

Whenever you're ready, I'll come along.

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Our Team

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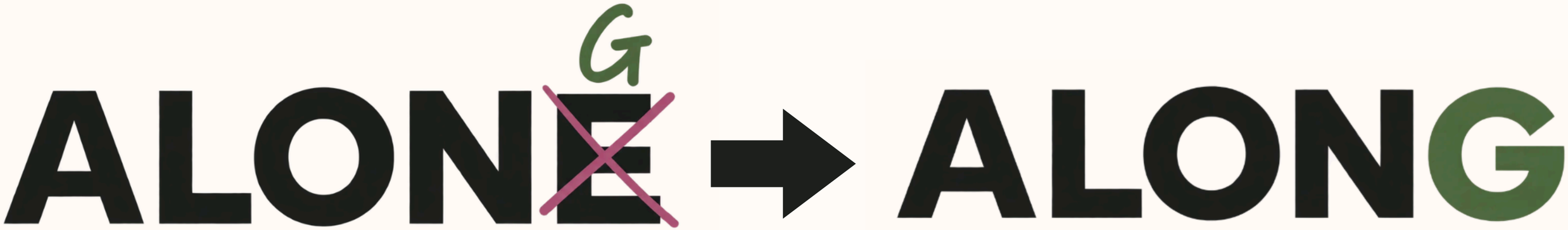
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Why we chose ALONG



We chose ALONG to express the companionship we hope to offer people facing the loss of a loved one or pet, or a family member's serious illness. Changing the E in ALONE to a G represents a shift from feeling alone to having a companion by your side.

ALONG also evokes "walking alongside someone," reflecting the role of our virtual animal companion: offering comfort through emotional ups and downs while allowing users to move at their own pace, without pressure to feel better right away.

Problem / Solution Overview

PRIMARY USERS

ALONG supports people coping with the loss of a loved one or pet, or with a loved one’s serious illness.

THE PROBLEM

Loneliness and low motivation can make everyday activities, such as going outside or eating a meal, difficult to begin.

OUR SOLUTION

ALONG uses AR to bring a virtual animal companion into users’ surroundings through a phone or compatible headset, offering gentle, skippable invitations to everyday activities and companionship at their own pace.

VALUE PROPOSITION

Whenever you're ready, I'll come along.

Stakeholders

Who uses **ALONG**, and who may be affected by it

DIRECT STAKEHOLDERS

People who interact with the product

People seeking companionship

Use the companion to begin small outings.
Need control over pace, privacy and participation.

Users who share personal stories

Contribute text, audio or video for others to discover.
Need control over the audience and removal of their stories.

INDIRECT STAKEHOLDERS

People affected without using it

Friends and family

May support outings or hear about the experience.
Their names or stories may appear in reflections.

Bystanders in shared spaces

May enter the camera view during AR use.
Have an interest in privacy and unobstructed access.

Staff at activity locations

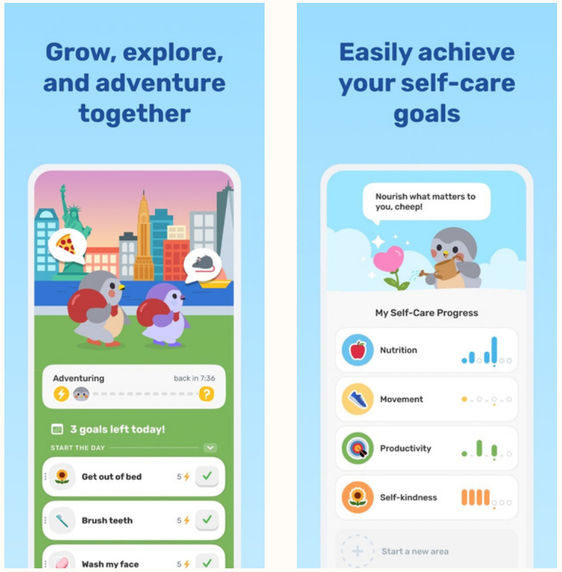
May encounter users exploring parks or cafés.
Need activities to respect access and local rules.

Market Research: Finch

Shared foundation: a lovable companion, small real-world tasks, reflection and rewards

FINCH

Everyday self-care [1]



Real-world goal
↓
Bird's virtual adventure
↓
Story + reward
A growing pet with stories and preferences.

OUR PROPOSED CONCEPT

Returning to daily life after loss

AR invitation
↓
Shared real-world activity
↓
Memory shapes the next invitation

User-approved activity and journal memories.
Users can edit or delete them.

WHAT USERS REPORT [2]

Worked: the pet helped a user start tasks.
Risk: claiming rewards for unfinished tasks.

IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR DESIGN

Test actual participation and anticipation.
Keep tasks skippable and preserve progress.
Check that companionship adds no pressure.

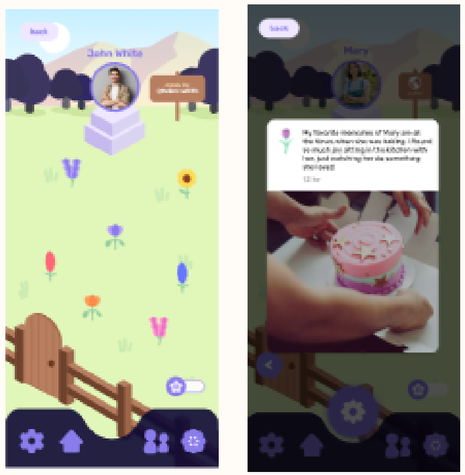
Sources: [1] Finch guide; [2] App Store reviews + screenshots.

Market Research: Superbloom

Shared foundation: support after loss through meaningful digital experiences and connection

SUPERBLOOM

Remembering loved ones [1]



Capture a memory

↓

Plant it in a digital garden

↓

Remember together

Private / public gardens and shared memorial events

OUR PROPOSED CONCEPT

Small steps into daily life after loss

AR invitation

↓

A small outing with a companion

↓

An optional memory or reflection

Pocket Companion: put the phone away.
Continue with optional voice or quiet company.

PEER EVALUATION FINDINGS [2]

Privacy: public/private switching lacked a warning.
Flexibility: posting required both a photo and text.

IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR DESIGN

Keep activities skippable and preserve progress.
Let users choose what to share and with whom.
Test whether companionship helps them step outside.

Sources: [1] Superbloom website + prototype screens, CS147 2024. [2] Group heuristic evaluation. Full links in notes.

Market Research: Peridot

Shared foundation: AR pets and real-world activities (mobile closed Aug 2026)

Peridot

What worked:

- Environment-aware reactions make pets feel present in the user's surrounding [1]
- Desires give users reasons to explore on daily walks [2]



Limitations

- Holding up a phone can be exhausitve and interrupt real-world attention
- Server shutdown removed access to pets users had bonded with [3]

Our Proposed Solution

Similarities & Differences:

- Both: build bonds through AR pets and shared activities
- Peridot: raise and hatch pets for growth and game rewards
- Ours: help grieving individuals who just experienced loss in their life to take one small self-care step daily

Implications for Our Design

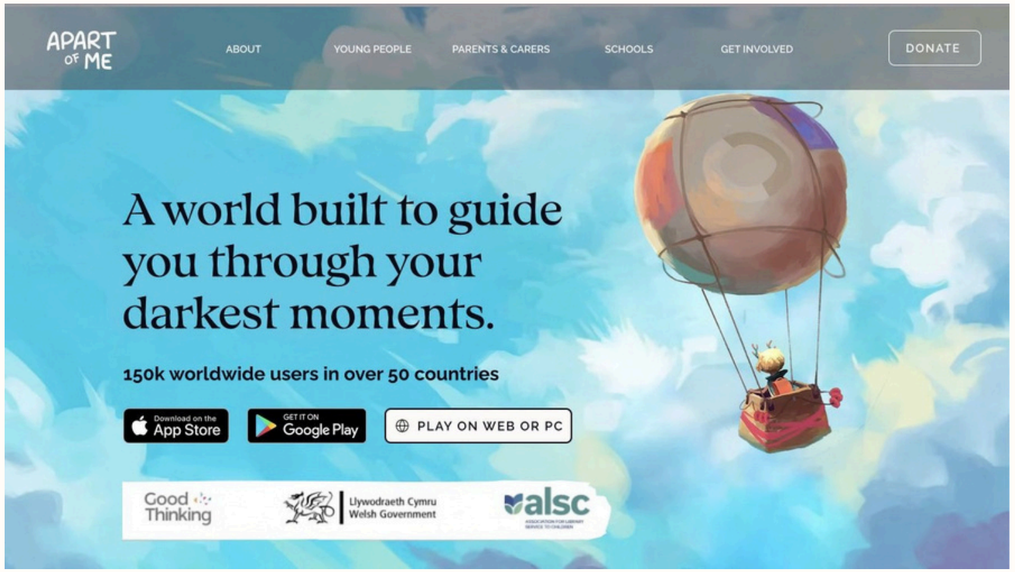
- Brief AR invitations let users put phones away
- Adapt task size and allow guilt-free skipping
- Save memories and keep basic access offline

Sources: [1] Peridot official website. [2] Peridot Help Center. [3] Official mobile shutdown announcement. Design implications are our analysis.

Market Research: Apart of Me

Shared focus: companionship for people experiencing or facing the loss of a loved one.

APART OF ME



Explore a virtual island, hear peer stories and complete reflection quests in daily life. [1]

OUR PROPOSED CONCEPT

Explore real places with a companion

Meet & explore

Meet in AR and accept or skip tasks. Completing activities earns progress and unlocks new character forms.

Discover & remember

Find players' text, audio and video stories. Save shared places, memory cards and AI-guided voice diaries.

Pocket Companion

Turn the camera off and continue with optional voice or quiet company.

Mobile AR and a planned headset experience

WHAT WORKED [2]

Audio stories helped participants feel less alone. The gentle atmosphere let them engage at their own pace.

LIMITATIONS [2]

Some participants were unsure what to do next or struggled to find stories that reflected their own experience.

IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR DESIGN

Keep invitations clear and optional. Offer varied stories. Test whether companionship still feels supportive with the camera off.

Sources: [1] Official website. [2] Selena King, qualitative evaluation (2019). Historical user feedback; full links in notes.

Ethical Implications

Tarot Cards of Tech • 01 /
Companionship & trust

THE SIREN

Engagement vs. autonomy & rest



POTENTIAL RISKS
Affection scores can make absence feel like neglect. Random rewards can shift attention from real activities to collecting.

WHO COULD BE AFFECTED?
Users with low energy; overlooked: caregivers and close friends.

DESIGN RESPONSE
Keep progress during breaks; no affection decay or guilt messages. Make notifications optional. Test whether users feel free to stop.

THE BACKSTABBER

Personalization vs. privacy & control



POTENTIAL RISKS
Journal details may resurface at painful moments. Invented memories or revealing notifications may break trust.

WHO COULD BE AFFECTED?
Shared-device users; overlooked: people mentioned in journals and bereaved relatives.

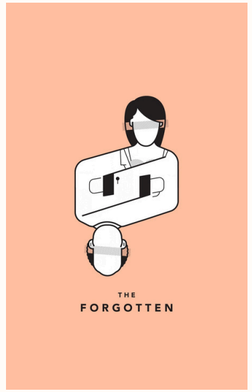
DESIGN RESPONSE
Separate journal storage from memory consent. Show sources; allow review, correction and deletion. Use private notifications.

Ethical Implications

Tarot Cards of Tech • 02 / Inclusion & community safety

THE FORGOTTEN

Immersion vs. equitable access



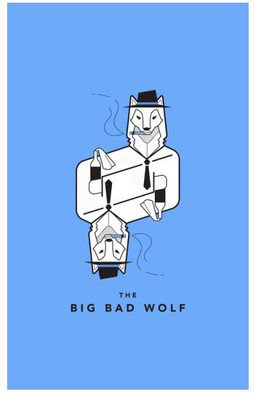
POTENTIAL RISKS
Camera-dependent experiences can exclude users. Outdoor-only tasks disadvantage people without safe, accessible places nearby.

WHO COULD BE AFFECTED?
Disabled and older-phone users; overlooked: caregivers and people with limited outdoor access.

DESIGN RESPONSE
Offer equal-value indoor and seated tasks, non-AR access, captions and adjustable audio. Let Pocket Companion work with the screen away.

THE BIG BAD WOLF

Connection vs. safety & boundaries



POTENTIAL RISKS
Strangers may exploit shared grief to manipulate or harass. Public stories or location clues may enable unwanted tracking.

WHO COULD BE AFFECTED?
Story readers and meetup participants; overlooked: people in stories, volunteers and moderators.

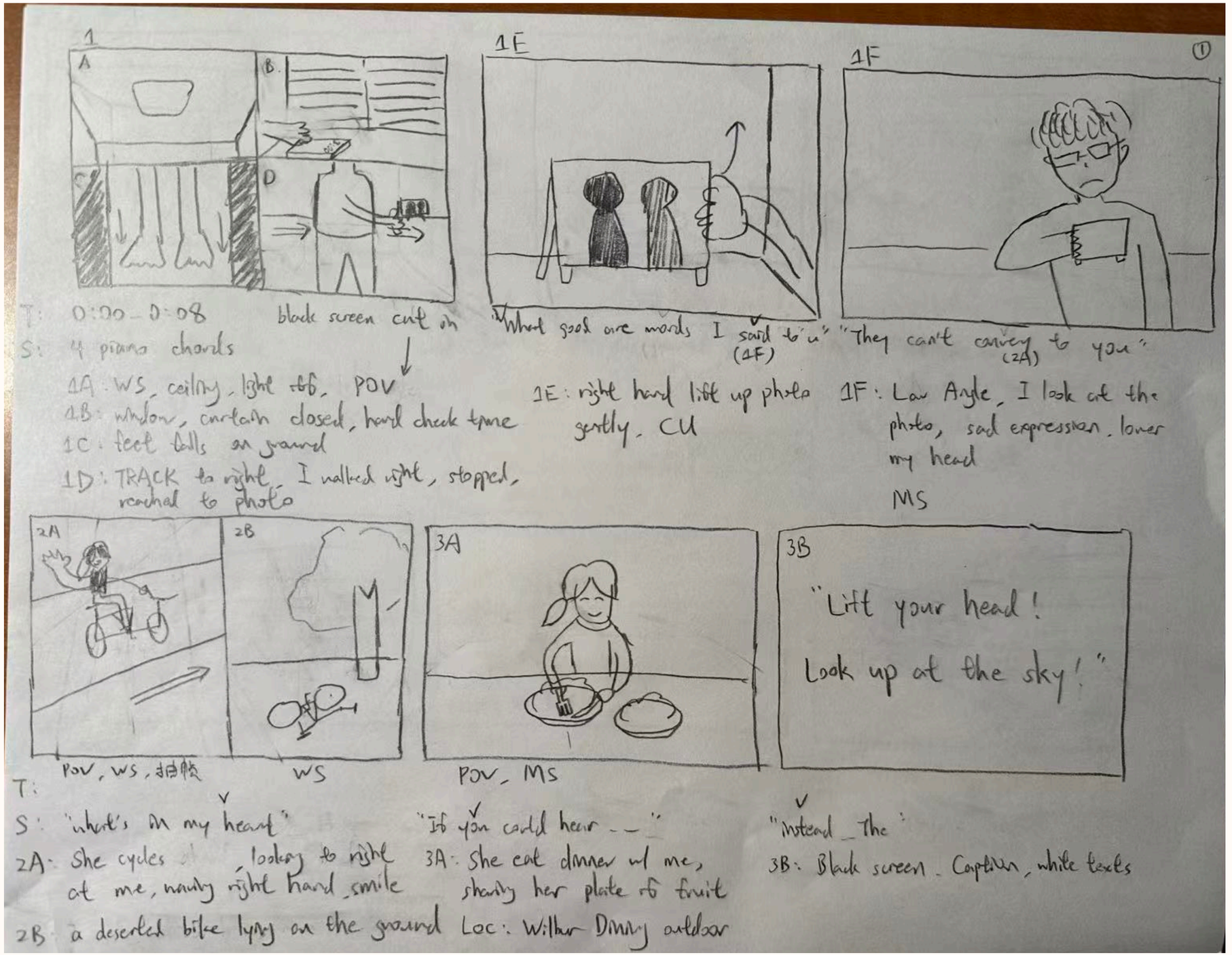
DESIGN RESPONSE
Hide precise locations. Require mutual opt-in for contact; enable blocking, reporting and withdrawal. Set partner boundaries and moderation procedures.

Core Tasks

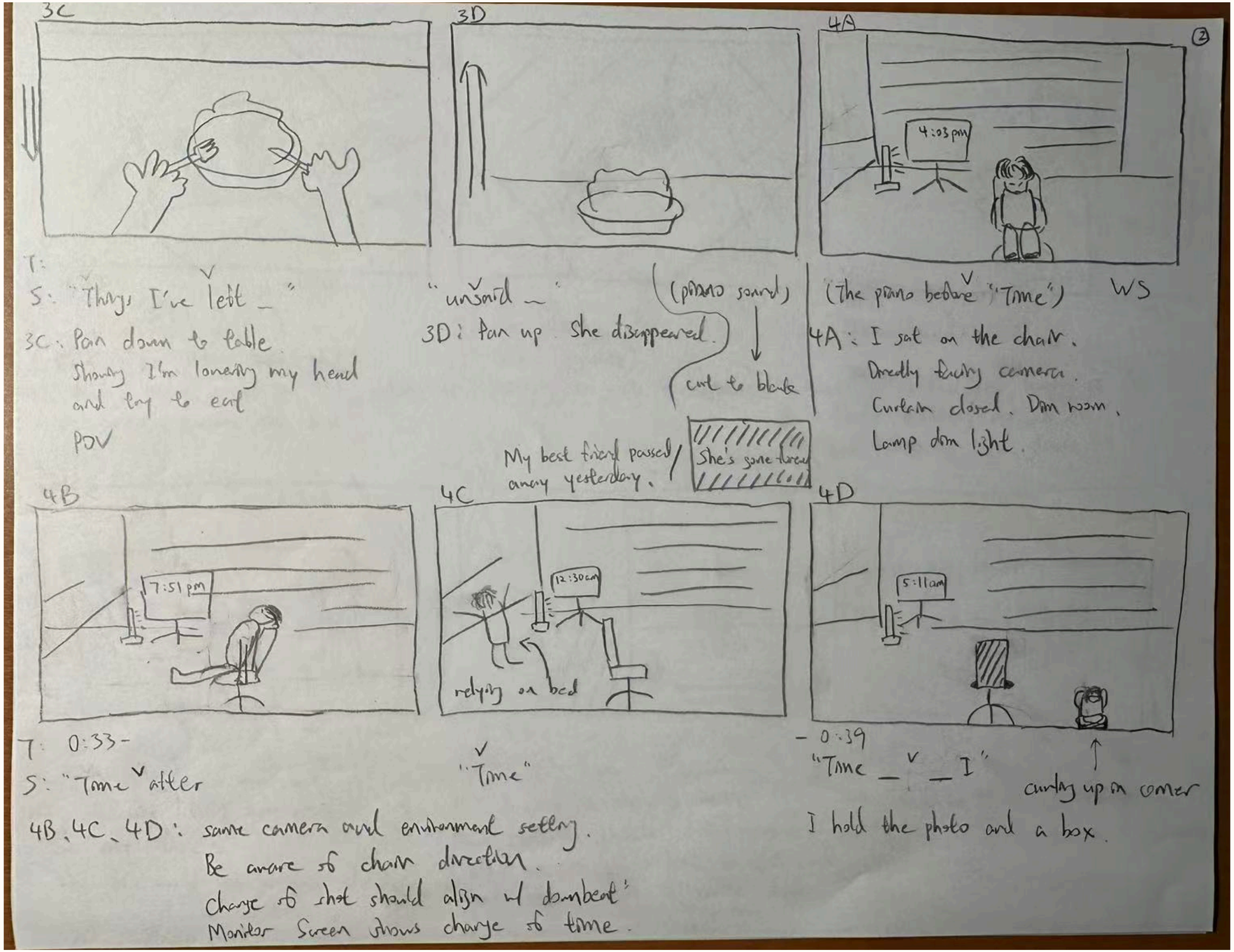
Small actions and shared experiences support a return to everyday life.

DIFFICULTY	USER TASKS	WHY THIS LEVEL?	VIDEO
SIMPLE	Find a small activity that feels manageable to do at the moment of depression.	All users will find a manageable activity proposed by the companion to start with for everyday support.	01:01
MODERATE	Complete a simple self-care activity when grief makes it hard to get started.	Most users will regularly complete suggested self-care activities as part of their routine.	01:02-01:07
COMPLEX	Take the initiative to share an everyday experience or suggest something to do together with others.	Intended for power users who regularly share their lives and initiate/propose activities with the companion.	01:18

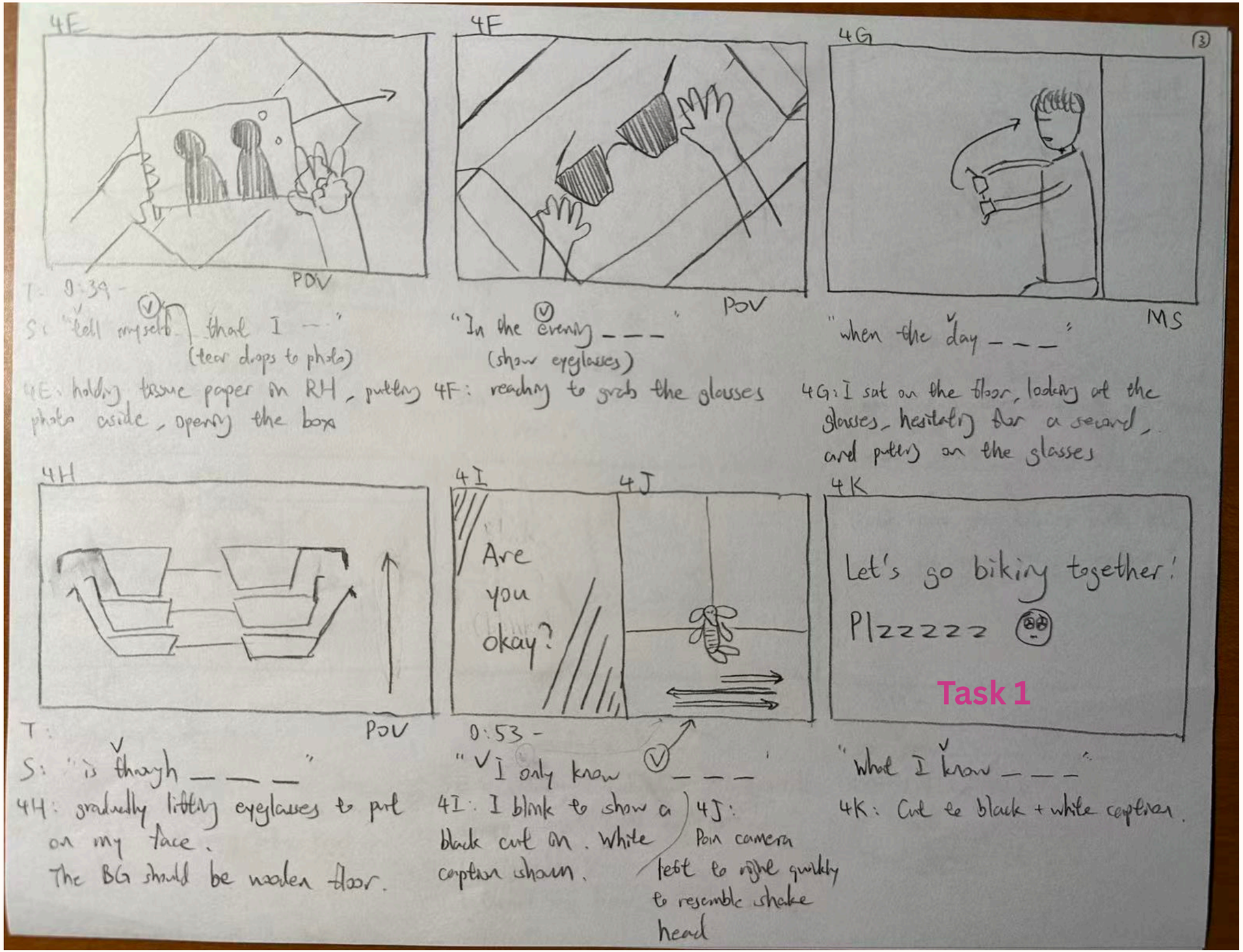
Script and Storyboard



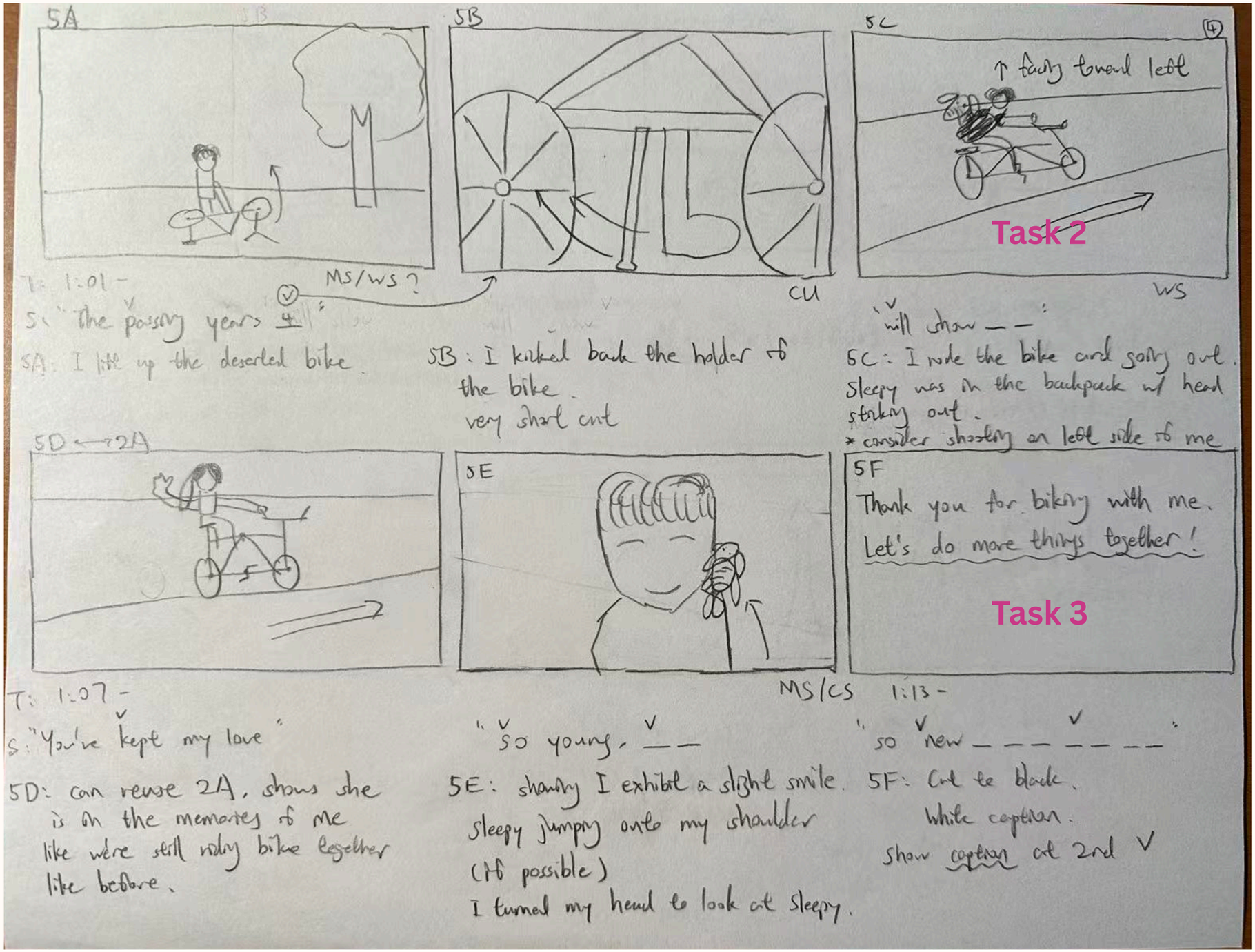
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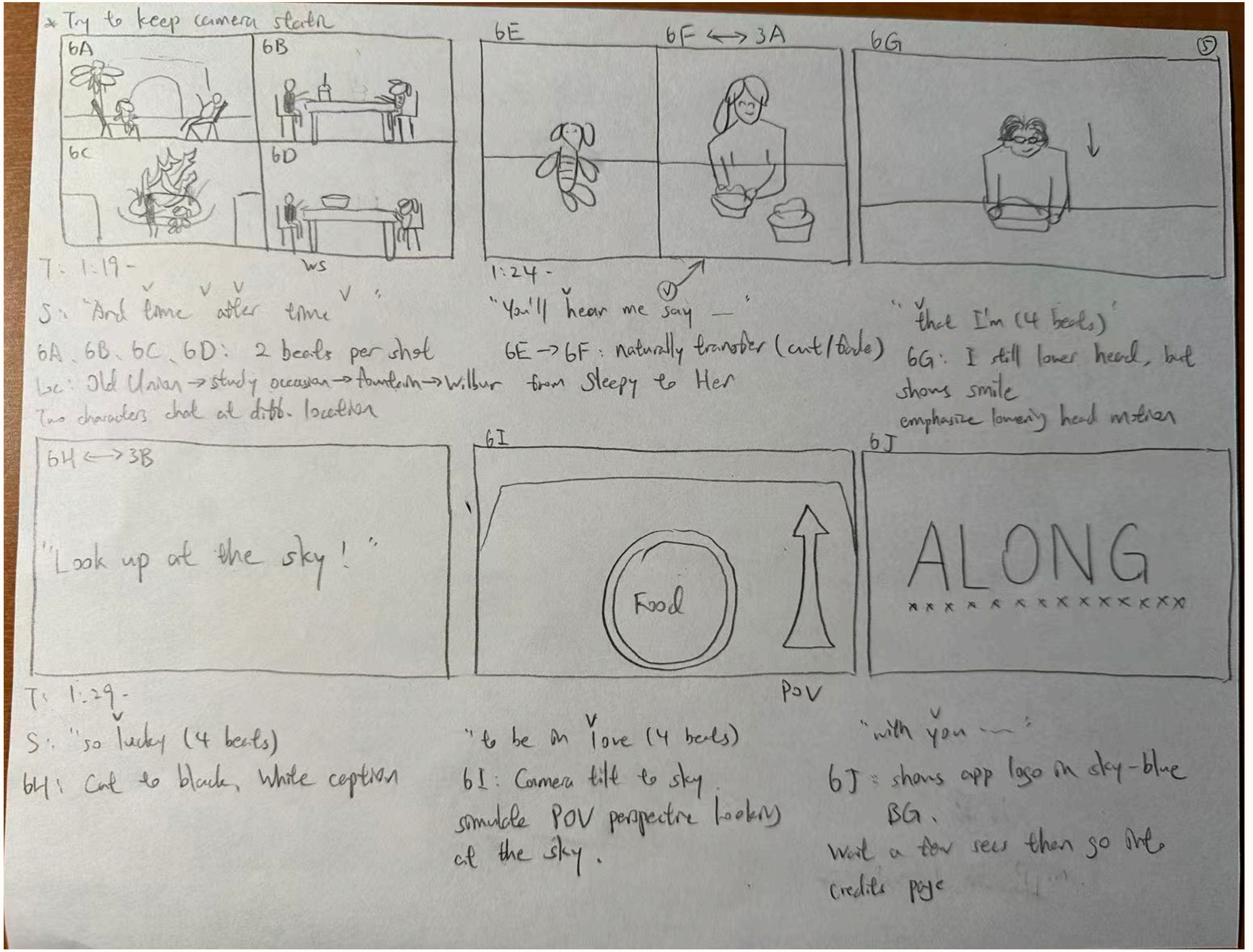
Script and Storyboard



Script and Storyboard



Script and Storyboard



Concept Video



Link to our concept video: https://youtu.be/JGOFWAvoV9k

Thank you!