

Making Your World Interesting -- the advanced scripting and conversation tutorial

The goal of this tutorial is to build on the last tutorial (Making Your World Work) by making the world you've built more...well...interesting. This tutorial assumes that you've finished the basic Aurora Toolset tutorial, the ScriptEase tutorial, the Making Your World tutorial, and the Making Your World Work tutorial.

In this tutorial, we will make the Guardian a bit more talkative, we'll make him angry, and we'll add some audio and visual effects.

The player is a wandering adventurer who happens upon a tower in the wilderness. Inside the tower, the player finds a friendly Guardian who tells the player about the magic levers. If they are pulled in the right order, the vault opens and the treasure may be obtained.

Getting Started:

- 1) Open the Aurora Toolset.
- 2) Open LeverMagic2 and save it as "LeverMagic3".

Interesting Conversation:

Introduction to talking back:

3) At this point, when you try to talk to the Guardian, he just makes a declaration. There is no chance for an actual conversation. This kind of "interaction" often doesn't make for interesting games. Right-click on the "guardianwelcome" conversation (found by clicking on the '+' sign next to "Conversations" in the "Module Content" panel on the left side of the AT window) and choose "Edit" from the menu.

4) In the "Conversation Editor" window that opens, right-click on the dialogue that you have (should start with "[Owner] - 'Welcome, <FirstName>...'") and choose "Add" from the list (this can also be done with the "Add" button which is discussed in the last tutorial).

5) An "Input Text" window should open, prompting you to "Enter what the player says next", replace "<< Enter text here >>" in the text area with the following text:

"Greetings, Guardian. I'd sure like that treasure. Is there any way you could tell me the right order?"

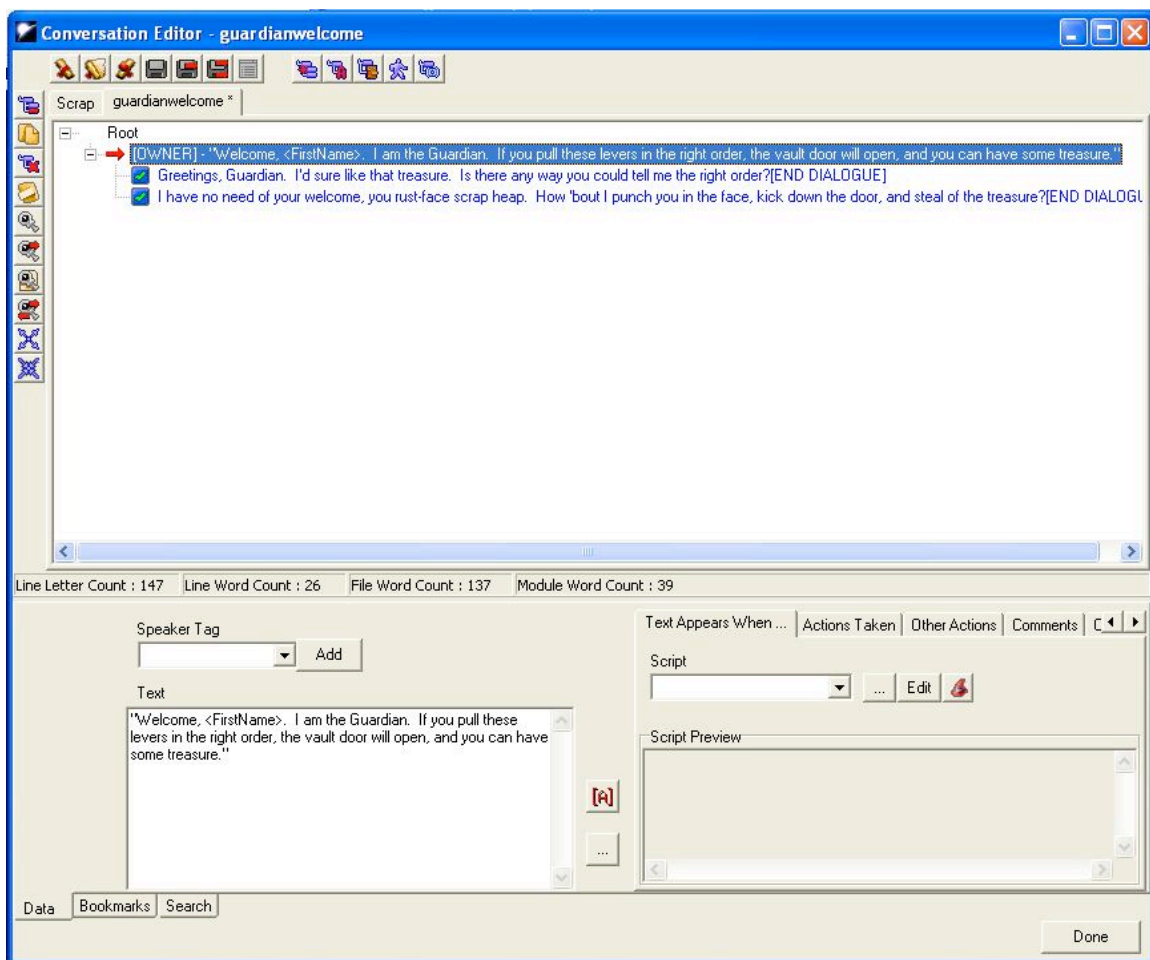
Just click the "Ok" button when you've finished adding your text.

6) As you should have discovered in the AT and SE tutorials, conversation follows a tree structure. All conversations start with a root. Branches from that root express any further dialogue. If this isn't immediately clear, it should become more clear shortly. At this point, we've only given the user one response to the Guardian's opening statement. It is a friendly, polite response that is likely to result in friendly, polite treatment. For completeness, we should allow the user to be a bit nastier. Add another branch by right-clicking on the "Welcome" line and choosing "Add" from the menu.

7) In the "Input Text" window that opens, add following text and click "Ok":

"I have no need of your welcome, you rust-faced scrap heap. How 'bout I punch you in the face, kick down the door, and steal the treasure?"

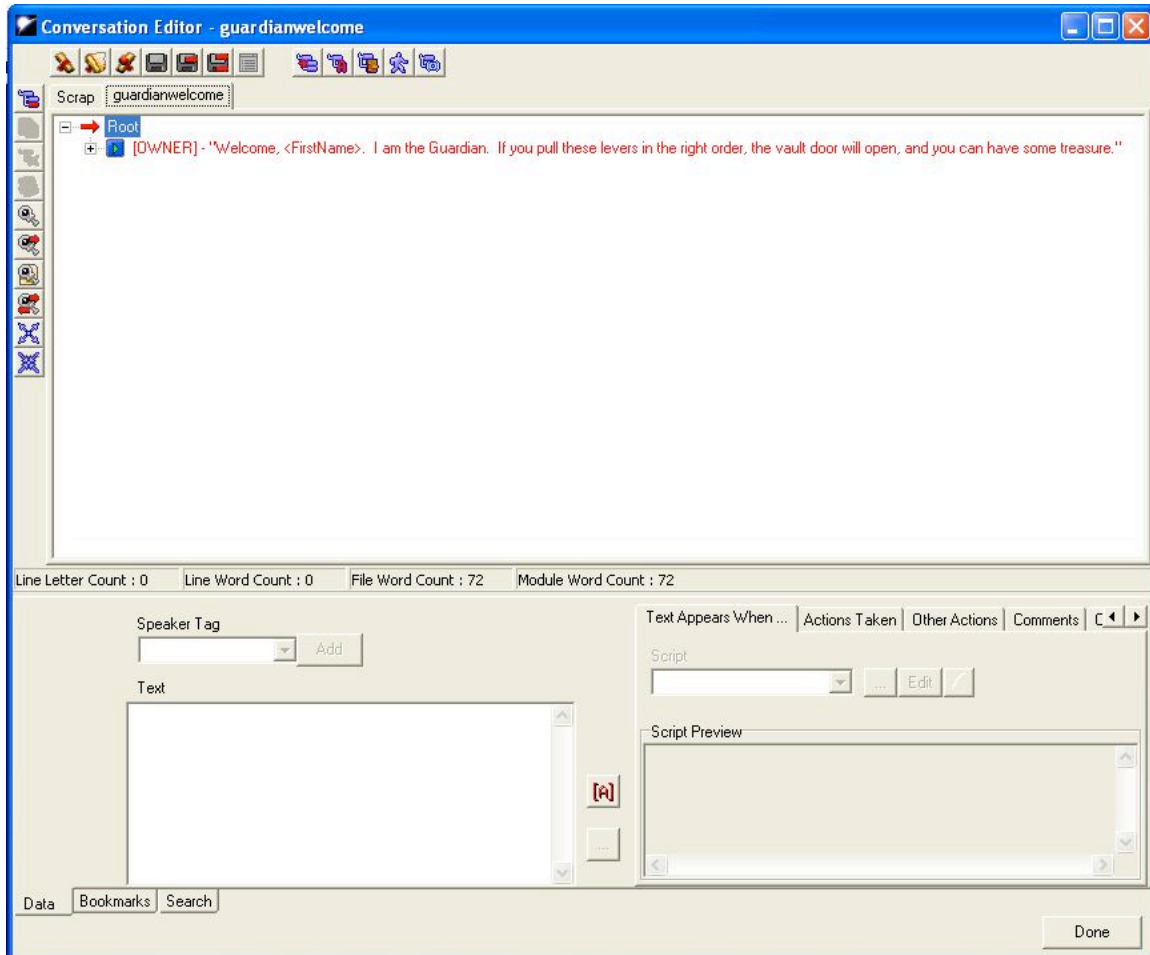
8) You should now see two blue lines (or branches) which are things that can be said by whoever the speaker (in this case the speaker is the Guardian) is talking to. Lines that belong to the speaker start with [OWNER] and are coloured red. There is a screenshot below of what your conversation should look like. You can also see that the branch you are adding things to (or the "selected" branch) is highlighted in blue and has a red arrow at the start of the line.



9) Save this conversation by clicking the “Save” button. Save your module and try it out. You should now have some options when conversing with the Guardian.

Branching out:

10) Open the “Conversation Editor” again (right-click on the "guardianwelcome" conversation and choose “Edit”). This is a good time to discuss a few components of the “Conversation Editor”. Consider this screenshot:



11) You'll notice that the Root is highlighted (red arrow, blue highlight). Clicking on the '-' next to the Root will contract the tree below the Root. Clicking on the '+' next to the "Welcome" will expand the tree below that branch. The green triangle icon (▶) next to a line means that it is spoken by the Owner (of the conversation). The checkmark icon (☑) indicates that this branch belongs to the person the Owner is speaking to (in our case, it's the Player). Take this opportunity to click around in your conversation until you feel clear about how a conversation is put together and navigated.

12) To continue our campaign of making things interesting, let's put some Guardian responses in there. First, we'll add a line to the "Greetings, Guardian..." branch by right-clicking on it and choosing "Add". In the "Input Text" window, you may now notice that you are prompted to "Enter what the NPC says next:". This is just a little cue to make sure you're adding responses where you think you are. We'll add the text:

“Why certainly. You just had to ask nicely. The order is simple: 1, then 2, and finally 3.”

13) Let's add a couple of player responses to this branch. The text for each will be:

“Thanks, Guardian. I'll go snag that treasure now. Have a super day!”

and

“Ha ha! You fool! The treasure is mine. All mine!”

Conversation links:

14) Now we've got a couple of places that the Guardian needs responses. To the friendly PC response, the Guardian should respond:

“It's no trouble. Enjoy the treasure.”

To the nasty PC response, the Guardian will say:

“I don't think you're very nice. I think I'll smash you now.”

15) Now that the NPC has started to respond to the PC's nastiness, but we'd like to give the PC a chance to back down before the Guardian smashes them. Add the following branches to the conversation (both are PC responses to that "I'll smash you now" line):

“Uh, wait, I think I gave you the wrong impression. Can we start over? I'm <FirstName>.”

and

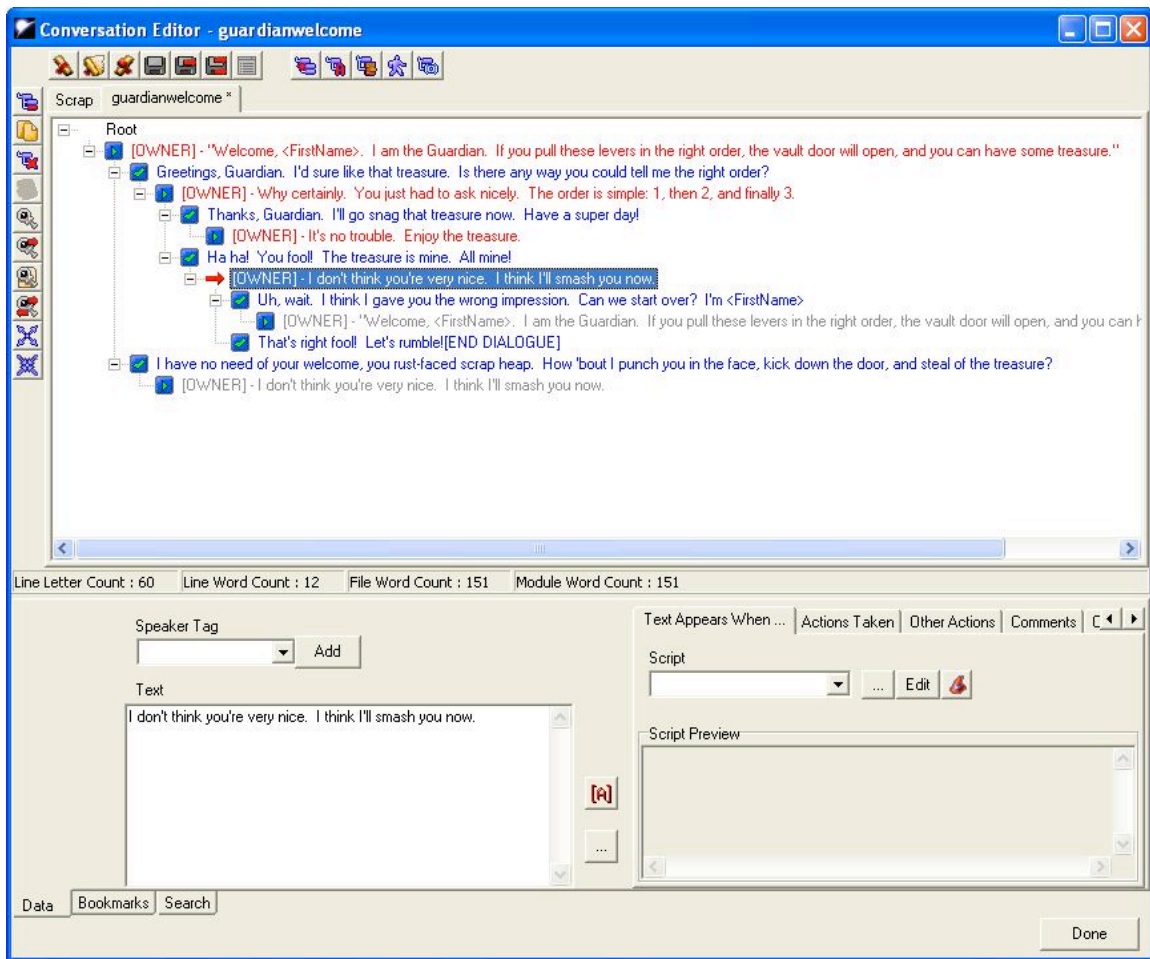
“That's right, metal mouth. Let's rumble.”

16) Wouldn't it be handy to be able to link the "start over" line with the beginning of the conversation? We can! Using "links". Right-click on the “[Owner] – ‘Welcome...’” line that started the conversation and choose “Copy” from the menu.

17) Right-click on the PC response “Uh, wait...” and choose “Paste As Link” from the menu. A copy of the “Welcome” line should appear (in grey) under the “Uh, wait...” branch. The grey signals that it's a link. Congratulations, you've created your first link.

18) There is another good place for a link. "Copy" the "I don't think you're very nice..." Guardian branch and paste it as a link on the "I have no need of your welcome..." PC branch. Now you've linked up the whole conversation branch with a couple of clicks.

19) Check out the screenshot below to see that your conversation has all the right branches and links.



20) Save your conversation and your module and try it out. You'll notice that there are no actions to go with the conversation. That's next.

Interesting Action:

Money and your mouth:

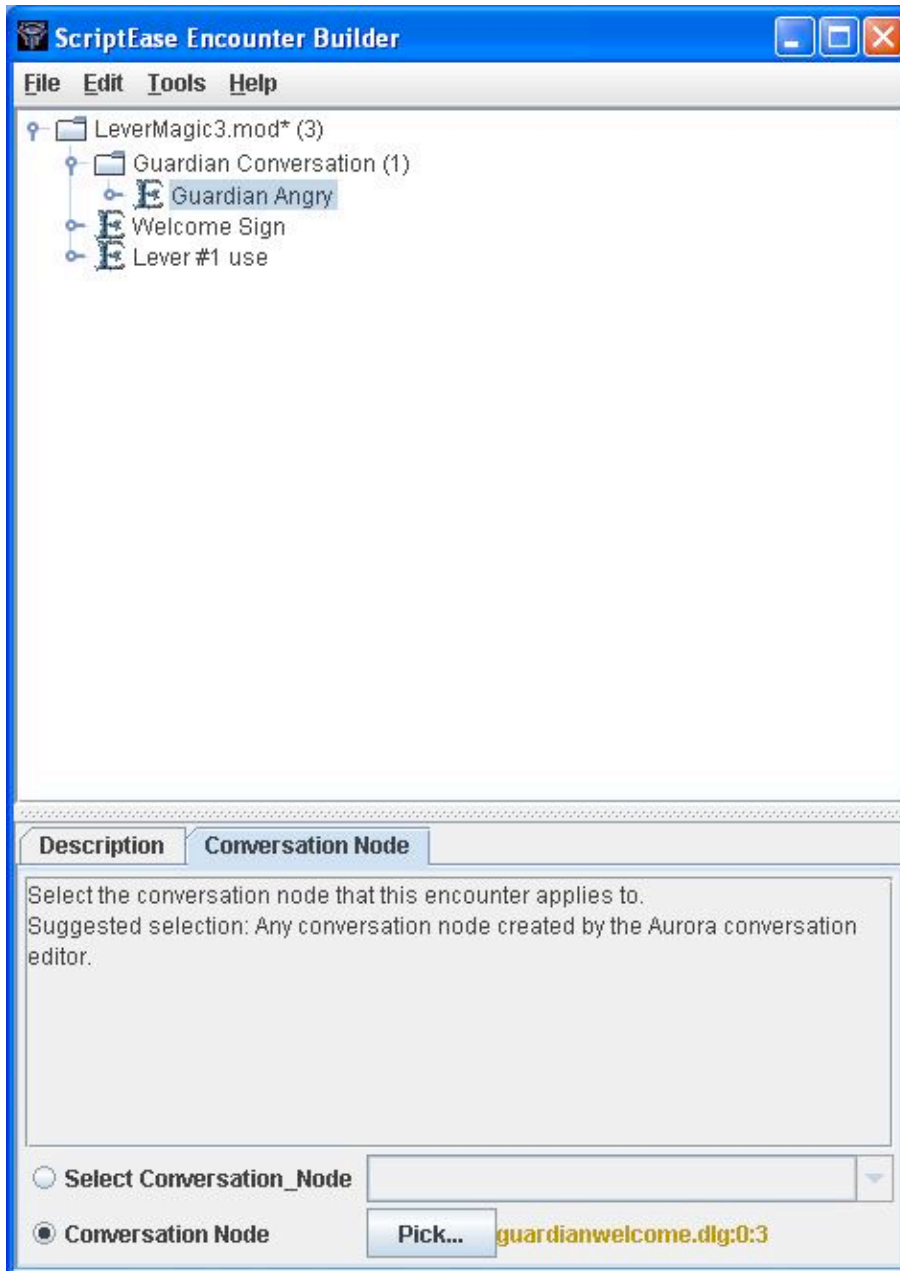
21) It seems like our PC might want to take a round out of the Guardian, so let's oblige them. Open your module in ScriptEase. We'll follow the advice of the SE developers and create a new folder for the Guardian's conversations. Right-click on the top folder in

your module (should be called LeverMagic3.mod) and select “New Folder” from the menu.

22) Click on your new folder and fill in the “Category” name with “Guardian Conversation”, then add a New Specific Encounter-->Conversations-->Basic conversation.

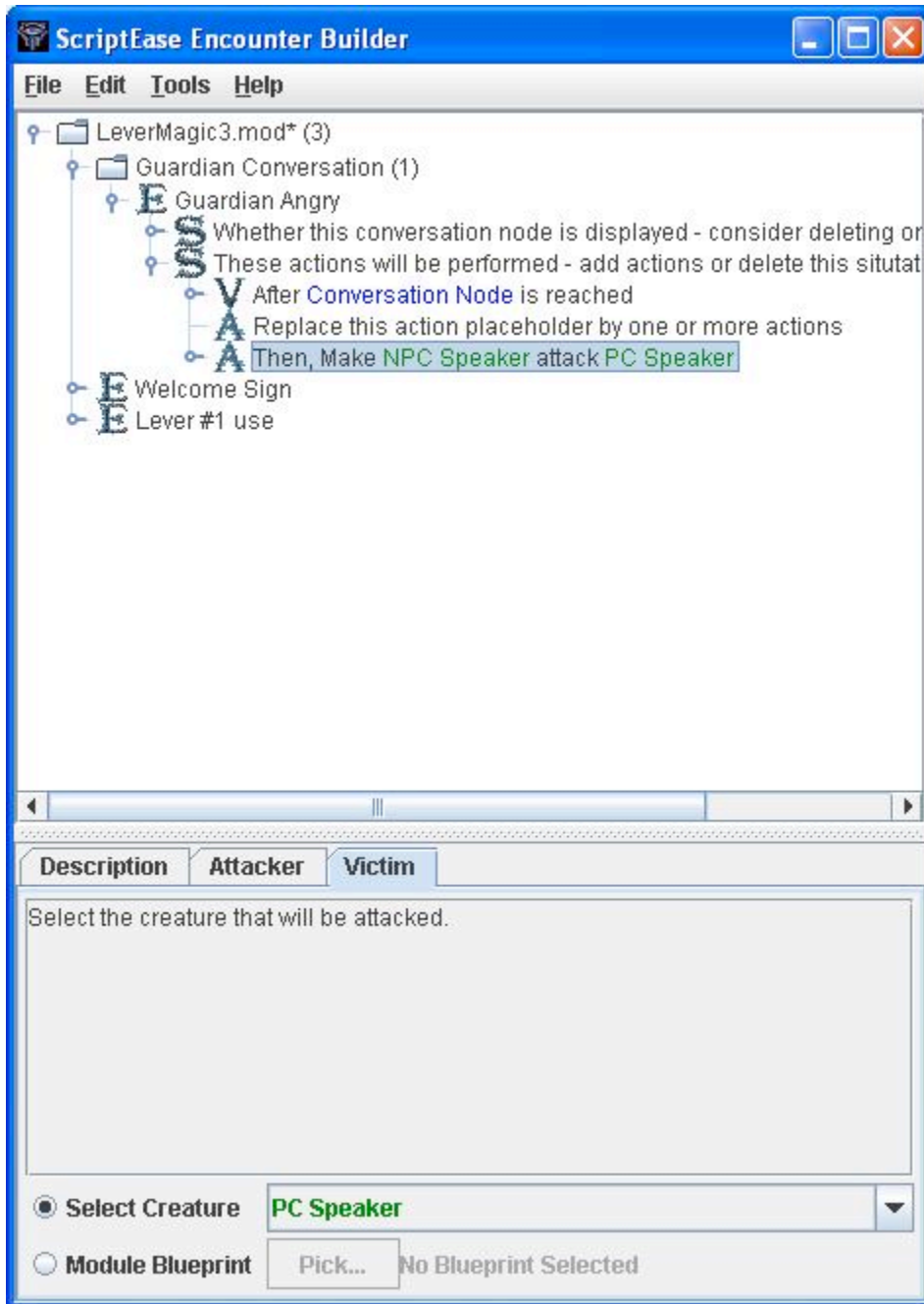
23) Select your new “Encounter” and change the “Instance Name” to “Guardian Angry” (under the “Description” tab)

24) Under the Conversation Node tab-->Conversation Node-->Pick button and a "Pick a conversation node" window should open up. It should look much like the conversation editor in Aurora. Select the “guardianwelcome.dlg” conversation (it should be the only one) and navigate to the "That's right, metal mouth..." line. Click on it to select it then click “Ok”. Now, beside the “Pick” button, you should see "guardianwelcome.dlg:0:3" in gold text like in the screenshot below.



25) Expand your “Guardian Angry” Encounter. By right-clicking on the "These actions will be performed..." Situation, Add an Action-->Action Encounter-->Make a creature attack a creature that was its friend.

26) In the “Action” you've just created, under the “Attacker” tab-->Select Creature-->NPC Speaker and under the “Victim” tab-->Select Creature-->PC Speaker. Your new encounter should now look like this screenshot. “Save and Compile”, then go a round or two with the guardian.



Making the Guardian's Anger Interesting

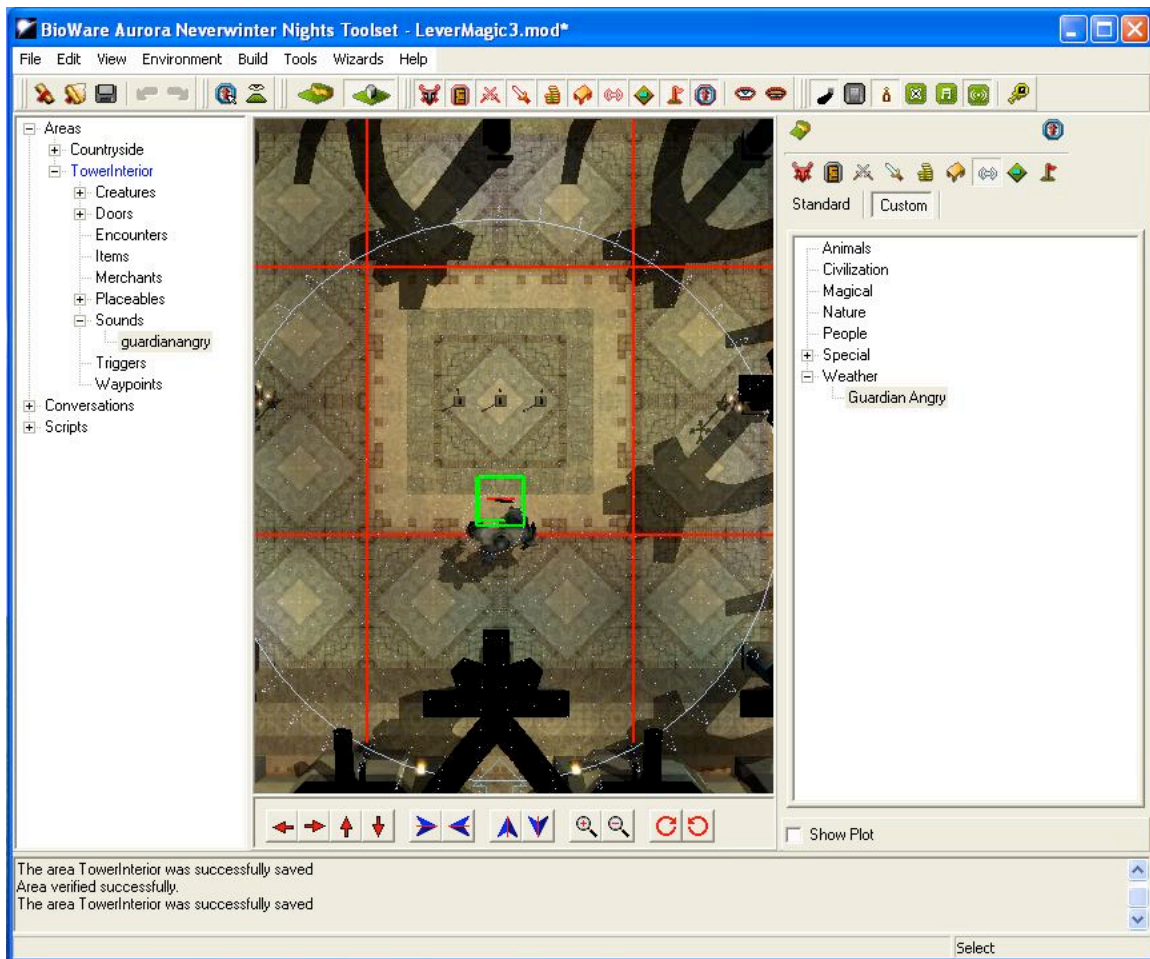
Adding single-shot sound:

27) To make the Guardian's change more dramatic, we're going to make a sound that is triggered when the Guardian gets angry. To get started, we'll select the "Paint Sounds" tool, and under "Weather", we'll "Edit Copy" of "Thunder Claps Near".

28) In the “Sound Properties” window that opens, we’ll change the name to “Guardian Angry” and change the tag to “guardianangry”.

29) Under the “Positioning” tab, we’ll choose “Plays from a specific position”, change Volume Distances-->Cutoff distance (m) to 100, and leave the rest of the settings alone. Click “Ok” to accept the changes.

30) Paint your “guardianangry” sound object near the Guardian so that it will sound like it is coming from him. Don't place the object directly on the Guardian or it will be hard to select for moving around and editing. The screenshot below shows what the sound object looks like in the area viewer and a possible location for the sound.

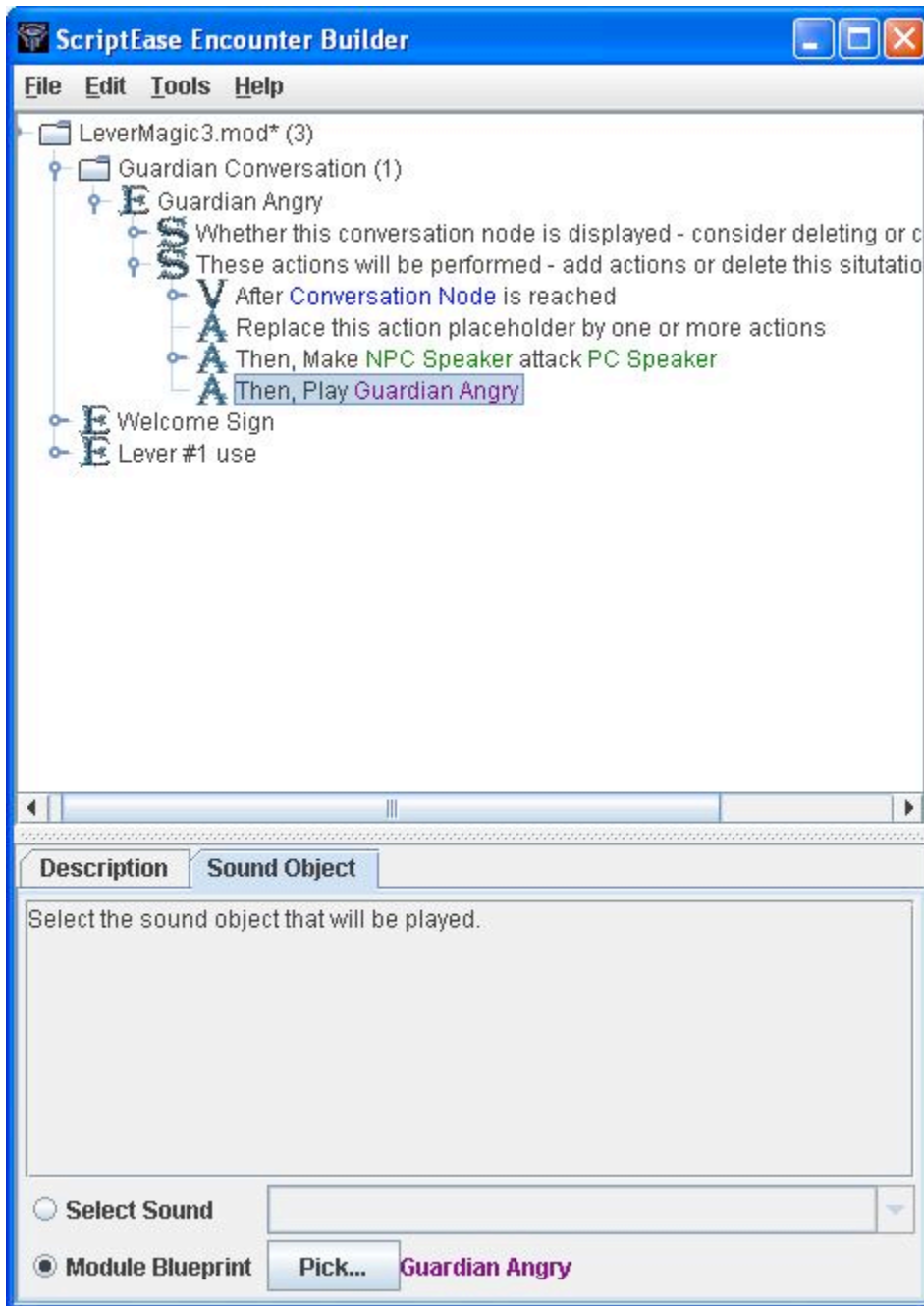


Scripting that sound:

31) We've got a sound object that makes noise near the Guardian, but let's use ScriptEase to more closely connect the thunder sound with the anger of the Guardian. Start by opening your module in SE.

32) Under Guardian Conversation-->Guardian Angry, right-click on “These actions will be performed...” and choose Add an Action-->Action Atom-->Miscellaneous-->Play a sound object.

33) Under the new “Action” that you've created-->Sound Object tab-->Module Blueprint Pick-->Guardian Angry. The screenshot shows what the ScriptEase should look like. It's as simple as that. Save and compile your module and try it out. You should get an excellent thunderstorm sound to accompany an enraged Guardian.



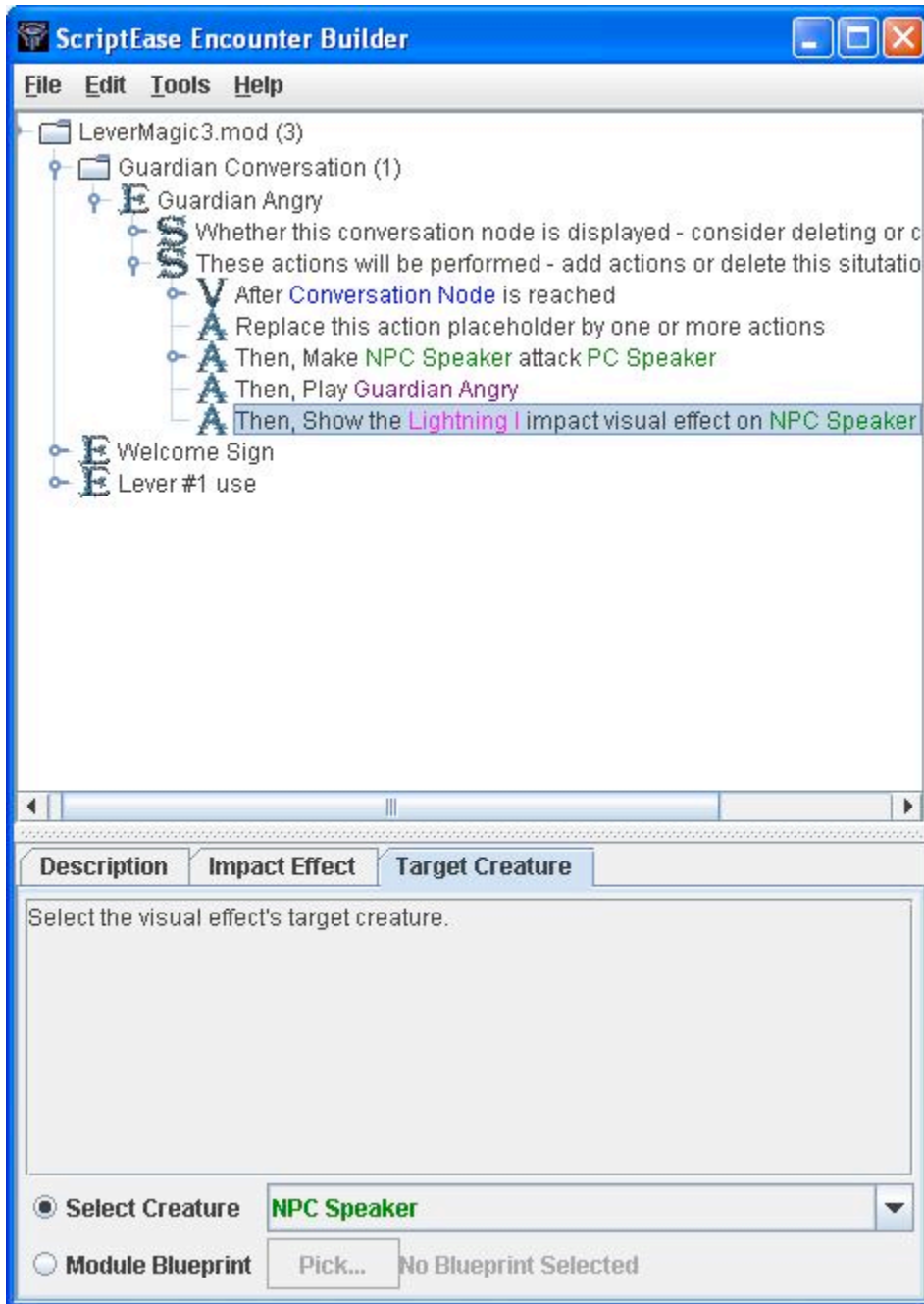
Something flashy:

34) The cherry on top of this angry Guardian is to add a visual effect caused by the Guardian's rage. Open your module in ScriptEase again, and expand the Guardian Conversation-->Guardian Angry.

35) By right-clicking on the “These actions will be performed...” Situation, Add an Action-->Action Atom-->Visual Effects-->Show an impact visual effect on a creature.

36) In the “Action” you've just created-->Impact Effect tab-->Constant-->choose “Lightning I” from the dropdown.

37) Under the “Target Creature” tab-->Select Creature-->choose NPC Speaker from the dropdown. ScriptEase should now look like this:



38) Now save your module and compile it then try it out in NWN. Hopefully, you will get something like the screenshot below.



39) Now that we've made the Guardian more interesting, let's tackle those levers (finally). Not here, in the next tutorial.

Excellent work. You've made the Guardian talk, get angry, sound angry, and look angry. What's he angry about? The levers! Let's get on to the next tutorial: Making Your World Lively -- plot tokens and other magic.