Making Your World Cinematic – ScriptEase cut-scene tutorial

The goal of this tutorial is to build on the previous tutorial (Making Your World with Triggers) by teaching you the basics of in-game cut-scenes. This tutorial assumes that you’ve finished the previous five Make Your World tutorials. The sixth one, Making Your World Fleshy, and the seventh one, Making Your World Story-worthy, are not required to complete this tutorial.

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 ScriptEase.

2) Open LeverMagic7 (or LeverMagic6 or LeverMagic5) and save it as “LeverMagic8”.

Entering the Tower:

What we want here is to have an in-game cut-scene once the player character enters the tower. The cut-scene introduces the guardian to the player.

3) Create a New Specific Encounter → Base CodePak → Areas → When Area is entered by Specific Creature
   On the Left Side, choose towerinterior.are

4) Since we only want the cut-scene to happen when the PC enters the tower, we need to select the PC. Under the “Specific Creature” tab, Pick the PC.

5) Now the encounter is ready, let’s create the cut-scene! A few concepts first:

Concept 1: In NWN, there is a cut-scene mode. Once the game enters the cut-scene mode, the player loses control of the PC and the game, allowing a scene to unfold itself without interruption. But you have to be careful! If something goes wrong while your game is in cut-scene mode (for example, a character is supposed to give another character an item but is unable to do so), then your game will be stuck forever. This can be a huge show-stopper for your game, so use cut-scenes with extra care!

Concept 2: In NWN, there are three “unbreakable” actions, sit, attack, and move. While NPCs are sitting, attacking, or moving, they will ignore whatever commands you give them until they finish. For attacking, finish means the enemies have been killed; for moving, finish means the destination has been reached; for sitting, unfortunately this
action never finishes.

To resolve this situation, there is a special command called “Clear all actions.” It tells the creature to forget all actions and start anew. “Clear all actions” is the only way to stop the three “unbreakable” actions.

Therefore, before entering cut-scene mode, we need to make sure all parties involved are ready.

Right-click the Encounter → Add an Action → Action Atom → Miscellaneous → Clear all actions of Target

6) In the “Target” tab, Pick… → Select a PC

7) Repeat the step above and create another “Clear all actions.” In the “Target” tab, Pick… → Guardian

8) Now start the cut-scene mode. Right-click the Encounter → Add an Action → Action
Atom → Cut Scene → The Activator * triggers a set cutscene mode of The Creature to Cutscene Mode

9) Under “The Activator” tab, choose Pick... → Guardian. **Note:** The activator can be any NPC involved in this cut-scene, as long as this NPC is alive. However, the activator should not be the PC.

10) Under “The Creature” tab, choose Pick... → Select a PC. Under the “Cutscene Mode” tab, select True.

**Concept 3:** Starred (*) actions vs. Non-Starred actions. Some actions in SE have a * in them, such as the previous one “The Activator * triggers a set cutscene mode of The Creature to Cutscene Mode,” while other actions have no stars, such as “Set PC’s camera facing.” The difference is that starred actions are given to a particular NPC, to be performed in an action queue in an orderly fashion; on the other hand, non-starred actions are just commands to be performed immediately. Starred actions are always performed by a subject (The Activator in the example above); non-starred actions do not have a subject. They are performed by the game-engine itself. “Set PC’s camera facing” is not done by any creature, for example. If you want a set of actions to happen in a guaranteed order, you have to use all starred actions.

11) Let’s set the camera. Right-click the Encounter → Add an Action → Action Atom → Cut Scene → The Activator * triggers a store the PC’s camera facing

Under “The Activator” tab, Pick the Guardian. This will help us restore the camera facing once the cut-scene finishes.

**Concept 4:** To get the right timing on a list of actions, there is a command called “Delay.” You can use “Delay” to specify that an action is to be performed a number of seconds later.

12) Right-click the Encounter → Add an Action → **Action Encounter** → Object * delays the following actions for Delay seconds

Under the “Object” tab, Pick the Guardian. Under the “Delay” tab, enter 1.

13) Right-click the Delay action → Add an Action → Action Atom → Cut Scene → The Activator * triggers a set Target PC’s camera mode to Camera Mode

Under “The Activator” tab, Pick the Guardian. Under the “Target PC” tab, Pick the PC. Under the “Camera Mode” tab, choose Driving.
14) For each action, we’ll need to use a “Delay” command. Right-click the Encounter → Add an Action → Action Encounter → Object * delays the following actions for Delay seconds. Under the “Object” tab, Pick the Guardian. Under the “Delay” tab, enter 2.

15) Right-click the Delay action → Add an Action → Action Atom → Movement and Orientation → Mover * (run/walk) within Distance meters of Target for Timeout seconds

Under the “Mover” tab, Pick the PC. Under the “Target” tab, Pick the Guardian. Under the “Speed” tab, choose run. Under the “Distance” tab, enter 3. Under the “Timeout” tab, enter 30.
Save and compile. Try the game now. The PC should run to the guardian once you enter the tower. The game will then freeze. Press Alt+F4 to exit the game.

16) Add another Delay command. Under the “Delay” tab, enter 5.

17) Right-click the Delay action → Add an Action → Action Atom → Animations → Animate The Creature * to Animation

Under “The Creature” tab, Pick the PC. Under the “Animation” tab, choose Salute.

18) Add another Delay command. Under the “Delay” tab, enter 7.

19) Right-click the Delay action → Add an Action → Action Atom → Visual Effects → Show the Fired Effect fired visual effect on Creature

Under the “Creature” tab, Pick the Guardian. Under the “Fired Effect” tab, choose Sound Burst.
Save and compile. Try the game now.

20) Add another Delay command. Under the “Delay” tab, enter 10.

21) Right-click the Delay action → Add an Action → Action Atom → Movement and Orientation → Mover * (run/walk) within Distance meters of Target for Timeout seconds

Under the “Mover” tab, Pick the PC. Under the “Target” tab, Pick Lever #1. Under the “Speed” tab, choose run. Under the “Distance” tab, enter 2. Under the “Timeout” tab, enter 30.

22) Right-click the same Delay action → Add an Action → Action Atom → Movement and Orientation → Facing Creature * faces Object To Face

Under the “Facing Creature” tab, Pick the PC. Under the “Object To Face” tab, Pick the Guardian.

23) Add another Delay command. Under the “Delay” tab, enter 14.

24) Right-click the Delay action → Add an Action → Action Atom → Movement and Orientation → Mover * (run/walk) within Distance meters of Target for Timeout seconds

Under the “Mover” tab, Pick the Guardian. Under the “Target” tab, Pick the PC. Under the “Distance” tab, enter 3. Under the “Timeout” tab, enter 30.

Save and compile. Try the game now.

25) Finally, we want to end the cut-scene. Add another Delay command. Under the “Delay” tab, enter 18.

26) Right-click the Delay action → Add an Action → Action Atom → Cut Scene → The Activator * triggers a set Target PC’s camera mode to Camera Mode


27) Right-click the same Delay action → Add an Action → Action Atom → Cut Scene → The Activator * triggers a restore the PC’s camera facing

Under “The Activator” tab, Pick the Guardian. This will help us restore the camera facing once the cut-scene finishes.
28) Right-click the same Delay action → Add an Action → Action Atom → Cut Scene → The Activator * triggers a set cutscene mode of The Creature to Cutscene Mode

29) Under “The Activator” tab, choose Pick... → Guardian. Under “The Creature” tab, choose Pick... → Select a PC. Under the “Cutscene Mode” tab, select False.

30) Save and compile your module and check it out in NWN. Now the cut scene will stop and you don’t have to kill the game by using Alt+F4 anymore. The complete module is shown below.
Quick-Action buttons:

This is not directly related to in-game cut-scenes, but it is a useful tool to know if you want to manually create some fast action sequences and record the screen as a video (i.e. a pre-made video cut-scene).

Normally, actions in Neverwinter Nights are round-based. Each round is 6 seconds (a heart-beat), and characters wait around until a new round comes to perform the next action. This can be slow and boring to look at. Fortunately, NWN does provide a mechanism for fast responses, using in-game chat messages. A demonstration is detailed below.

31) In ScriptEase, right-click “LeverMagic8.mod” → New Specific Encounter → Base CodePak → Player → When the Player sends a specific chat message Message

32) Under the “Message” tab, enter “attack” in the “Constant” textbox.

We’ll use the word “attack” as a code word for executing an action.

33) Right-click the Encounter → Add an Action → Action Atom → Visual Effects → Show the Beam Effect beam visual effect between Source and Target for Duration seconds

34) Under the “Beam Effect” tab, choose “Fire Beam”. Under the “Source” tab, Pick A PC. Under the “Target” tab, Pick the Guardian. Under the “Duration” tab, enter 0.5.

35) Right-click the Encounter → Add an Action → Action Encounter → Delay the following actions for Delay seconds. Under the “Delay” tab, enter 0.5.

36) Right-click the Delay Action → Add an Action → Action Atom → Visual Effects → Show the Fired Effect fired visual effect on Target.

37) Under the “Fired Effect” tab, choose “Fireball”. Under the “Target” tab, Pick the Guardian.

38) Right-click the Delay Action → Add an Action → Action Atom → Combat → Deal Amount points of Damage Type damage to Target


A screenshot is shown below.
Save and compile the module.

Now what does this actually do? We’ve told the game to watch for player chat messages. If the chat message “attack” comes up, then the PC will shoot an explosive beam of fire at the Guardian.

40) When you are in the game, press the Enter key to bring up the chat window. It’s on the bottom of the screen, marked with “Talk:” See screenshot below.
Type “attack” (without the quotes) and press Enter. If everything is working, you should see a beam of fire shooting from the PC to the Guardian. Type “attack” again to see it happen again.

Utilizing Quickslots:

NWN uses a set of shortcuts for quick actions. The bar at the bottom of the screen corresponds to the F1 to F12 function keys on the keyboard.

We can map these keys to pre-defined chat messages to use for our own purposes.

To set up one of the keys, for example F1, first we need to empty the current F1 slot.

41) In the game, right-click the slot marked with F1, then left-click Empty Quickslot.
42) When the F1 slot is empty, right-click it again, and then left-click the icon at the top: Custom Text Macro.

43) When a new windows pop up with the prompt “Enter Label”, type “attack”. When the prompt “Input Command” shows up, type “attack”.
Now the quickslot is set-up. Pressing F1 is equivalent to typing “attack”, and the PC will shoot a fireball at the Guardian. Press F1 multiple times and see the mighty Guardian fall before you. You can utilize this quickslot method to create fast actions in an action sequence.

Note: If you save a player character with custom quickslots, you can use this character later as a custom character. All quickslots will be saved.