Bevel's Painting is a short game made in RPG Maker VX by a game developer under the name Maninu. Its playthrough is estimated to be around 2 hours unless the player chooses to experience more possible endings. The game offers ten different ways of ending the story, with one of them being a bonus ending unlockable only under certain conditions. It tells the story of a young, artistic girl named Bevel, who notices something strange happening inside her painting. It emits a bizarre glow, and upon interacting with it, Bevel finds herself in a fantastical world.

As she descends into the world inside her painting she notices, that the atmosphere gets heavier, and the theme becomes darker with each new part of the world. In one of the rooms, she meets a different version of herself, one with an inverted hair colour to hers. This character seems to be hostile towards our protagonist at first, however many different endings focus on either reuniting or making peace with this character.

Having played all of the endings, the player can conclude that the playable Bevel whose hair colour is white is actually an internalized version of the true Bevel, one that holds all the trauma and hurtful memories, and the hostile black-haired Bevel was the true version through all this time. This explains the beginning of the game, where our protagonist seemed to be unnoticed by her classmates, except for the true Bevel, who was the only interactable NPC. Whether they merge and make peace with their memories, abandon them, or stay in the painting depends only on the player.

One of the most intriguing aspects that Bevel's Painting introduces is the made-up language that is used in the world of the painting. In the unofficial English translation by vgperson, the game folder includes a guide to deciphering the text written in Bevelese, which allows the player to get used to the new alphabet before playing. I'm not sure whether the original Japanese game folder also includes a similar file, but in case it doesn't, the game shows hints to deciphering the alphabet.
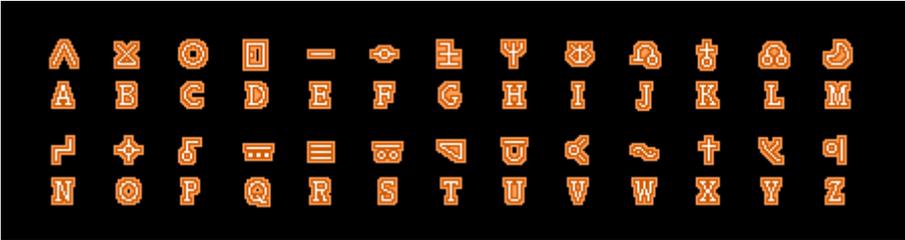
What I truly enjoy about this feature is the fact, that without learning the alphabet, or at least having the guide by hand, the player will not learn about the major plot parts, such as Bevel's past and for example - her relationship with her mother. The dialogues will also remain an enigma to the player, and without taking the effort to understand the Bevelese text, the player will feel as if playing a foreign game, grasping only the surface.

Since languages and process take a major role in my project for this semester, I felt enamoured with this feature of the game. The fact, that the most important plot points were hidden beneath an alphabet out of my reach added more spice into the game and made me more excited to think what else could I've missed. It also made me ponder about language, and the power it holds. Although Bevelese is called a different language, it doesn't introduce any new words or sentence structures and thus, is merely a new way to write in English. Despite that, it took some time and patience to be able to read in it, and the first impression it left on me felt intimidating. Upon more reflection, I realized, that this could easily apply to anyone, since all of us come from different environments, with different experiences for each of us, and sometimes, to truly understand someone, you have to

first decipher the language they are using. This is why it's so easy to misunderstand someone else's words while not knowing them well enough.

One thing I can criticize is how the language aspect was implemented into the game. With the start of the adventure, we are first met with sentences written in Bevelese, with hints being shown only later on in the story. While this seems like a good solution for building tension, it's quite bothersome to learn it at the start. I feel that if we started getting hints at the beginning of the game, perhaps in a form that would make remembering them easier, such as minigames, the process of getting used to the sight and meaning of the letters would be more enjoyable. Of course, this solution would take away the charm of the game, although I believe that the current situation with having to learn the language might discourage some players from picking up Bevel's Painting at all.

Another interesting aspect is the lonely feeling of the game. It's quite common for RPG Maker games to feature a silent protagonist and with a shortage of dialogue, this only amplifies the loneliness of Bevel. Particularly eerie was the beginning itself, with absolutely no background music despite taking place in a usually noisy place which is a school corridor. Adding onto the eerie feeling was the fact, that the only interactable character was the "other Bevel", something I mentioned earlier. Background music starts playing only upon entering the painting's world, which is an interesting detail.

Considering the length of the game and the short time it took to finish it, I believe, that criticizing more aspects of the game is redundant. It conveys its message well and makes immersion a choice, that depends on the player solely. They can choose if they want to learn the Bevelese alphabet and play through different endings, or ignore the foreign text completely and understand only the surface.