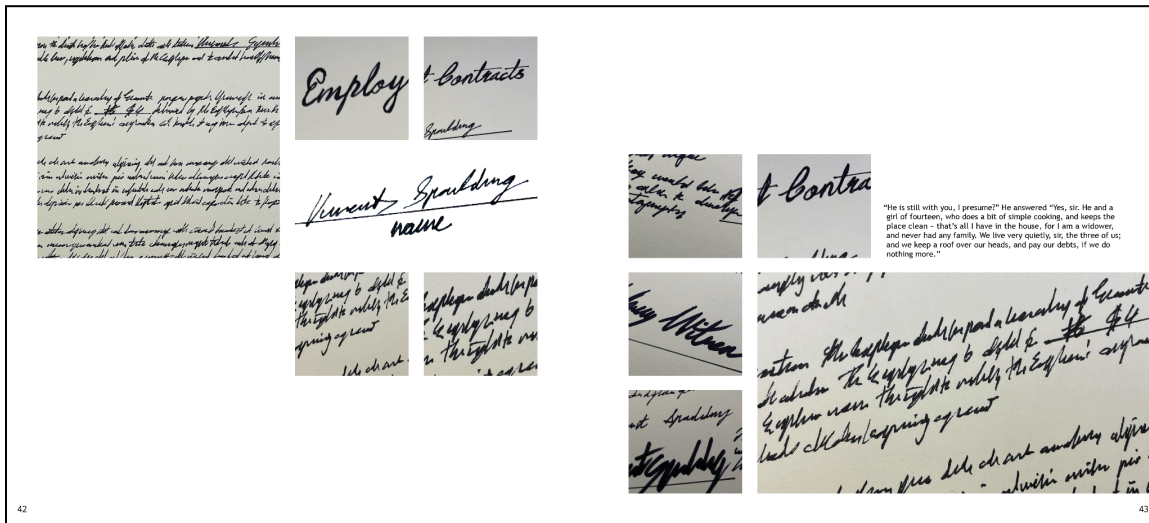
“At the beginning of the twenty-first century, there was certainly no slacking of interest in Holmes among an ever-increasing public hungry for anything associated with Doyle’s detective. Reprints of Doyle’s tales competed with new books (including graphic novels), adaptations and expansions of the original stories, pastiches, parodies, and tributes. The film industry exploited the Holmes stories for interpretations that appealed to contemporary audiences; television reaped the benefits of viewers’ familiarity with the characters to create a number of popular and critically acclaimed new productions” (Mazzeno, 2005, pg 134).

The knowledge from this literary research allows me to deliberately design a coffee table book as something that can be flipped through and observed. The findings of the commercialization of Sherlock Holmes stories also influenced the internal layout of the book, moving away from a traditional typology displaying images towards an experimental comic-style framing (Figure 24), with the image selection and cropping reflecting Doyle’s written descriptions of the objects and how they are interpreted in the story. By deconstructing stories and conducting third-party literary research, I am able to adapt the narratives while expressing my design voice, allowing the writing to drive my creative decisions.



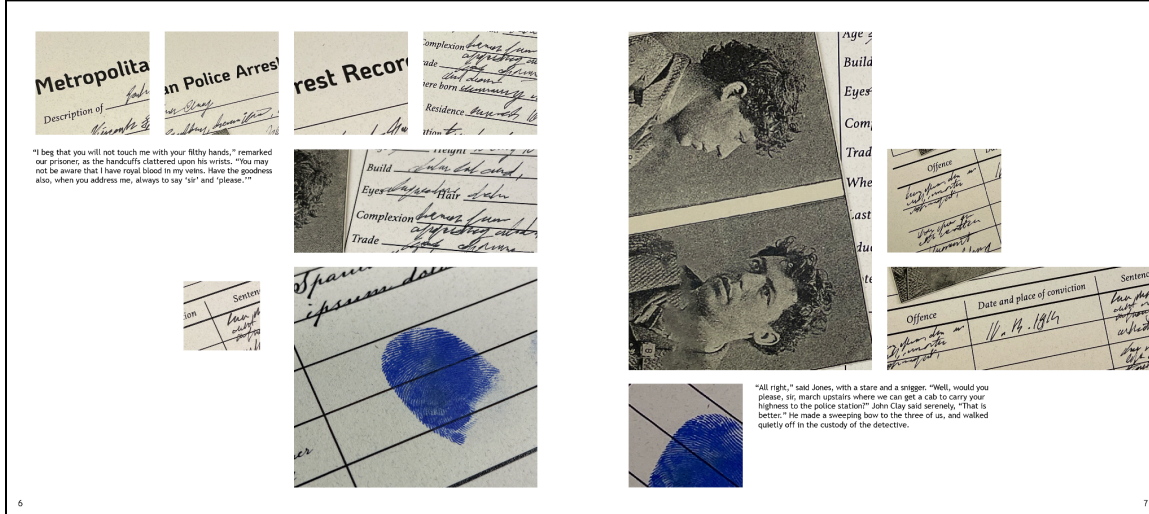
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31



42

43



6

7

Figure 24. Spreads Showcasing Image Framing from The Adaptation of *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Header League* (2025)

The methodologies I examine and implement in this section provide knowledge of storytelling. They guide the development of new systems by deconstructing existing narratives and interpreting them through a series of graphic design methodologies. This thesis draws on techniques from mediums such as comics, film and design in addition to literary research to influence the way the outcomes of visual storytelling are designed. As a result, the three new systems conceived in this thesis are: “The Unrecognizable Patterns of Overhearing,” “Documentation of the World of Story,” and “Parallels, Perspectives, and Subjective Views.”

## Conclusion

My thesis explores and develops new systems for visual storytelling by deconstructing existing stories and interpreting them through a series of graphic design methodologies. This is achieved through the analysis of story structures, the deconstruction of written narratives, and the incorporation of visual storytelling methodologies taken from filmmaking, comics, design and other media to investigate and develop new storytelling systems. The process involves “Research Through Design,” an iterative process of the following steps: First, the deconstruction of stories entails analyzing the plots, character interactions and other conventional world-building techniques in several stories. This guides my design decisions when creating visual pieces, which are instrumental in developing new storytelling systems. Next, research on storytelling methodologies consists of literary explorations of how storytelling is done in filmmaking, comics, illustrations and writing. The knowledge of these methodologies is implemented in the design process of translating written narratives into visuals. Additionally, research of the material being adapted is the process of examining the authors and the cultural significance of their text through third-party sources. This helps inform creative choices that may have been missed during deconstruction. Developing visual language is the process of creating various storytelling systems and designed objects that serve as vehicles for visual storytelling. Lastly, deliberation is the iterative process of analyzing the successes and shortcomings of my design work, which informs additional designs and revisions.

By deconstructing a variety of stories from Western culture and leveraging the insights gained from this analysis, I developed three new story systems: The “Unrecognizable Patterns of Overhearing,” “Documentation of the World of Story,” and “Parallels, Perspectives, and Subjective Views.” These story systems are intended to be used to create visual adaptations. My thesis builds upon existing frameworks of storytelling, with the aim of investigating how new models and rule sets can be generated and used to transform the written word into visual forms. As graphic designers, I believe we can enhance storytelling by exploring the relationship between written narratives and visuals using design principles.

This thesis demonstrates that the exploration of storytelling is ever-evolving and has limitless possibilities for generating methods of visual communication. Thus, in addition to the three new story systems I develop in this thesis, there is potential to create more. Even the short stories I examine and adapt are a restrained selection as there are still ample opportunities to examine other short stories, novels, poetry, folklore and many more from across the globe and various cultures. The methodologies I have examined and implemented so far are also limited in quantity, but there are a variety of other visual communication methods that I have not touched upon. The continuation of this research can yield new and interesting ways of transforming written work into compelling visual storytelling. This thesis lays out a foundation for the process of exploring and developing new systems for storytelling by deconstructing existing narratives and interpreting them through a series of graphic design

methodologies. Using this thesis can provide the basis for generating new story systems, developing visual languages, and evolving the methods for graphic design.

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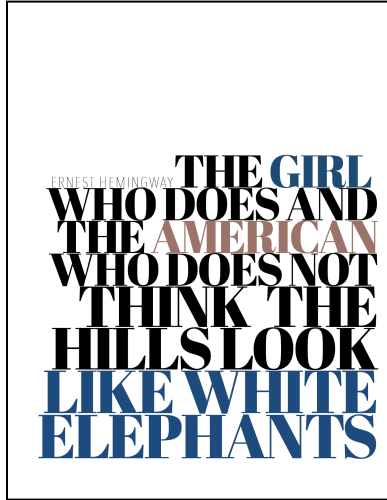
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Zine of Hills Like White Elephants. Front Cover and All Interior Pages (2025).



The hills across the valley of the Ebro were long and white. On this side there was no shade and no trees and the station was between two lines of rails in the sun. Close against the side of the station there was the warm shabazz of the building and a curtain made of strings of baboon heads, hung across the opening into the bar, to keep out flies. The American and the girl with him sat at a table in the shade outside the building. It was very hot and the express from Barcelona would come in forty minutes. It stopped at this junction for two minutes and went on to Madrid.

"What should we drink?" the girl asked. She had taken off her hat and put it on the table.

"It's pretty hot," the man said. "Let's drink beer."  
 "Dos cervezas," the man said into the curtain.  
 "Big ones?" a woman asked from the doorway.  
 "Yes. Two big ones."  
 The woman brought two glasses of beer and two felt pads. She put the felt pads and the beer glasses on the table and looked at the man.

"They were white in the sun and the country was brown and dry."

"I've never seen one," the man drank his beer.

"I might have," the man said. "Just because you say I wouldn't have doesn't prove anything."

"Anís del Toro. It's a drink."  
 The man called "Listen" through the curtain.  
 The woman came out from the bar.  
 "Four reales."  
 "We want two Anís del Toro."  
 "Do you want it with water?"

"It's all right."  
 "You want them with water?" asked the woman.

"Big ones?" a woman asked from the doorway.

The woman brought two glasses of beer and two felt pads. She put the felt pads and the beer glasses on the table and looked at the man and the girl. The girl was looking at the hills of hills. They were white in the sun and the country was brown and dry.

"They look like white elephants," she said. "I've never seen one." The man drank his beer. "No, you wouldn't have."

The girl looked at the bead curtain. "They've painted something on it," she said. "What does it say?"

"Could we try it?"

"Your order?"

"Do you want it with water?"

"You want them with water?" asked the woman. "Yes, with water."

"It tastes like licorice," the girl said and put the glass down.

"Yes," said the girl. "Everything tastes of licorice. Especially all the things you've waited so long for. Like anís del Toro."

"That's the way with everything."

"Oh, cut it out."

"Well, let's try and have a fine time."

"That was bright."

"I guess so."

"Should we have another drink?"  
 The warm wind blew the bead curtain against the table.  
 "The beer's nice and cool," the man said.

"It's really an awfully simple operation, Jig," the man said. "It's not really an operation at all."

"I know you wouldn't mind it, Jig. It's really not anything. It's just to let the air in."

"You started it," the girl said. "I was being amused. I was having a fine time."

"All right. I was trying to say the mountains looked like white elephants. Wasn't that bright?"

"I wanted to try this new drink. That's all we do, isn't it—look at things and try new drinks?"

The girl looked across at the hills.

"They're lovely hills," she said. "They don't really look like white elephants. Just meant the coloring of their skin through the beard."

"All right."

The warm wind blew the bead curtain against the table.

"It's lovely," the girl said.

The girl looked at the ground and the table legs rested on.

The girl did not say anything.

"Then what will we do afterward?"

"I'll go with you and I'll stay with you all the time. They just let the air in and then it's all perfectly natural."

"Well, be fine afterward. Just like we were before."

"That's the only thing that bothers us. It's the only thing that's made us unhappy."

"I know we will. You don't have to be afraid. I've known lots of people that have done it."

"Well," the man said, "if you don't want to you don't have to. I wouldn't have you do it if you didn't want to. But I know it's perfectly simple."

"I think it's the best thing to do. But I don't want you to do it if you don't really want to."

"I love you now. You know I love you."

"I'll love it. I love it now but I just can't think about it. You know how I get when I worry."

"I won't worry about that because it's perfectly simple."

"What makes you think so?"

The girl looked at the bead curtain, put her hand out and took hold of two of the strings of beads.

"And you think then we'll be all right and be happy?"

"So have I said the girl? And afterward they were all so happy?"

"And you really want to?"

"And if it will be happy and things will be like they were and you'll love me?"

"I know. But if I do, then it will be nice again if I say things and like white elephants, and you'll like it?"

"If I do you won't ever worry?"

"Then I don't. Because I don't care about me!"

"What do you mean?" "Well, I care about you."

"I don't want you to do it if you feel that way."

"And we could have everything and every day we make it more impossible."

"I said we could have everything. We can have everything."

"We can have the whole world."

"We can go everywhere."

"It's ours."

"But they haven't taken it away."

"Come on back in the shade," he said. "You mustn't feel that way."

"I don't care about me!"

"Oh yes. But I don't care about me. And I'll do it and then everything will be fine!"

The girl stood up and walked to the end of the station. Across on the other side, were fields of grain and trees along the banks of the Baro. Far away beyond the trees were mountains. The shadow of a cloud moved across the field of grain and she saw the river through the trees. "I wish we could have all this!" she said. "I wish we could have everything and every day we make it most impossible!"

"I said we could have everything!"

"No we can't!"

"No we can't!"

"No we can't. It isn't ours any more!"

"No it isn't. And once they take it away you never get it back!"

"Well wait and see!"

"I don't feel any way," the girl said. "I just know things!"

**"I don't want you to do anything that you don't want to do—"**

"All right. But you've got to realize—"

They sat down at the table.

The man looked at her and at the table. "You've got to realize," he said, "that I don't want you to do it if you don't want to. I'm perfectly willing to go through with it if it means anything to you."

"Of course it does. But I don't want anybody but you. I don't want any one else. And I know it's perfectly simple."

"It's all right for you to say that, but I do know it."

"I'd do anything for you."

He did not say anything but looked at the bags against the wall of the station. There were labels on them from all the hotels where they had spent nights. "But I don't want you to," he said, "I don't care anything about it."

"Isn't that just good for me?" she said. "I know. Could we have another beer?"

"I realize," the girl said. "Can't we maybe stop talking?"

They sat down at the table and the girl looked across at the hill on the dry side of the valley and the man looked at her and at the table.

"Doesn't it mean anything to you? We could get along!"

"Is you know it's perfectly simple?"

"Would you do something for me now?"

"Would you please please please please please please stop talking?"

"I'll scow!" the girl said.

The woman came out through the curtains with two glasses of beer and put them down on the damp felt pads.

The woman came out through the curtains with two glasses of beer and put them down on the damp felt pads.

"The train comes in five minutes," she said.

"That the train is coming in five minutes."

"I'd better take the bags over to the other side of the station," the man said. She smiled at him.

He picked up the two heavy bags and carried them around the station to the other tracks. He looked up the tracks but could not see the train. Coming back, he walked through the barroom, where people waiting for the train were drinking. He drank an Anis at the bar and looked at the people. They were all waiting reasonably for the train. He went out through the bead curtain.

"Do you feel better?" he asked.

"The train comes in five minutes," she said.

"What did she say?" asked the girl.

The girl smiled brightly at the woman, to thank her.

She smiled at him.

"All right. Then come back and we'll finish the beer!"

She was sitting at the table and smiled at him.

"I feel fine!" she said.

"There's nothing wrong with me. I feel fine!"

Pass him **HIM**  
YOU P A S S

I'm not driving.  
**That's right**

you're a little close,

**HERE**  
SIDE  
the  
to

**WE'LL** *miss*  
**SUPPER,**

That's all right.  
We've missed it.  
**We've missed it.**

How are you doing?  
??  
I'm fine!

**IT'S A MANSION!**  
*It's a Georgian cube*

# The Irish Wedding

she told him



It's a n

Why Ireland?

amazing house,

W H Y  
I N D E E D .

APPARENTLY  
THEY LIKE  
THE IRISH.

I THINK THEY'RE MAD TO HAVE BOUGHT IT.

IT'LL TAKE THEM DONKEY'S TO FIX IT UP. <sup>Why?</sup> YEARS

NOT TO MENTION THE COST.

THEY'RE NOT VERY PRACTICAL

HERE,  
LET'S GO THIS WAY

RECALL the name of the dog.

CU

Jack, please LISTEN to what I'm saying.

Where were you for most of the RECEPTION?

What if he *died* in this bed,

People have died  
everywhere

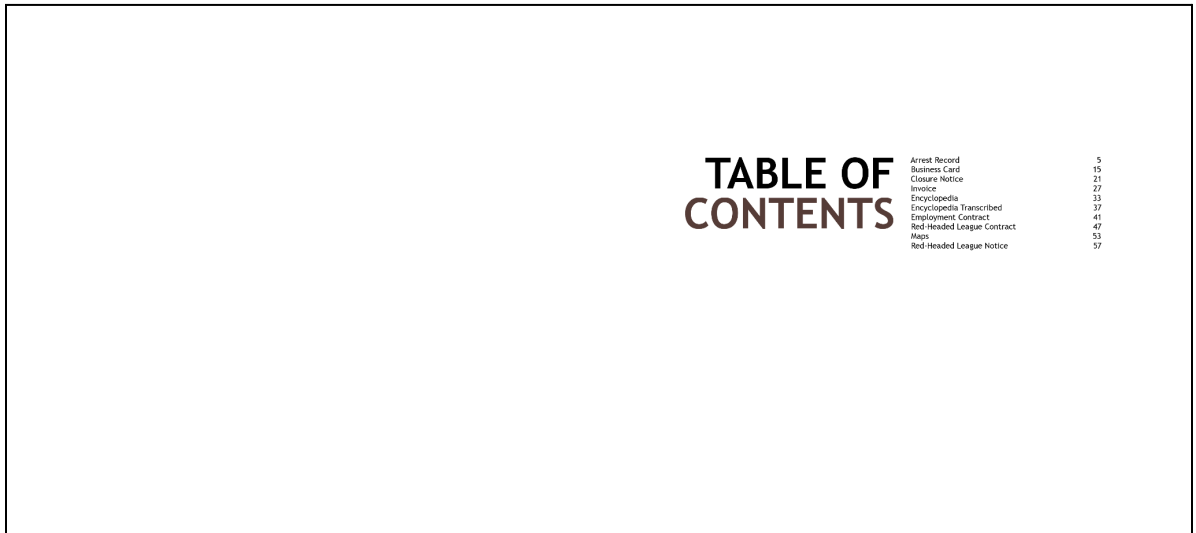
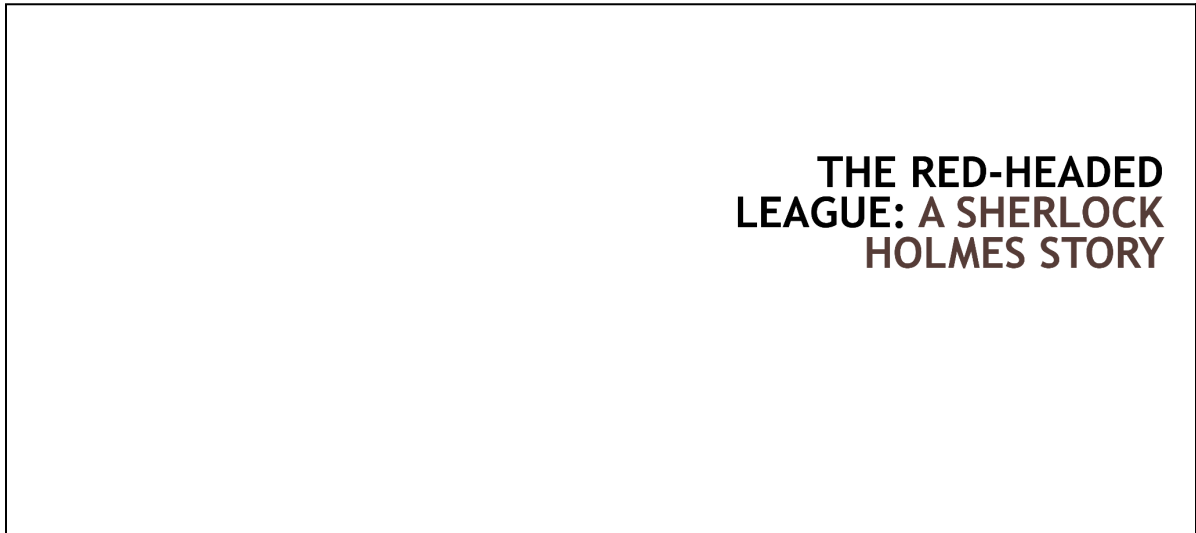
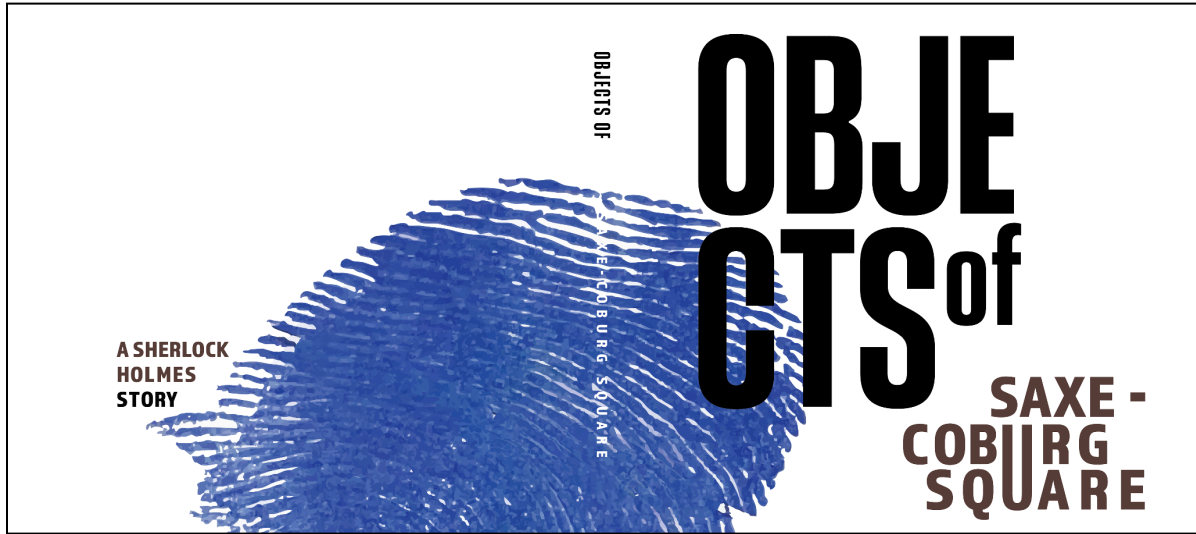
you

can

hardly

avoid **it**

c o m e here.



# ARREST RECORDS

AT FIRST it was but a lurid spark upon the stone pavement. Then it lengthened out until it became a yellow line, and then, without any warning or sound, a gash seemed to open and a hand appeared, a white, almost womanly hand, which fell about in the center of the little area of light. For a minute or more the hand, with its writhing fingers, protruded out of the floor. Then it was withdrawn as suddenly as it appeared, and all was dark again save the single lurid spark, which marked a chink between the stones.

Its disappearance, however, was but momentary. With a rending, tearing sound, one of the broad white stones turned over upon its side, and left a square, gaping hole, through which streamed the light of a lantern. Over the edge there peeped a clean-cut, boyish face, which looked keenly about it, and then, with a hand on either side of the aperture, drew itself shoulder high and waist high, until one knee rested upon the edge. In another instant he stood at the side of the hole, and was hauling after him a companion, little and small like himself, with a pale face and a shock of very red hair. "It's all clear," he whispered. "Have you the chisel and the bags? Great Scott! Jump, anchor, jump, and I'll swing for 'em!"

Sherlock Holmes had sprung out and seized the intruder by the collar. The other dived down the hole, and I heard the sound of rending cloth as Jones clutched at his skirts. The light flashed upon the barrel of a revolver, but Holmes's hunting crop came down on the man's wrist, and the pistol clinked upon the stone floor.

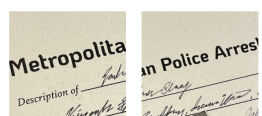
"It's no use, John Clay," said Holmes blandly, "you have no chance at all." The other answered, "So I see," with the utmost coolness. "I fancy that my pal is all right, though I see you have got his coat-tails."

"There are three men waiting for him at the door," said Holmes. "Oh, indeed. You seem to have done the thing very completely. I must compliment you." Holmes answered, "And I you, your red-headed idea was very new and effective."

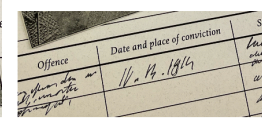
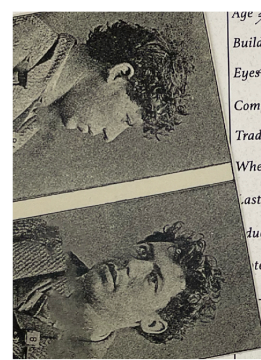
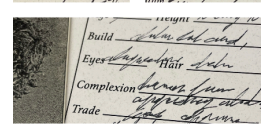
"You'll see your pal again presently," said Jones. "He's quicker at climbing down holes than I am. Just hold out while I fix the debris."

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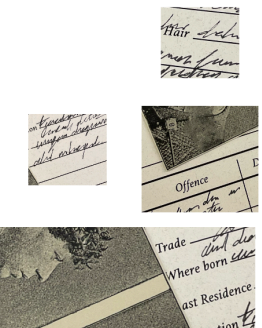
"I beg that you will not touch me with your filthy hands," remarked our prisoner, as the handcuffs clattered upon his wrists. "You may not be aware that I have royal blood in my veins. Have the goodness also, when you address me, always to say 'sir' and 'please.'"



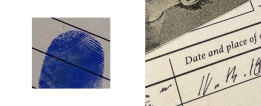
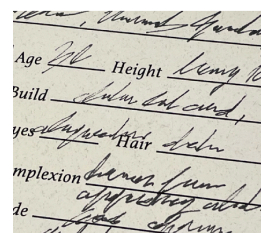
"All right," said Jones, with a stare and a shiver. "Well, would you please, sir, march upstairs where we can get a cab to carry your highness to the police station?" John Clay said serenely, "That is better." He made a sweeping bow to the three of us, and walked quietly off in the custody of the detective.

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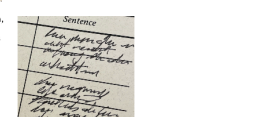
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"I hope that I may have the pleasure of introducing you tonight. I've had one or two little turns also with Mr. John Clay, and I agree with you that he is at the head of his profession. It is past ten, however, and quite time that we started. If you two will take the first hansom, Watson and I will follow in the second."

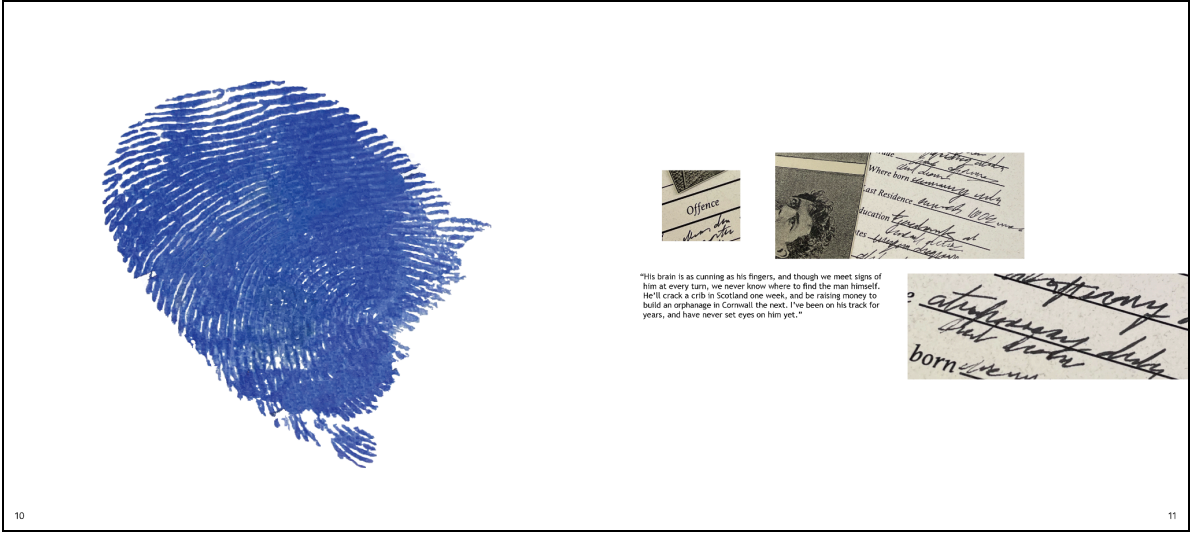


"John Clay, the murderer, thief, smasher, and forger. He's a young man, Mr. Merryweather, but he is at the head of his profession and I would rather have my knuckles on him than on any criminal in London. He's a remarkable man, is young John Clay. His grandfather was a Royal Duke, and he himself has been to Eton and Oxford."



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"His brain is as cunning as his fingers, and though we meet signs of him at every turn, we never know where to find the man himself. He'll crack a crib in Scotland one week, and be raising money to build an orphanage in Cornwall the next. I've been on his track for years, and have never set eyes on him yet."

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"Really, Mr. Holmes," said Mr. Merryweather, as we followed them from the cellar, "I do not know how the bank can thank you or repay you. There is no doubt that you have detected and defeated in the most complete manner one of the most determined attempts at bank robbery that have ever come within my experience."

"I have had one or two little scores of my own to settle with Mr. John Clay," said Holmes. "I have been at some small expense over this matter, which I shall expect the bank to refund, but beyond that I am amply repaid by having had an experience which is in many ways unique, and by hearing the very remarkable narrative of the Red-headed League."

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## BUSINESS CARD

"WELL, IT IS JUST AS I HAVE BEEN TELLING YOU, Mr. Sherlock Holmes," said Jabez Wilson, mopping his forehead, "I have a small pawnbroker's business at Saxe-Coburg Square, near the City. It's not a very large affair, and of late years it has not done more than just give me a living. I used to be able to keep two assistants, but now I only keep one; and I would have a job to pay him but that he is willing to come for half wages, so as to learn the business."

Now, Mr. Jabez Wilson here has been good enough to call upon me this morning, and to begin a narrative which promises to be one of the most singular which I have listened to for some time. You have heard me remark that the strangest and most unique things are very often connected not with the larger but with the smaller crimes, and occasionally, indeed, where there is room for doubt whether any positive crime has been committed. As far as I have heard, it is impossible for me to say whether the present case is an instance of crime or not; but the course of events is certainly among the most singular that I have ever listened to. Perhaps, Mr. Wilson, you would have the great kindness to recommence your narrative. I ask you, not merely because my friend, Dr. Watson, has not heard the opening part, but also because the peculiar nature of the story makes me anxious to have every possible detail from your

your lips. As a rule, when I have heard some slight indication of the course of events I am able to guide myself by the thousands of other similar cases which occur to my memory. In the present instance I am forced to admit that the facts are, to the best of my belief, unique."

I did not gain very much, however, by my inspection. Our visitor bore every mark of being an average commonplace British tradesman, obese, pompous, and slow. He wore rather baggy gray shepherd's check trousers, a not-over-clean black frock coat, unbuttoned to the front, and a drab waistcoat with a heavy brass Albert chain, and a square pierced bit of metal dangling down as an ornament. A frayed top hat and a faded brown overcoat with a wrinkled velvet collar lay upon a chair beside him. Altogether, look as I would, there was nothing remarkable about the man save his blazing red head and the expression of extreme chagrin and discontent upon his features.

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Sherlock Holmes's quick eye took in my occupation, and he shook his head with a smile as he noticed my questioning glances. "Beyond the obvious facts that he has at some time done manual labor, that he takes snuff, that he is a Freemason, that he has been in China, and that he has done a considerable amount of writing lately, I can deduce nothing else." Mr. Jabez Wilson started up in his chair, with his forefinger upon the paper, but his eyes upon my companion. Now, in the name of good fortune, did you know all that, Mr. Holmes?" he asked. "How did you know, for example, that I did manual labor? It's as true as gospel, for I began as a ship's carpenter."

"Your hands, my dear sir. Your right hand is quite a size larger than your left. You have worked with it and the muscles are more developed."  
 "Well, the snuff, then, and the Freemasonry?"  
 "I won't insult your intelligence by telling you how I read that, especially as, rather against the strict rules of your order, you use an arc and compass breastpin."  
 "Ah, of course, I forgot that. But the writing?"  
 "What else can be indicated by that right cuff so very shiny for five inches, and the left one with the smooth patch near the elbow where you rest it upon the desk?"

"Well, but China?" "The fish which you have tattooed immediately above your wrist could only have been done in China. I have made a small study of tattoo marks, and have even contributed to the literature of the subject. That trick of staining the fishes' scales of a delicate pink is quite peculiar to China. When, in addition, I see a Chinese coin hanging from your watch chain, the matter becomes even more simple."  
 Mr. Jabez Wilson laughed heavily. "Well, I never!" said he. "I thought at first that you had done something clever, but I see that there was nothing in it after all."



**Wilson's Pawnbrokers**  
 175 Pilgrim St, Saxe-Coburg Square, London  
**OPEN DAILY**  
 Pawnbroking      Sales of Pawned Items  
 Loans on collateral

## CLOSURE NOTICE

"YES, SIR, AND NO LATER THAN THIS MORNING. I went to my work as usual at ten o'clock, but the door was shut and locked, with a little square of cardboard hammered onto the middle of the panel with a tack. Here it is, and you can read for yourself." He held up a piece of paper. It read in this fashion:

"THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE IS DISSOLVED. Oct. 9, 1890."  
 Sherlock Holmes and I surveyed this curt announcement and the rueful face behind it, until the comical side of the affair so completely overtopped every consideration that we both burst out into a roar of laughter. "I cannot see that there is anything very funny," cried our client, flushing up to the roots of his flaming head. "If you can do nothing better than laugh at me, I can go elsewhere." "No, no," cried Holmes, shoving him back into the chair from which he had half-risen. "I really wouldn't miss your case for the world. It is most refreshingly unusual. But there is, if you will excuse my saying so, something just a little funny about it. Pray what steps did you take when you found the card upon the door?"

"I was staggered, sir. I did not know what to do. Then I called at the offices round, but none of them seemed to know anything about it. Finally, I went to the landlord, who is an accountant living on the ground floor, and I asked him if he could tell me what had become of the Red-headed League."

He said that he had never heard of any such body. Then I asked him who Mr. Duncan Ross was. He answered that the name was new to him. "Well, said I, the gentleman at No. 4. He asked 'What, the red-headed man?'"

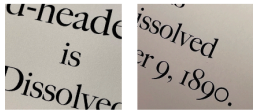
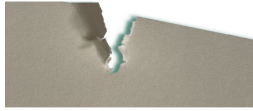
I responded, "Yes."  
 "Oh," said he, "his name was William Morris. He was a solicitor, and was using my room as a temporary convenience until his new premises were ready. He moved out yesterday."

"Where could I find him?"

"Oh, at his new offices." He did tell me the address. "Yes, 17 King Edward Street, near St. Paul's."

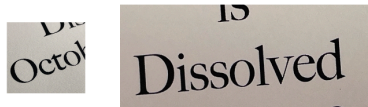
"I started off, Mr. Holmes, but when I got to that address it was a manufactory of artificial knee-caps, and no one in it had ever heard of either Mr. William Morris or Mr. Duncan Ross."

"I went home to Saxe-Coburg Square, and I took the advice of my assistant. But he could not help me in any way. He could only say that if I waited I should hear by post. But that was not quite good enough, Mr. Holmes. I did not wish to lose such a place without a struggle, so as I had heard that you were good enough to give advice to poor folk who were in need of it, I came right away to you." Holmes said "And you did very wisely, your case is an exceedingly remarkable one, and I shall be happy to look into it. From what you have told me I think that it is possible that grave issues hang from it than might at first sight appear."



# The Red-headed League is Dissolved October 9, 1890.

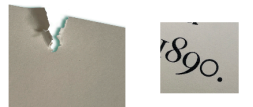
# The Red-headed is Dissolved October 9.



"Grave enough!" said Mr. Jabez Wilson. "Why, I have lost four pound a week." Holmes remarked "As far as you are personally concerned, I do not see that you have any grievance against this extraordinary league. On the contrary, you are, as I understand, richer by some thirty pounds, to say nothing of the minute knowledge which you have gained on every subject which comes under the letter A."



"You have lost nothing by them." He responded "No, sir. But I want to find out about them, and who they are, and what their object was in playing this prank - if it was a prank - upon me. It was a pretty expensive joke for them, for it cost them two and thirty pounds."



## INVOICE

IT WAS A QUARTER PAST NINE when I started from home and made my way across the Park, and so through Oxford Street to Baker Street. Two hansoms were standing at the door, and, as I entered the passage, I heard the sound of voices from above. On entering the room, I found Holmes in animated conversation with two men, one of whom I recognized as Peter Jones, the official police agent; while the other was a long, thin, sad-faced man, with a very shiny hat and oppressively respectable frock coat. "Hal our party is complete," said Holmes, buttoning up his pea jacket, and taking his heavy hunting crop from the rack. "Watson, I think you know Mr. Jones, of Scotland Yard? Let me introduce you to Mr. Merryweather, who is to be our companion in tonight's adventure."

"We're hunting in couples again, doctor, you see," said Jones, in his consequential way. "Our friend here is a wonderful man for starting a chase. All he wants is an old dog to help him do the running down." Mr. Merryweather gloomily observed "I hope a wild goose may not prove to be the end of our chase."

"You may place considerable confidence in Mr. Holmes, sir," said the police agent loftily. "He has his own little methods, which are, if he won't mind my saying so, just a little too theoretical and fantastic, but he has the makings of a detective in him. It is not too much to say that once or twice, as in that business of the Shelton murder and the Agia treasure, he has been more nearly correct than the official force."

"Oh, if you say so, Mr. Jones, it is all right!" said the stranger, with deference. "Still, I confess that I miss my rubber. It is the Saturday night for seven-and-twenty years that I have not had my rubber." Sherlock Holmes said "I think you will find that you will play for a higher stake tonight than you have ever done yet, and that the play will be more exciting. For you, Mr. Merryweather, the stake will be some thirty thousand pounds; and for you, Jones, it will be the men upon whom you wish to lay your hands."

Sherlock Holmes was not very communicative during the long drive, and lay back in the cab humming the tunes which he had heard in the afternoon. We rattled through an endless labyrinth of gaslit streets until we emerged into Farringdon Street. "We are close there now," my friend remarked. "This fellow Merryweather is a back director and personally interested in the matter. I thought it as well to have Jones with us also. He is not a bad fellow, though an absolute imbecile in his profession. He has one positive virtue. He is as brave as a bulldog, and as tenacious as a lobster if he gets his claws upon anyone. Here we are, and they are waiting for us."

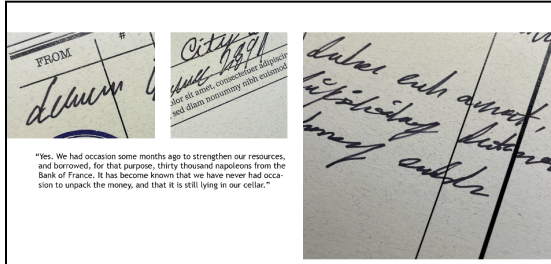


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In the cellar of the City branch of one of the principal London banks. "Mr. Merryweather is the chairman of directors, and he will explain to you that there are reasons why the more daring criminals of London should take a considerable interest in this cellar at present." The director whispered "It is our French gold. We have had several warnings that an attempt might be made upon it." He asked "your French gold?"

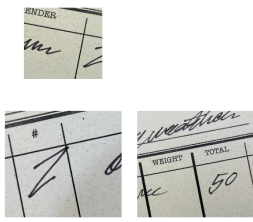


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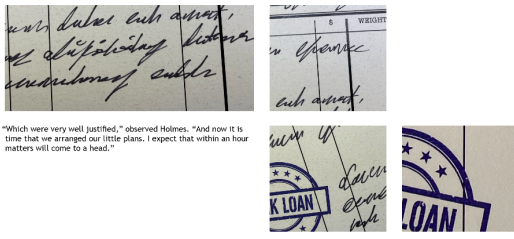


"Yes. We had occasion some months ago to strengthen our resources, and borrowed, for that purpose, thirty thousand napoleons from the Bank of France. It has become known that we have never had occasion to unpack the money, and that it is still lying in our cellar."

"The crate upon which I sit contains two thousand napoleons packed between layers of lead foil. Our reserve of bullion is much larger at present than is usually kept in a single branch office, and the directors have had misgivings upon the subject."



"Which were very well justified," observed Holmes. "And now it is time that we arranged our little plans. I expect that within an hour matters will come to a head."



"Which were very well justified," observed Holmes. "And now it is time that we arranged our little plans. I expect that within an hour matters will come to a head."

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## ENCYCLOPEDIA

"THAT WOULD SUIT ME VERY WELL," said I. "And the pay?"  
 "Is four pounds a week."  
 "And the work?" I asked.  
 "Is purely nominal."  
 "What do you call purely nominal?"  
 "Well, you have to be in the office, or at least in the building, the whole time. If you leave, you forfeit your whole position forever. The will is very clear upon that point. You don't comply with the conditions if you budge from the office during that time." "Mr. Wilson continued, "It's only four hours a day, and I should not think of leaving," said I. "No excuse will avail," said Mr. Duncan Ross, "neither sickness, nor business, nor anything else. There you must stay, or you lose your billet."  
 "And the work?"  
 "Is to copy out the Encyclopaedia Britannica. There is the first volume of it in that press. You must find your own ink, pens, and blotting paper, but we provide this table and chair. Will you be ready to-morrow?"  
 "Certainly," I answered.

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"Then, good-bye, Mr. Jabez Wilson, and let me congratulate you once more on the important position which you have been fortunate enough to gain." He bowed me out of the room, and I went home with my assistant hardly knowing what to say or do, I was so pleased at my own good fortune, whole business came to an end."



FIRST EDITION

# ENCYCLOPEDIA TRANSCRIBED

"WELL, TO MY SURPRISE AND DELIGHT everything was as right as possible. The table was set out ready for me, and Mr. Duncan Ross was there to see that I got fairly to work. He started me off upon the letter A, and then he left me; but he would drop in from time to time to see that all was right with me. At two o'clock he bade me good-day, complimented me upon the amount that I had written, and locked the door of the office after me. This went on day after day, Mr. Holmes, and on Saturday the manager came in and planked down four golden sovereigns for my week's work."

My Wilson continued, "It was the same next week, and the same the week after. Every morning I was there at ten, and every afternoon I left at two. By degrees Mr. Duncan Ross took to coming in only once of a morning, and then, after a time, he did not come in at all. Still, of course, I never dared to leave the room for an instant, for I was not sure when he might come, and the billet was such a good one, and suited me so well, that I would not risk the loss of it."

"Eight weeks passed away like this, and I had written about Abbots, and Archery, and Armo, and architecture, and at last, and hoped with diligence that I might get on to the Bs before very long. It cost me something in foolscap, and I had pretty nearly filled a shelf with my writings. Then suddenly the whole business came to an end."







# MAPS

"THEN PUT ON YOUR HAT AND COME. I am going through the City first, and we can have some lunch on the way. I observe that there is a good deal of German music on the programme, which is rather more to my taste than Italian or French. It is introspective, and I want to introspect. Come along!" We travelled by the Underground as far as Aldersgate, and a short walk took us to Saxe-Coburg Square, the scene of the singular story which we had listened to in the morning. It was a cosy, little, shabby genteel place, where four lines of dingy, two-storied brick houses looked out into a small railed-in enclosure, where a lawn of weedy grass, and a few clumps of faded laurel bushes made a hard fight against a smoke-laden and ungenial atmosphere. Three gilt balls and a brown board with JASEZ WILSON in white letters, upon a corner house, announced the place where our red-headed client carried on his business.

Shanlock Holmes stopped in front of it with his head on one side, and looked it all over, with his eyes shining brightly between puckered lids. Then he walked slowly up the street, and then down again to the corner, still looking keenly at the houses. Finally he returned to the pawnbroker's and, having thumped vigorously upon the pavement with his stick two or three times, he went up to the door and knocked. It was instantly opened by a bright-looking, clean-shaven young fellow, who asked him to step in. "Thank you," said Holmes, "I only wished to ask you how you would go from here to the Strand." The assistant answered "Third right, fourth left," promptly, closing the door. "Smart fellow, that," observed Holmes as we walked

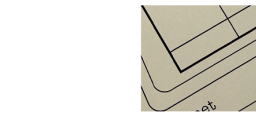
away. "He is, in my judgment, the fourth smartest man in London, and for daring I am not sure that he has not a claim to be third. I have known something of him before."

"Evidently," said I. "Mr. Wilson's assistant counts for a good deal in this mystery of the Red-headed League. I am sure that you inquired your way merely in order that you might see him."  
"Not him."  
"What then?"  
"The leaves of his trousers."  
"And what did you see?"  
"What I expected to see."  
"Why did you beat the pavement?"  
"My dear doctor, this is a time for observation, not for talk. We are spies in an enemy's country. We know something of Saxe-Coburg Square. Let us now explore the parts which lie behind it."

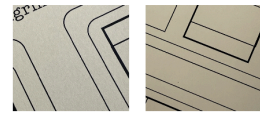
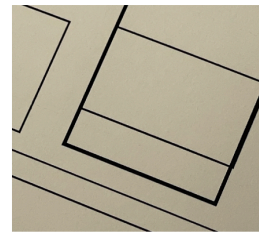
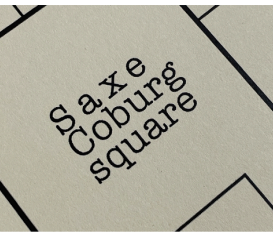
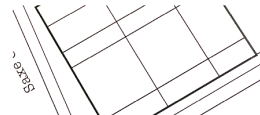
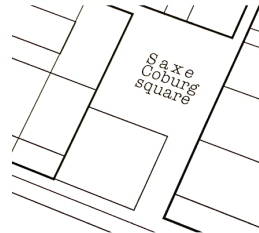
The road in which we found ourselves as we turned round the corner from the retired Saxe-Coburg Square presented as great a contrast to it as the front of a picture does to the back. It was one of the main arteries which convey the traffic of the City to the north and west. The roadway was blocked with the immense stream of commerce flowing in a double tide inward and outward, while the footpaths were black with the hurrying swarms of pedestrians. It was difficult to realize, as we looked at the line of fine shops and stately business premises, that they really abutted on the other side upon the faded and stagnant square which we had just quitted.

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"You want to go home, no doubt, doctor," he remarked, as we emerged.  
"Yes, it would be as well."  
"And I have some business to do which will take some hours. This business at Saxe-Coburg Square is serious."  
"Why serious?"  
"A considerable crime is in contemplation. I have every reason to believe that we shall be in time to stop it. But today being Saturday rather complicates matters. I shall want your help tonight."  
"At what time?"  
"Ten will be early enough."



"I shall be at Baker Street at ten."  
"Very well. And, I say, doctor! there may be some little danger, so kindly put your army revolver in your pocket." He waved his hand, turned on his heel, and disappeared in an instant among the crowd.

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# RED-HEADED LEAGUE ADVERTISEMENT

THE FIRST THING that put us out was that advertisement. Spaulding, he came down into the office just this day eight weeks, with this very paper in his hand, and he says "I wish to the Lord, Mr. Wilson, that I was a red-headed man."  
"Why that?" I asked. "Why," says he, "here's another vacancy on the League of the Red-headed Men. It's worth quite a little fortune to any man who gets it, and I understand that there are more vacancies than there are men, so that the trustees are at their wits' end what to do with the money. If my hair would only change color here's a nice little crib all ready for me to step into."

"Why, what is it, then?" I asked. "You see, Mr. Holmes, I am a very staid at-home man, and, as my business came to me instead of my having to go to it, I was often weeks on end without putting my foot over the door mat. In that way I didn't know much of what was going on outside, and I was always glad of a bit of news. I have you never heard of the League of the Red-headed Men?" he asked, with his eyes open. "Never."

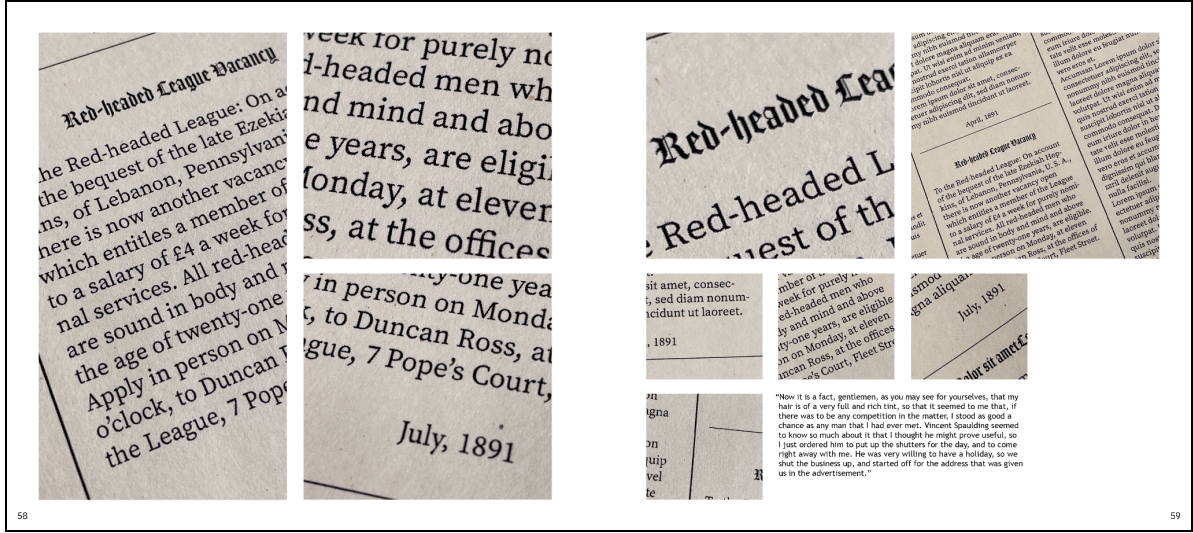
"Why, I wonder at that, for you are eligible yourself for one of the vacancies, and what are they worth?" I asked. "Oh, merely a couple of hundred a year, but the work is slight, and it need not interfere very much with one's other occupations." "Well, you can easily think that that made me prick up my ears. For the business has not been over good for some years, and an extra couple of hundred would have been very handy."

"Tell me all about it," said I. "Well," said he, showing me the advertisement, "you can see for yourself that the League has a vacancy, and there is the address where you should apply for particulars. As far as I can make out, the League was founded by an American millionaire, Ezekiah Hopkins, who was very peculiar in his ways. He was himself red-headed, and he had a great sympathy for all red-headed men; so, when he died, it was found that he had left his enormous fortune in the hands of trustees, with instructions to apply the interest to the provision of easy berths to men whose hair is of that color. From all I hear it is splendid pay, and very little to do."

"But," said I, "there would be millions of red-headed men who would apply."  
"Not so many as you might think," he answered. "You see it is really confined to Londoners, and to grown men. This American had started from London when he was young, and he wanted to do the old form a good turn. Then, again, I have heard it is of no use your applying if your hair is light red, or dark red, or anything but real, bright, blazing, fiery red. Now, if you cared to apply, Mr. Wilson, you would just walk in; but perhaps it would hardly be worth your while to put yourself out of the way for the sake of a few hundred pounds."

56

57

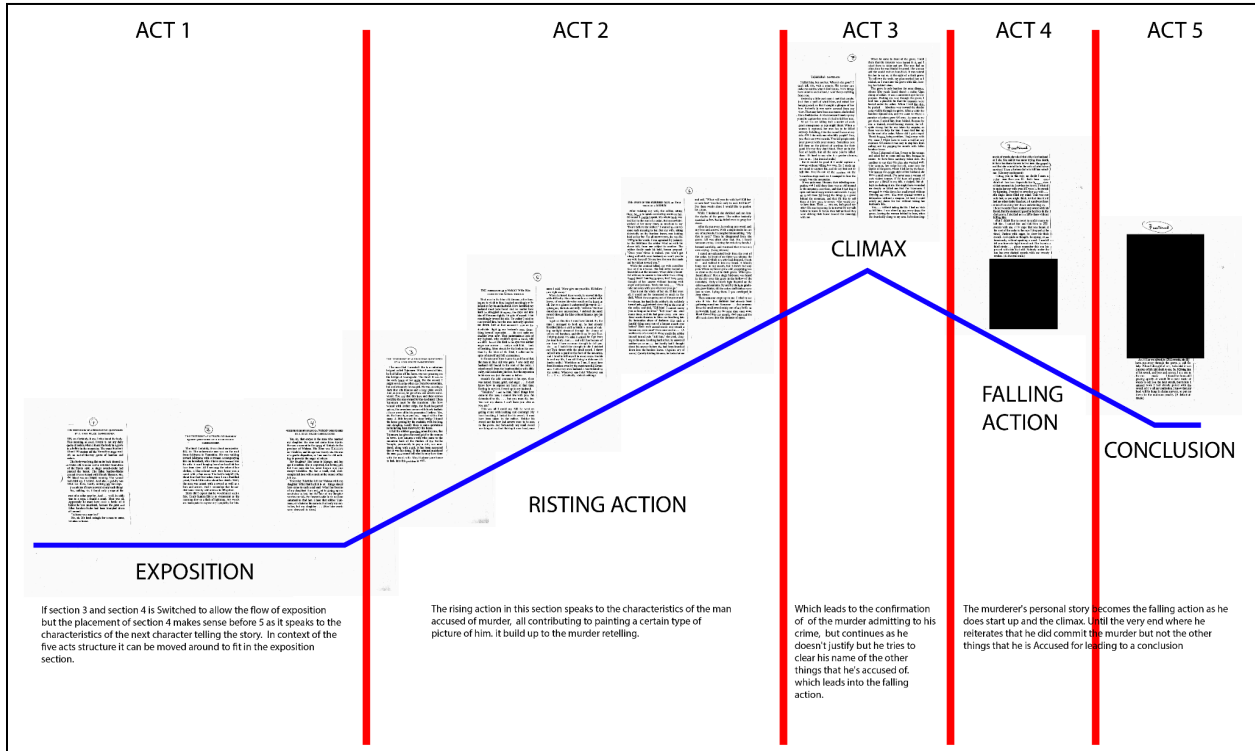


**Red-headed League**

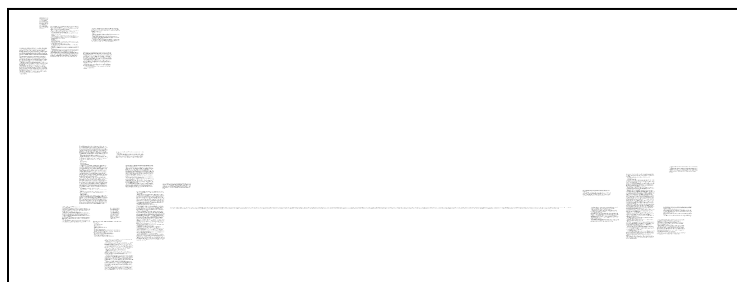
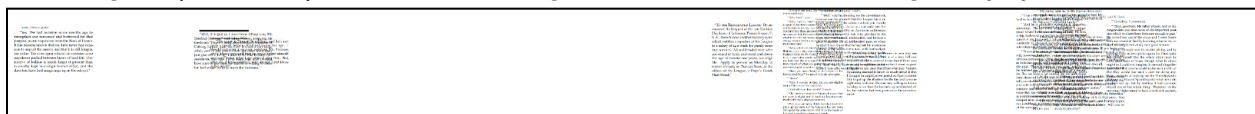
the Red-headed League: On  
the bequest of the late Ezekiah  
the Pennsylvania,

# Appendix B: Failed Design Explorations

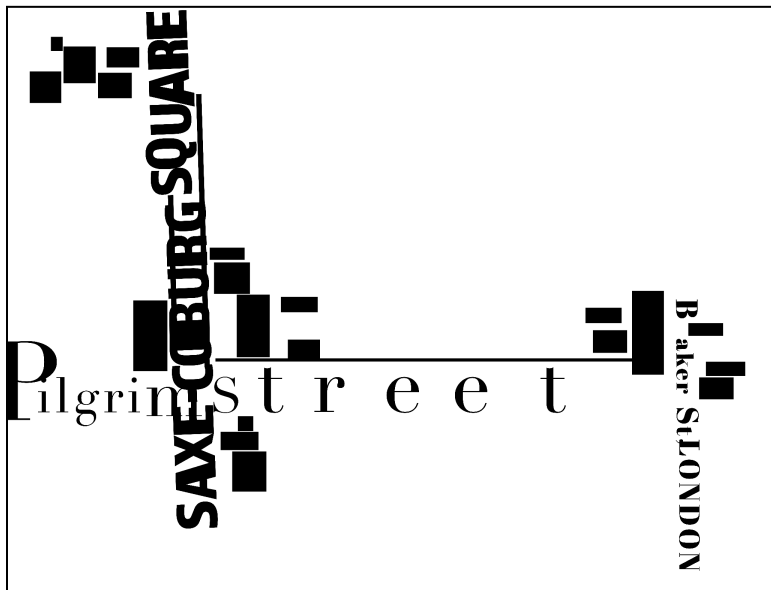
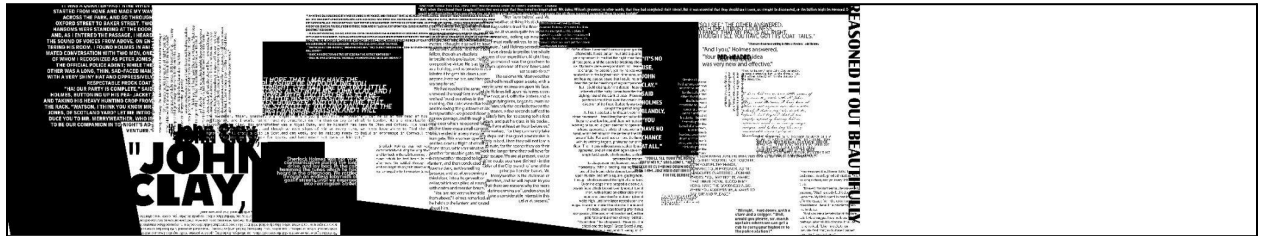
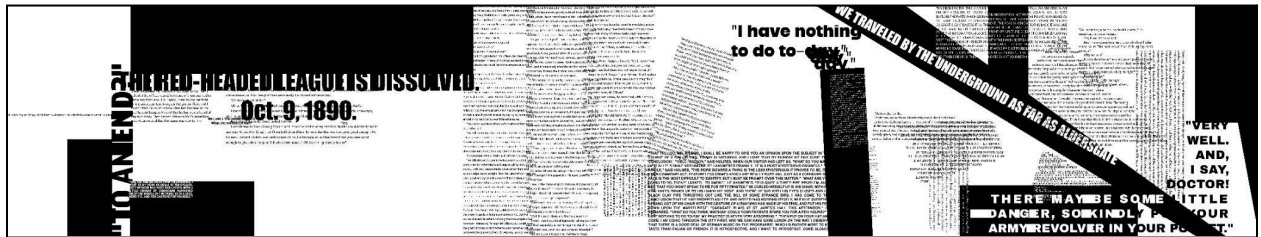
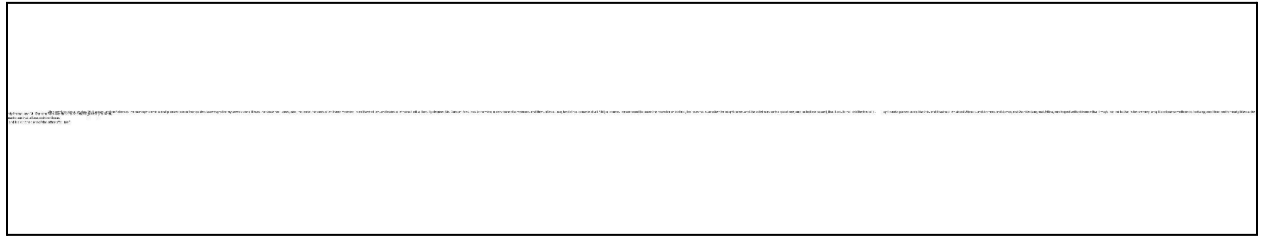
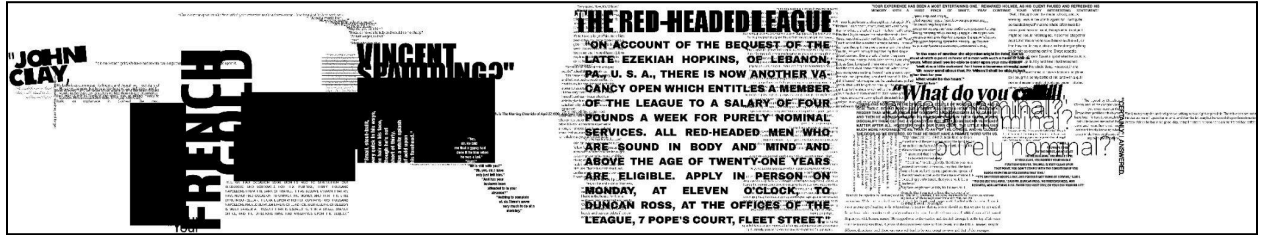
1. *In a Grove* short story by Ryūnosuke Akutagawa (1922). The design exploration aims to conform the short story which is written as a series of events retold by multiple characters into a five-act story pattern. Early exploration of learning about conventional and unconventional story patterns and how to rearrange stories. (2024)



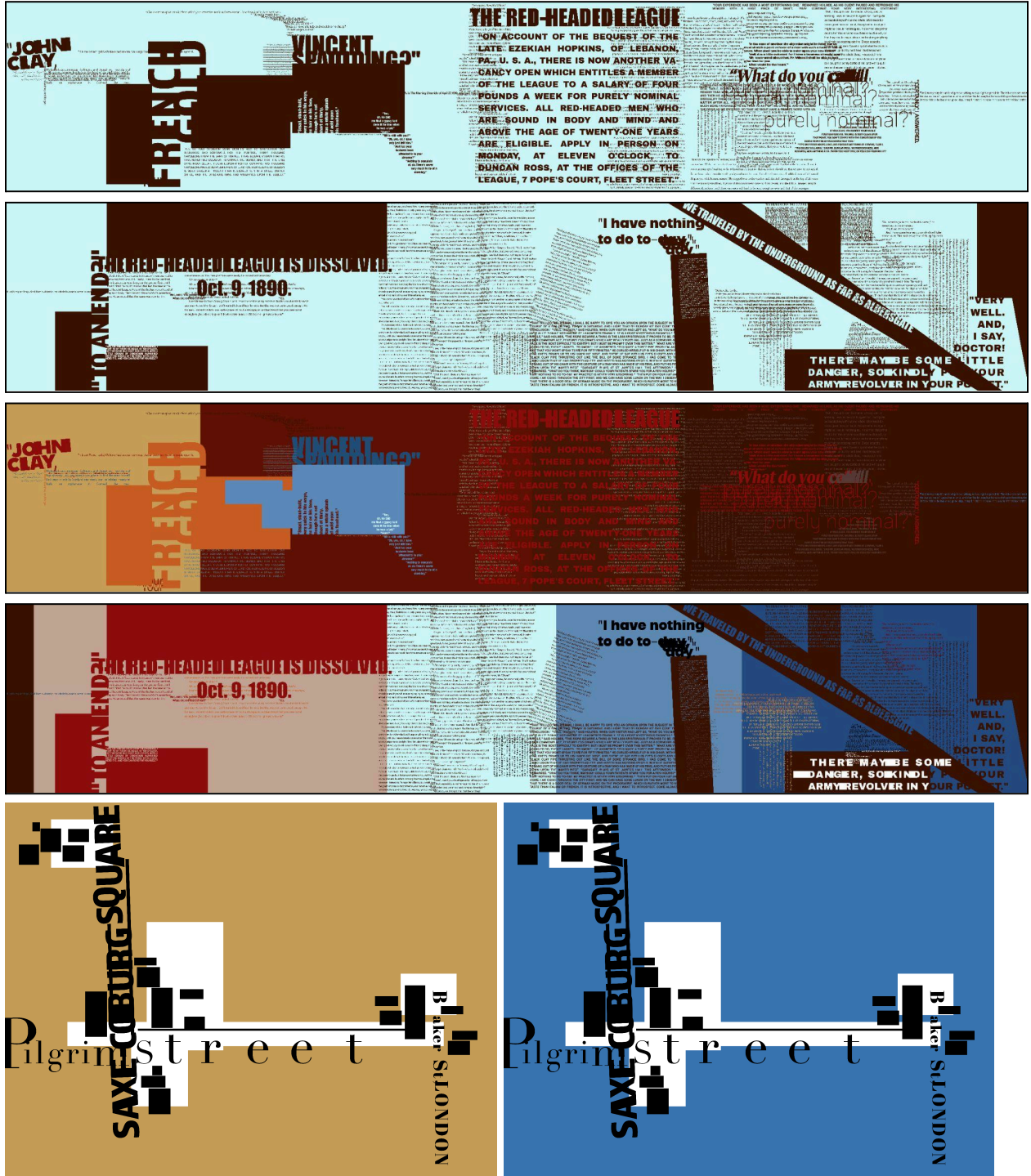
2. *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1891), early rough explorations of the idea of telling a story based on location, timing, placement and character interactions (2024). The initial stage helped conceptualize the “Unrecognizable Pattern of Overhearing” story system.



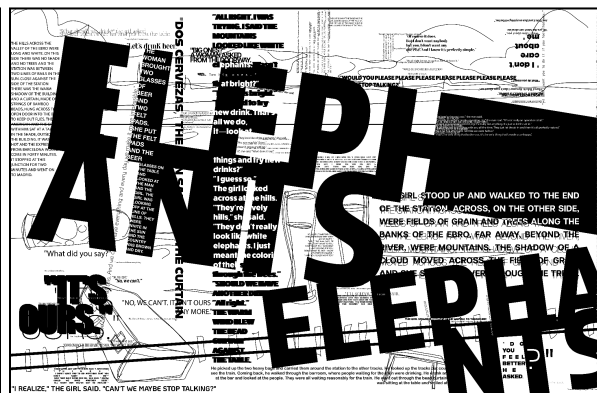
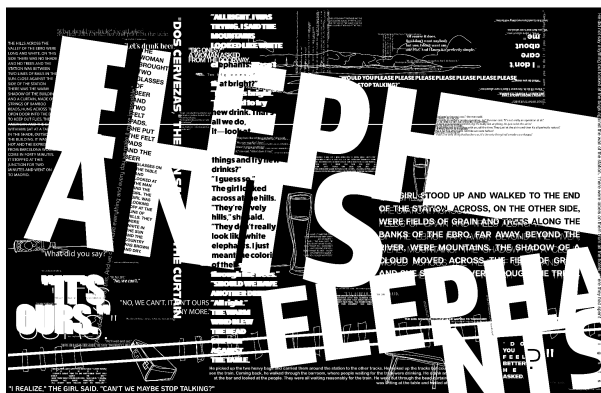
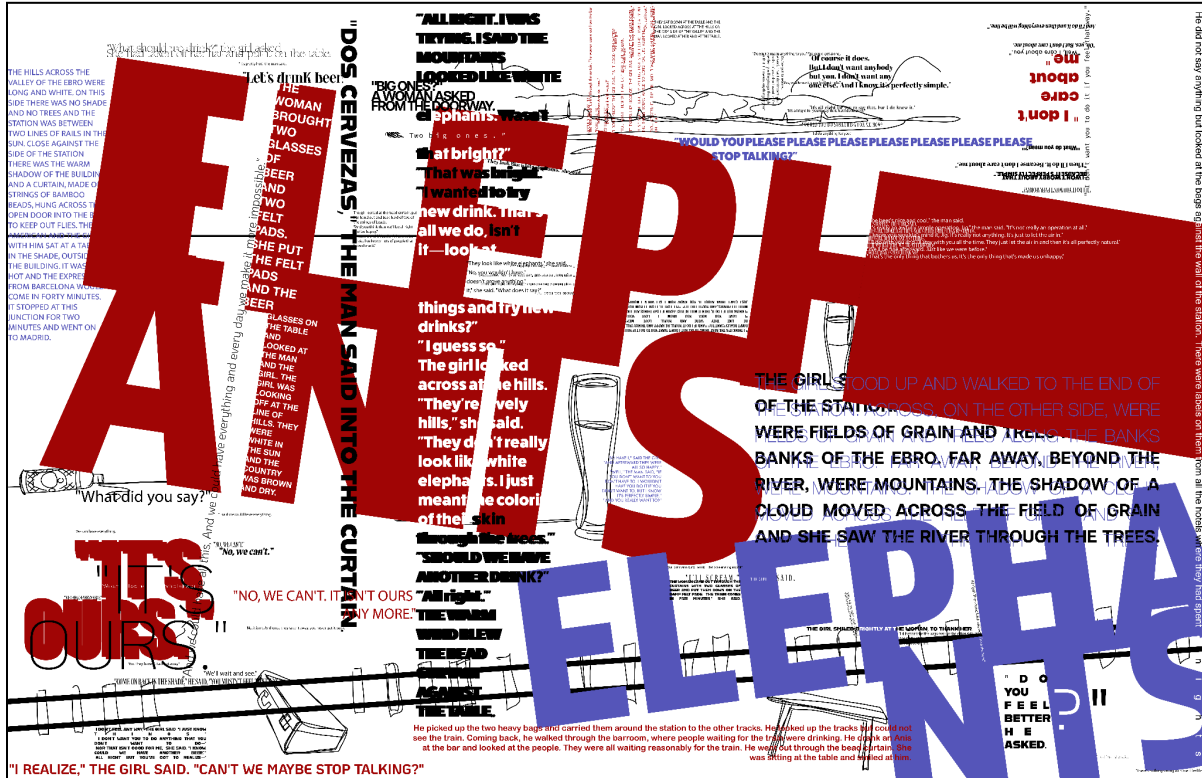
3. *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1891), refined design explorations of visualizing the written words form a story.



4. *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1891) in “Unrecognizable Pattern of Overhearing” story system, scrapped colour exploration.

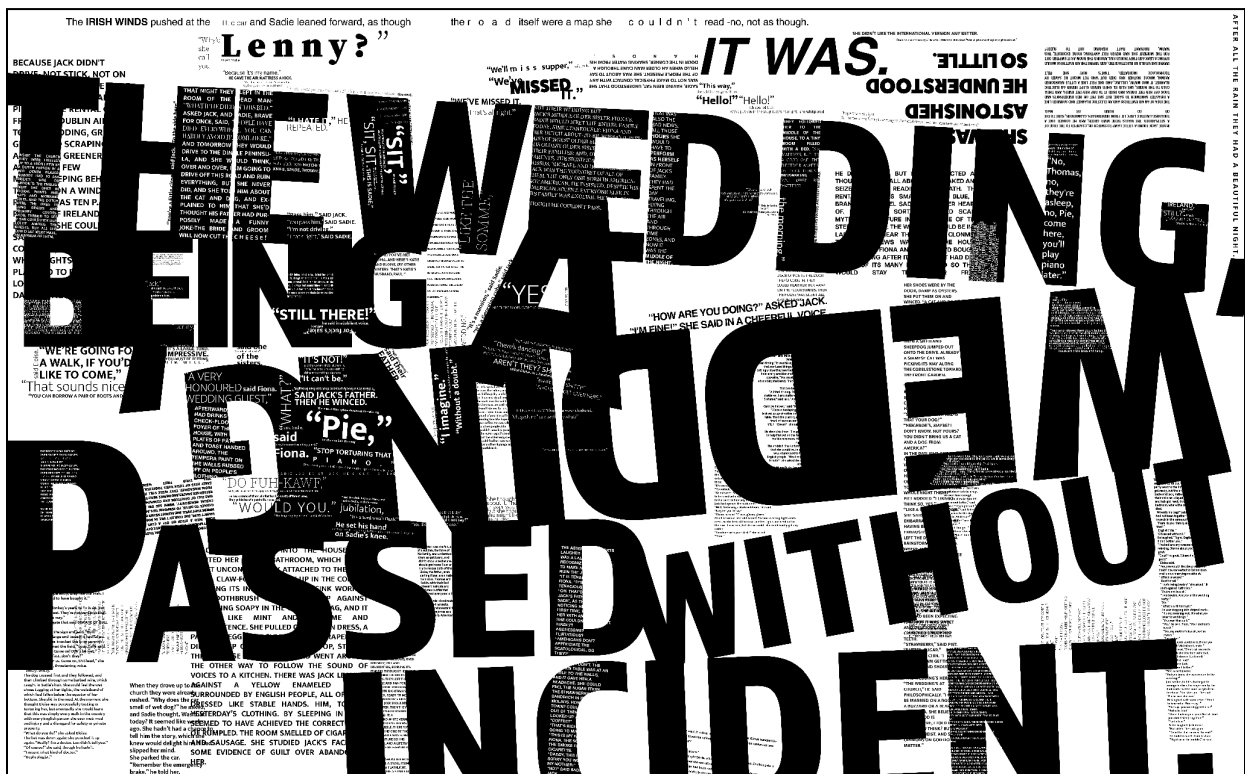


5. *Hills Like White Elephants* by Ernest Hemingway (1927). Early design exploration of using this story in The “Unrecognizable Patterns of Overhearing” framework. Attempting a variety of printing methods, bookbinding and layout styles. (2024)





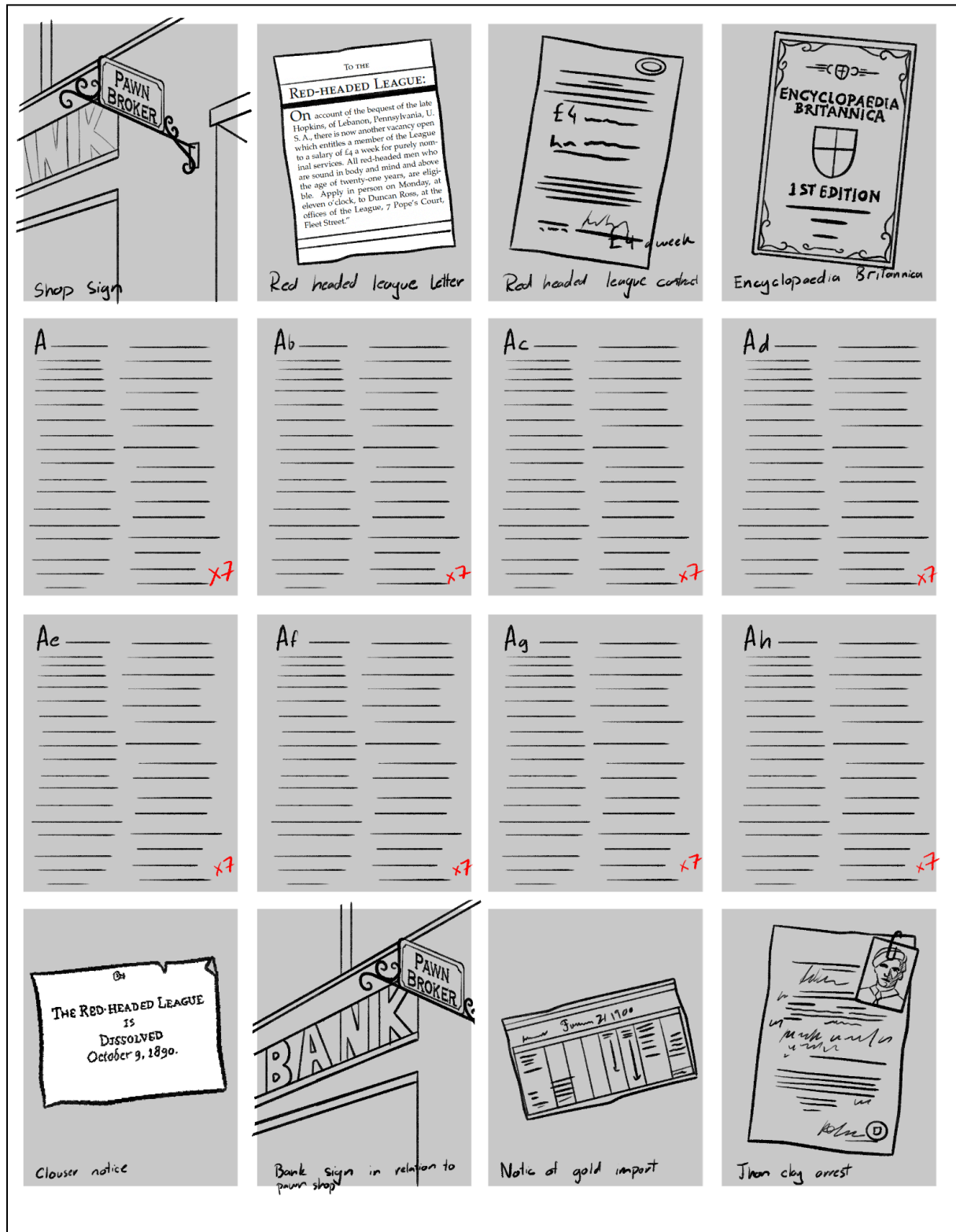
7. *The Irish Wedding* short story by Elizabeth McCracken (2021). In this design exploration, I tried to conform this story to the same visual output as the adaptation of *Hills Like White Elephants* in Systems One. This exploration failed as I was not deconstructing the story but rather forcing it into a different story's visual style. Cover, full comp poster and sample pages (2025).



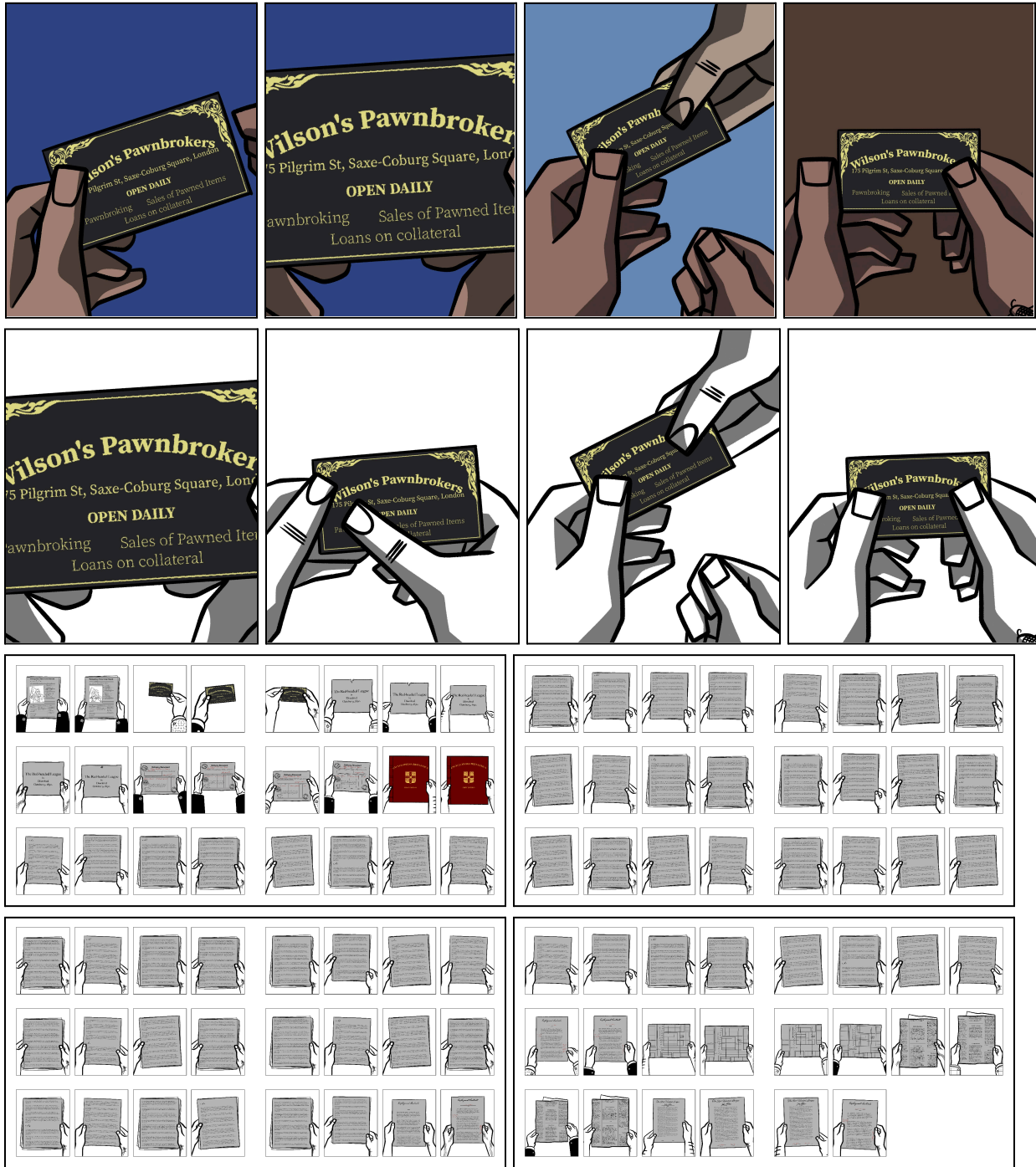




10. *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1891), a very early rough idea of creating a typology to tell a story by documenting the world the narrative occurs in (2024). The initial stage that helped conceptualize the “Documentation of The World of Stories” system.



11. *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1891), the refinement of the typology format and of documenting the objects of the world of story. Multiple books, illustrations and animation (2024).

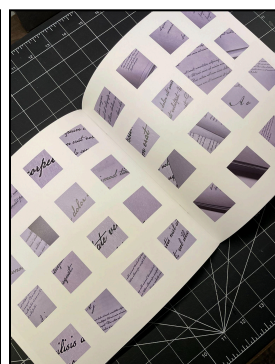


12. Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1891), the initial designs of the objects (prop design) from the story used in the typology (2025).

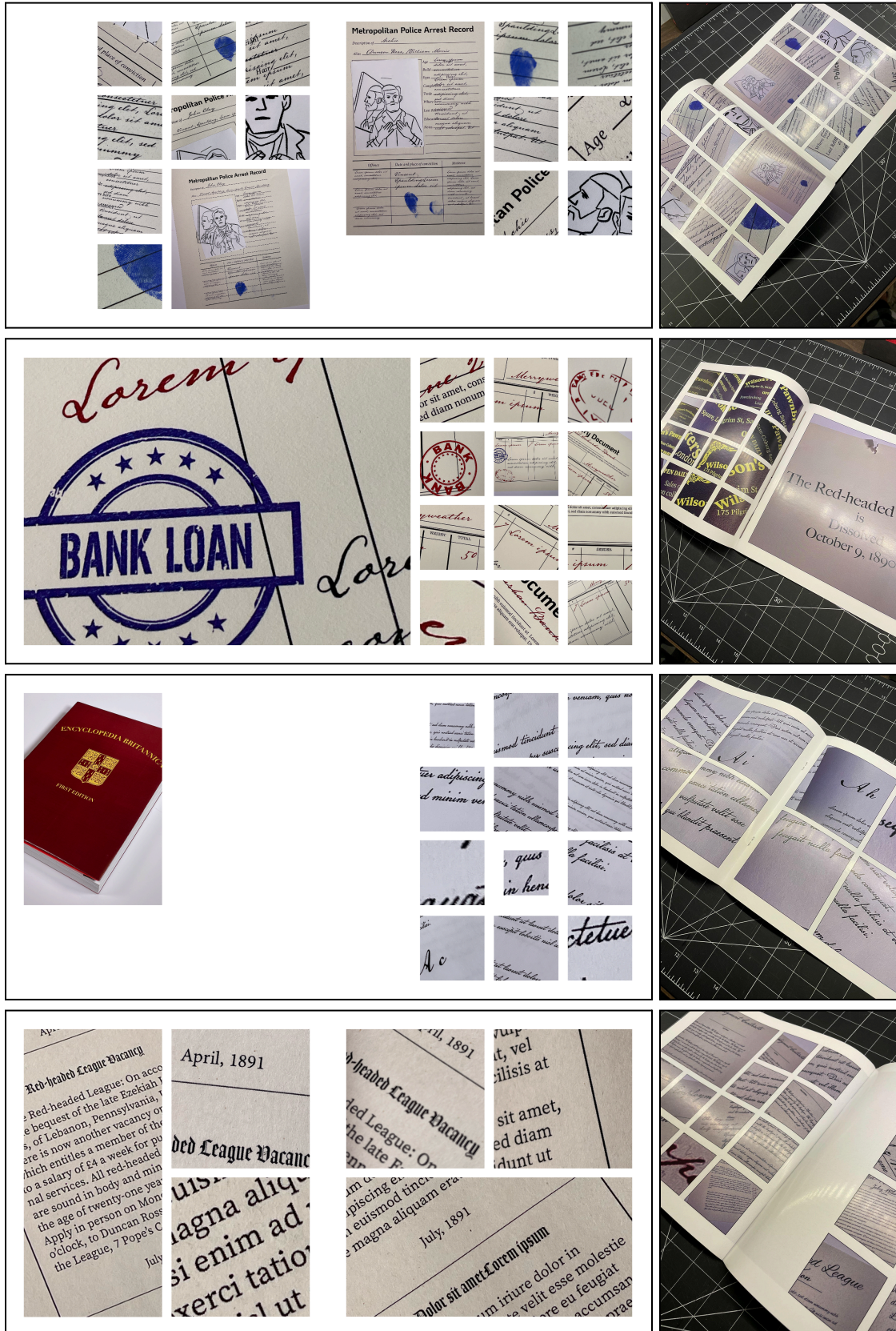


13. *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1891), three book formats explore the documentation of the objects as a traditional typology, comic style framing and combination of frames with text (2024).

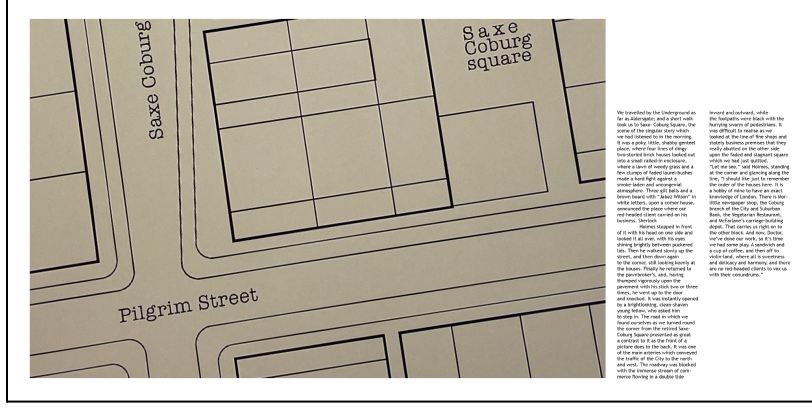
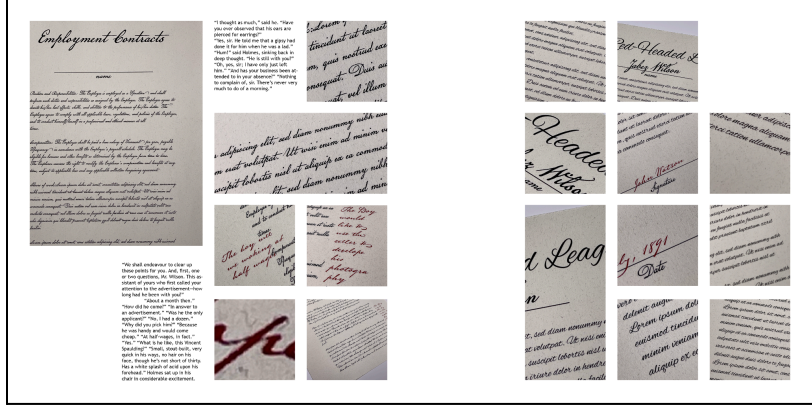
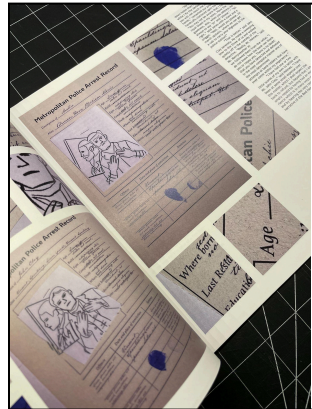
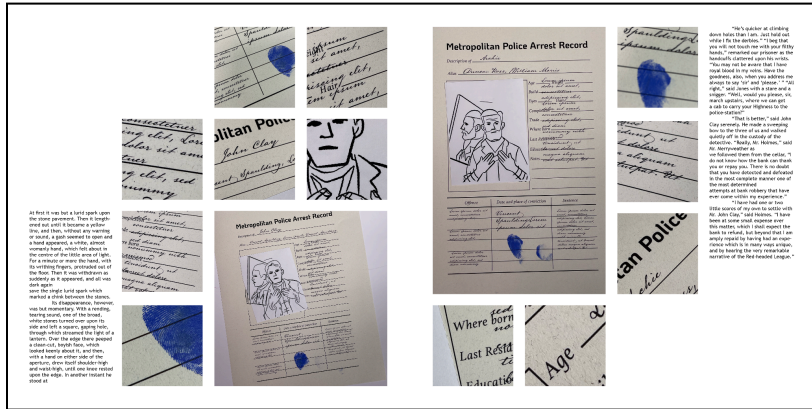
Sample Spreads of Traditional Typology:



Sample Spreads of Comic Style Framing:



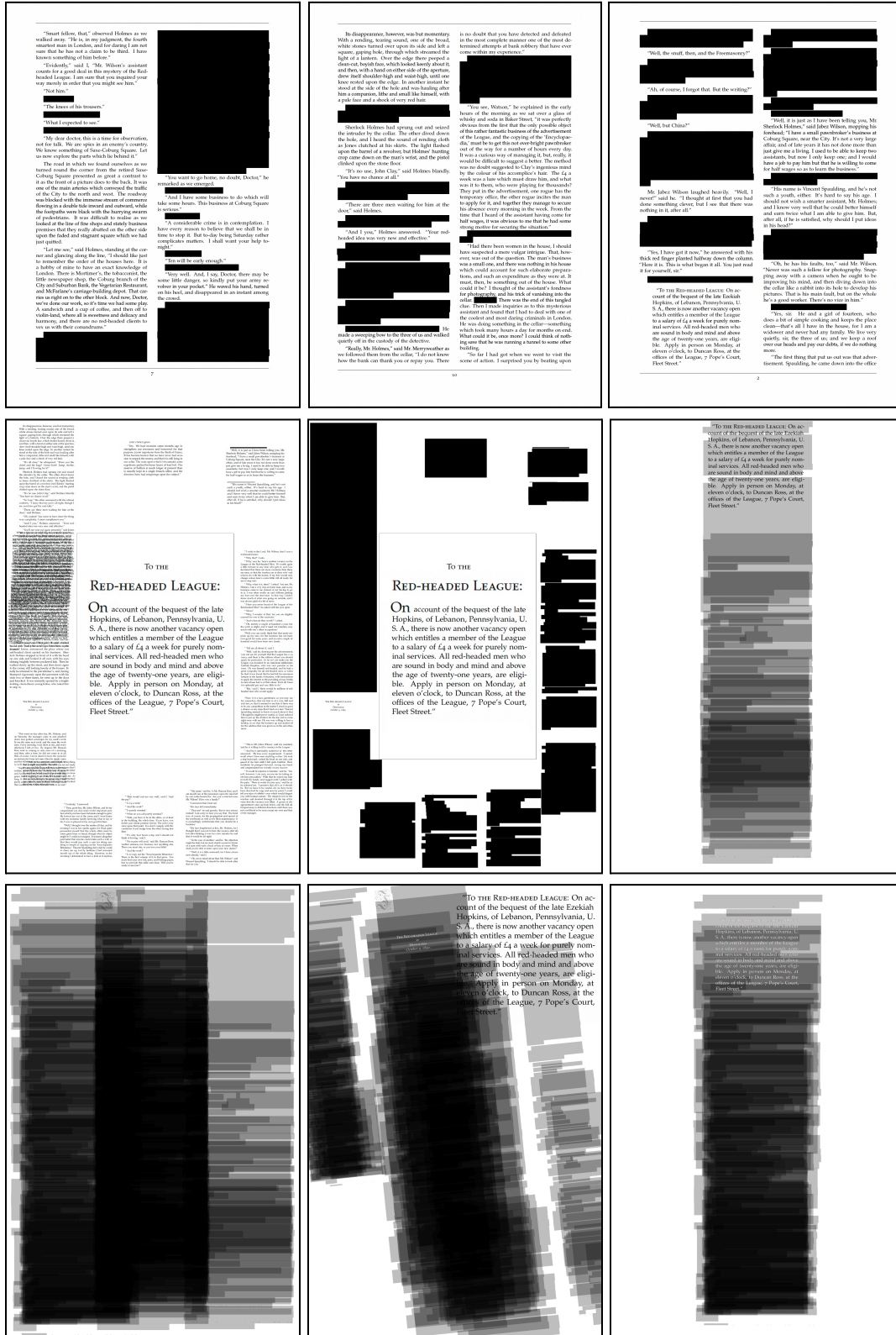
# Sample Spreads of Frames with Text:



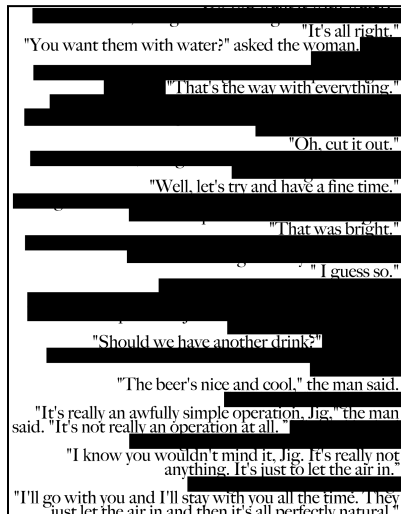
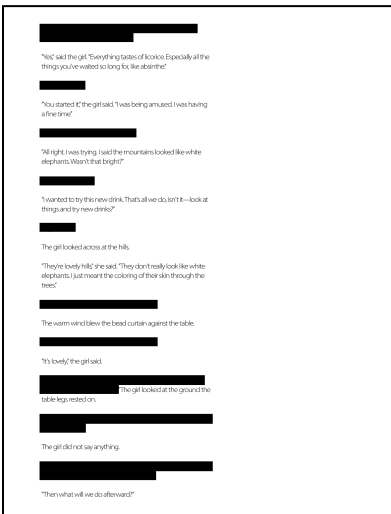
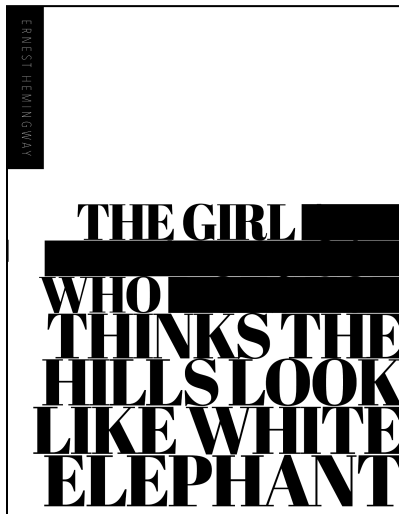
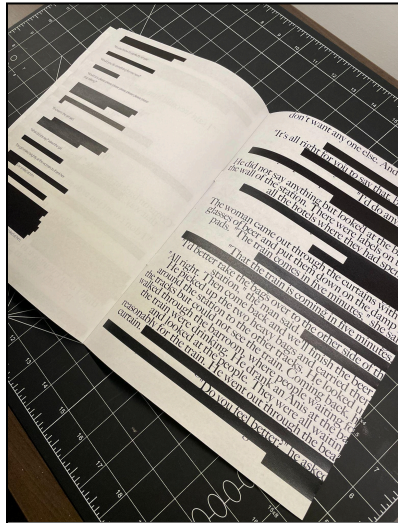
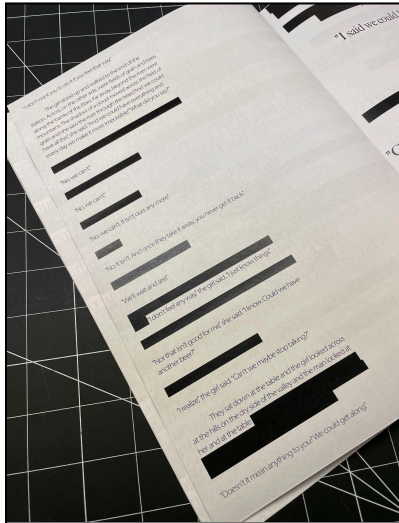
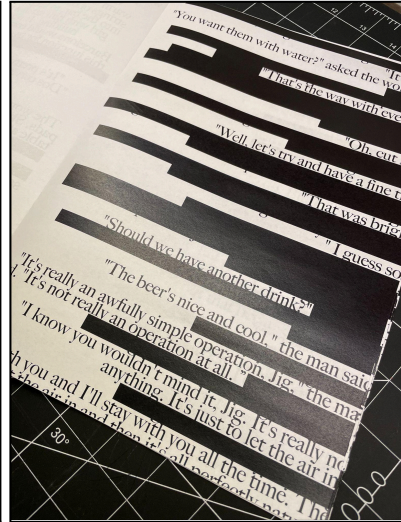




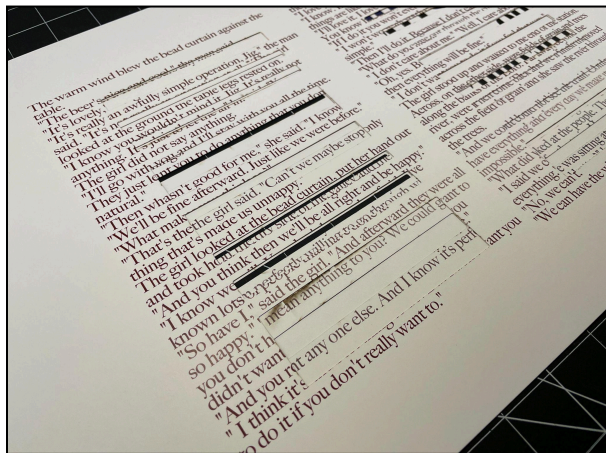
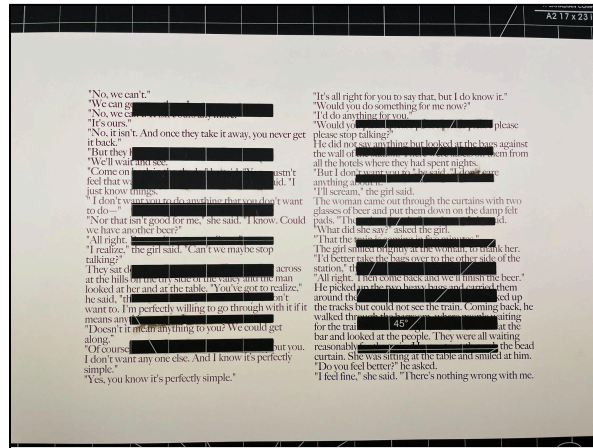
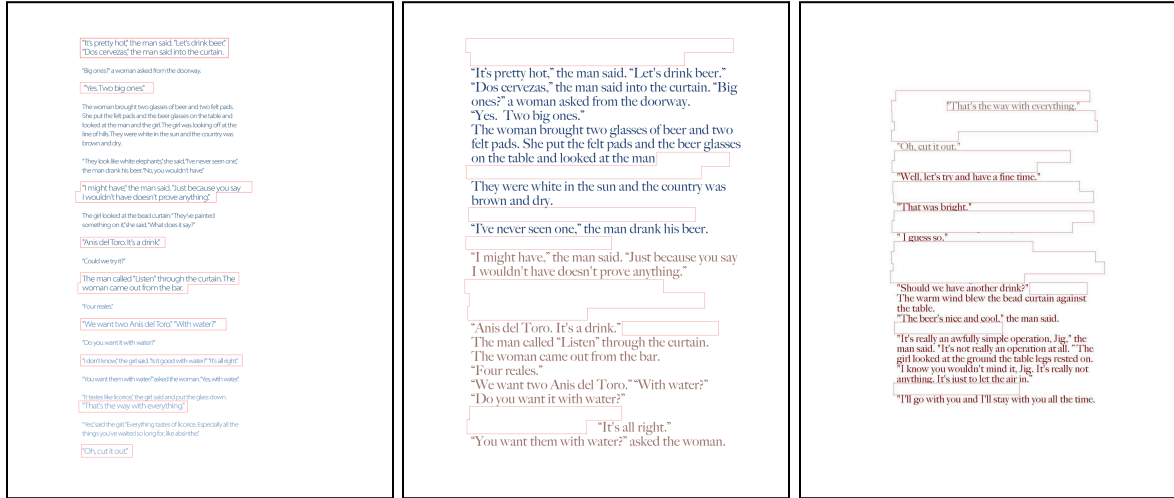
16. *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1891), an early rough sketch of the concept of telling the same story from different perspectives and redacting aspects of it to create visual texture (2024).



17. *Hills Like White Elephants* by Ernest Hemingway (1927). The first exploration of subjectivity in written narratives and playing around with redacting aspects of the story. The initial stage that helped conceptualize the “Parallels, Perspective, and Subjectivity” story system (2024).



18. Hills Like White Elephants by Ernest Hemingway (1927) in “Parallels, Perspective, and Subjectivity” story system. Early exploration of using the laser cutter to redact aspects of the story



19. *The Irish Wedding* short story by Elizabeth McCracken (2021). Early stage of establishing what the motion graphic would look like (2025).

<p><i>Pass him,</i></p> <p><b>YOU P A S S HIM,</b> I'm not driving.</p> <p>That's right,</p>	<p>you're a little close,</p> <p>to</p> <p>the</p> <p>side</p> <p><b>HERE</b></p>
<p><b>The Irish Wedding</b> she told him</p>	<p><b>Wedding</b> she told him</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div data-bbox="836 787 1047 913">  <p>There were DOGS &amp; CATS in our car</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1096 787 1307 913">  <p>Your dad is definitely SOMETHING</p> </div> </div>
<p>BECAUSE JACK DIDN'T DRIVE- NOT STICK, NOT ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE ROAD, NOT AT ALL EVER - SADIE PILOTEED THE RENTAL CAR FROM THE DUBLIN AIRPORT TO THE WEDDING, GRINDING GEARS AND SCRAPING ALONG THE GREENERY AND-FOR A FEW MILES-CREEPING BEHIND A TRACTOR ON A WINDING ROAD. IT WAS TEN P.M. AND RAINING. IF IRELAND WAS EMERALD SHE COULDN'T SAY, THE TRACTOR WAS A COMFORT, LIT UP WITH WHITE LIGHTS, WHICH SHE PLANNED TO FOLLOW AS LONG AS SHE COULD. TILL DAWN IF NECESSARY.</p>	<p>BECAUSE JACK DIDN'T DRIVE- NOT STICK, NOT ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE ROAD, NOT AT ALL EVER - SADIE PILOTEED THE RENTAL CAR FROM THE DUBLIN AIRPORT TO THE WEDDING, GRINDING GEARS AND SCRAPING ALONG THE GREENERY AND-FOR A FEW MILES-CREEPING BEHIND A TRACTOR ON A WINDING ROAD. IT WAS TEN P.M. AND RAINING. IF IRELAND WAS EMERALD SHE COULDN'T SAY, THE TRACTOR WAS A COMFORT, LIT UP WITH WHITE LIGHTS, WHICH SHE PLANNED TO FOLLOW AS LONG AS SHE COULD. TILL DAWN IF NECESSARY.</p> <p><i>Pass him,</i></p> <p><b>YOU P A S S HIM,</b> I'm not driving.</p> <p>That's right,</p>
<div style="display: flex;"> <div data-bbox="194 1291 446 1596"> <p><b>CAR RENTAL AGREEMENT: USA RENTER</b></p> <p><b>MINIMUM FUEL</b></p> <p>RENTAL CAR FROM: [REDACTED]</p> <p>DATE: [REDACTED]</p> <p>TIME: [REDACTED]</p> <p>LOCATION: [REDACTED]</p> <p>NAME: [REDACTED]</p> <p>ADDRESS: [REDACTED]</p> <p>CITY: [REDACTED]</p> <p>STATE: [REDACTED]</p> <p>ZIP: [REDACTED]</p> <p>PHONE: [REDACTED]</p> <p>EMAIL: [REDACTED]</p> <p>DRIVER LICENSE: [REDACTED]</p> <p>EXPIRES: [REDACTED]</p> <p>ISSUED IN: [REDACTED]</p> <p>DATE OF BIRTH: [REDACTED]</p> <p>SEX: [REDACTED]</p> <p>HAIR: [REDACTED]</p> <p>EYES: [REDACTED]</p> <p>HEIGHT: [REDACTED]</p> <p>WEIGHT: [REDACTED]</p> <p>HAIR COLOR: [REDACTED]</p> <p>EYE COLOR: [REDACTED]</p> <p>HAIR LENGTH: [REDACTED]</p> <p>EYE SHADE: [REDACTED]</p> <p>HAIR STYLE: [REDACTED]</p> <p>EYE GLASSES: [REDACTED]</p> <p>CONTACT LENSES: [REDACTED]</p> <p>HAIR COLOR: [REDACTED]</p> <p>EYE COLOR: [REDACTED]</p> <p>HAIR LENGTH: [REDACTED]</p> <p>EYE SHADE: [REDACTED]</p> <p>HAIR STYLE: [REDACTED]</p> <p>EYE GLASSES: [REDACTED]</p> <p>CONTACT LENSES: [REDACTED]</p> </div> <div data-bbox="446 1291 771 1596"> <p><i>Pass him,</i></p> <p><b>YOU P A S S HIM,</b> I'm not driving.</p> <p>That's right,</p> </div> </div>	<p>W H Y I N D E E D, A P P A R E N T L Y, T H E Y L I K E T H E I R I S H. I T H I N K T H E Y ' R E M A D T O H A V E B O U G H T I T. Why?</p> <p>I T ' L L T A K E T H E M D O N K E - Y ' S Y E A R S T O F I X I T U P.</p> <p>N O T T O M E N T I: O N T H E C O S T.</p> <p>T H E Y ' R E N O T V E R Y P R A C T I C A L</p> <p><b>BEWARE</b></p> <p><b>OF BULL</b></p> <p><b>HERE</b> LET'S GO THIS?</p>

20. Book trailer stills form animatics for *Hills Like White Elephants*, abandoned after early rough stages (2024)



21. The book trailer still from storyboard/animations for *Sherlock Holmes: The Red-Headed League*, abandoned after early rough stages (2024)

