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“Gary the Gull,” a four-minute replayable interactive short VR film built in the Limitless VR Creative Environment, combines the story of film with the interactivity of games.

As virtual reality approximates reality, we begin to expect virtual reality to behave like the real world. This is already apparent in the huge success of motion controllers, which generate virtual reality that is far more immersive than just VR visuals alone. But what about characters and people in those worlds? If VR characters look past you and don’t respond to you, the illusion is broken and you don’t form an emotional connection with those characters.

An ex-Pixar, ex-Bungie team solved this problem by introducing character interactivity into VR storytelling. In “Gary the Gull,” a seagull interrupts your lunch on the beach. And when the seagull asks you a question, you can respond with voice recognition, head gestures, and gaze direction. He responds to your questions, tries to distract you, jumps away if you invade his personal space. How you respond to Gary’s questions changes how you experience the narrative, and the interactivity makes you feel part of the story.

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