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Game Concept

Log Line

A young girl must overcome her fears in order to survive and save her sickly father in a world full of humanity's worst fears come to life.

Introduction

A 2.5D side-scrolling horror/stealth game. Protagonist is a young girl trying to survive with her father in the wreckage that is her home.

Description

The player is trying to keep her father alive through the game by scavenging through the world around her. There will be in game moments when the player has to choose to proceed further from home to find the truth behind these monsters, or to accept her reality and return to her father.

All the characters are to represent some sort of phobia, the monsters show this visually while the human characters show this through the narrative. Different monsters exist on different “layers” in the environment. The mother was **thanatophobia**, the father was **agoraphobia** and Thana was the fear of moving forward.

The player starts off looking to be about 13-15 years old, and her father is very sick. There will be multiple [StoryItem]s that the player can find once she reaches the location of that level. The player can choose to interact with them or not. If the player doesn't interact with the [StoryItem], she starts looking and speaking younger and her father gets stronger and healthier. If the player does interact with the story items, she grows older/more mature and her father grows weaker.

Genre

Horror/stealth

Platform

PC

Concept Art

(art by Jessica Carrer)



Game Mechanics

Core Game Play

Stealth - During this phase, the player will have to get from point A to point B while avoiding the monsters. There will be objects to hide behind and things to pick up to throw and lure things away. The player's flashlight could also act as a lure, as the crank creates noise. The player will have options to switch layers to avoid monsters.

Scavenge - Once the player reaches point B, they will be able to pick up a set number of items that exist in the world. The game will only continue once they pick them up. The player will also then choose to interact with the StoryItem. If yes, they watch a cutscene and they are teleported back to the house. If not, they have to make their way back to the house.

StoryItem Scene - A cutscene where the player watches part of what happened. Maybe make them out of order? Player can rewatch them from the main menu.

In Home - The player has limited intractability with objects within the house. They can always talk to the father.

Game Flow

Game will have 3 "phases." The player will either be in the stealth section, scavenge section or a cutscene. The player's home will act as the main "hub" of the game (can save, load, change settings, ect.).

There are 3 (?) layers that the player can switch between.

- There has to be some sort of color or symbol that indicates what layer the player is on
- Think about *Knock Knock* (aesthetically)

Each layer changes the world slightly, and monsters can only "exist" on certain layers.

The player must traverse the world by avoiding monsters through the use of these layers.

- **Layer One:** The player's sight is greatly reduced. The player can still hear monsters from other layers, but seeing them is extremely difficult. The player can see an outline of the monsters around them. Player has a light source but is very minimal.
- **Layer Two:** The player's hearing is dampened, and there are whispers or something that makes it hard to hear other monsters. The monsters will be louder than the other sounds, but try to make it feel "messy" almost.
- **Layer Three:** The "normal" layer. Plays with the characters vision, not by blinding them, but by changing objects or showing the outline of monsters on other layers.

Main Characters

Mother - seen only in photo or bad ending

- Mom clothes
- Hair that resembles Thana

Father - dying, barely has lines

- “Good” Ending
 - Face covered by cloth
 - Body hidden by blankets and junk
- “Bad” Ending
 - Scruffy
 - Plaid top
 - jeans

Thana - playable character

- Between 13-15
- Long, dark curly hair
- Vaguely brown
- Large sweatshirt that was obviously meant for an adult
- Jeans
- Backpack

Monsters

- Layer One:
 - [BirdEyes] - **Appears only in LayerOne, can see the player in any layer**
 - Scotophobia/Scopophobia, Trypophobia
 - Can see the player everywhere
 - Alerts all monsters within range to your presence if seen (scream)
 - Can hide from them (behind things)
 - Anything in it’s sight is illuminated
 - **DESIGN:**
 - TRYPOPHOBIA
 - So many eyes
 - Very bird-like
 - [AJS (Anthony Jacob Scarangelo)] - **Main body only appears in Layer One, it’s light can be seen/interacted with in any layer**
 - Thalassophobia, Batrachophobia
 - Has eyes but sees stupid
 - Can sneak past main body so long as you don’t touch it
 - Freak out and starts swinging its tongue around if touched

- Makes very inhuman noises
 - **DESIGN:**
 - A lantern type light (think of how an angler fish be)
 - This light will be a part of its tongue?
 - Sticky so when something touches it they can't easily get out (if at all)
 - Blob/Angler fish
 - Big boy
 - Just kinda sit in a place and wait for something to walk into its mouth
 - [Unseen.JPEG] - **Appears only Layer One, can see their outlines in other layers**
 - Photoaugliaphobia, Photophobia
 - Never see them fully in game
 - Insta kills player
 - If they catch the player, they basically just rip her apart
 - Sounds gremlin-y:
 - "The light, the light! Destroy"
 - "So pretty. I can fix that"
 - "Don't *look*"
 - "Light is pain"
 - "I promise I won't hurt you if you turn off the light"
 - Don't want to be seen, so they avoid any light sources
 - Immediately notice any source of light
 - Will either avoid it completely or attack and try to destroy it
 - If they find the player without her light on, the player has the chance to blind them and escape
 - Otherwise death
 - **DESIGN:**
 - Very deformed
 - Extra limbs/ limbs in the wrong place
 - Bulbous heads
 - Odd proportions
- Layer Two:
 - [Mimics] - **Appears only Layer Two**
 - Phonophobia, Spectrophobia
 - Understand human speech and can almost perfectly mimic anything after hearing it
 - Sounds human to an untrained ear but there's just something not *right* about it
 - Uncanny Valley type thing but for voices

- Scavenger
 - Lures things to their death by confusing them
 - **Design:**
 - No eyes
 - Long neck
 - Vulture like
 - feathers
- [Crawlers] - **Appears Layer Two and Layer Three, but you can hear them everywhere**
 - Scotomaphobia, Doraphobia
 - Blind
 - Really stupid/easy to avoid
 - Insta kills player
 - If they bump into anything they'll stand, exposing their mouth and grab that item, and pull it toward their mouth
 - Will spit it out if inanimate
 - Eats anything organic
 - Messy eaters
 - Follow sounds that aren't others of them
 - Basically won't follow voices (human or otherwise), but will follow any other sound
 - Mimic human words
 - Don't understand what they're saying and just repeat things they've heard
 - Past conversations, things they've heard from each other, ect.
 - Can't mimic the way humans sound so their voices are garbled and distorted
 - **DESIGN:**
 - Mouth is underneath them (part that faces the floor)
 - Squid esc mouth
 - Furry?
 - Lots of legs and arms
 - No eyes
 - Low to the ground
 - About the size of a large dog
- Layer Three:
 - [Masky] - **Mask appears in any layer, Body only appears in Layer Three**
 - Maskaphobia, Anthropomorphobia
 - Just follows the player

- Big creep
- If the player looks at them without moving for a bit, it will try to put the mask on the player
 - Changes the players controls for a certain amount of time
 - Disappears after
- Whispers softly
 - “Face... Face..”
 - “Would you like to see through me..?”
 - “I can show you so... so many new... things”
 - “Try me on...”
 - “I promise...”
 - “I just... want to ... feel again”
 - “....thank you”
- **DESIGN:**
 - Shadow body
 - Only thing solid is the Mask
 - Lol it’s No-face but a bad boy
- [Marionette] - **Appears in only Layer Three**
 - Pediophobia, Automatonophobia
 - Turn the player into a puppet
 - Can run from them (not insta kill)
 - When not “playing dead,” they say creepy shit:
 - “So pretty”
 - “Be my doll?”
 - “I can’t wait to play with you”
 - “Play with me?”
 - “Like US”
 - “Be like us”
 - “Play dead” in the world
 - Disguise themselves as normal dolls
 - When they are going to attack, they grow to their normal size (anywhere from 5ft to 6ft tall)
 - **Design:**
 - Look like puppets/marionettes
 - Move very stiffly
- [Rake Rip Off] - **Appears in only Layer Three, but can grab you from any layer**
 - Dendrophobia, Hylophobia
 - Disguises itself as a tree and scoops up the player/other animals
 - Insta kills player
 - **DESIGN:**

- Tall, slender
- Eyes that take up most of its face
- Sickly, pale
 - Green/Yellow undertones
- Arms longer than they should be
- Tree-like (to hide in background)
- Seemingly has no mouth, but when had pray it basically unhinges a jaw full of sharp teeth

Game Play Elements

In-Home Items:

- Torn Photo:
 - Shows player character happy with her parents

Interactables in World:

- Food packs, Water, Medicine
- Story Items:
 - Gives the player more info on the world around them and how it ot to be this way

Gameplay Items:

- Rocks/sticks
 - Player can use to create noise/distractions'
- Flashlight:
 - Not very bright
 - Can only see like a half a foot in front of them
 - One of those crank/shake ones so player has to constantly recharge it

Game Physics and Statistics

Thana can walk, run and crouch. She can only move left or right since it is a 2D space, and has a stamina meter. If she's being chased, she can run for slightly longer, but this causes her heart to beat loudly and her to be slow for longer.

Monster AI all work slightly differently for each one.

[BirdEyes]:

- Has a vision cone, but can see through all layers. If it spots the player, it will scream and keep its eyes locked on the player, which will show their location for all monsters.

- Maybe since so many eyes only a few can really see through them all
- The player can counteract this by hiding for a short time

[Unseen.JPEG]

- Can see in the dark better than the player, but can be blinded with light
- Will chase the player if they get too close or if it notices their light
 - Will eventually get bored of chasing
 - Will also leave if blinded too many times

[frog]

- Literally doesn't move
- Throws a temper tantrum if touched for a little

[Mimics]

- Can see in Layers Two and Three and will start talking once it spots the player
- Will follow the player for a bit before it will go away

[Crawlers]

- Will just head towards any noise
- Very stupid

[Masky]

- Benign
- Follows the player and talks to them
- Goes away once the player changes layers

[Marionette]

- When the player's back is turned and/or it is off screen, it will try to attack
- Will chase the player until the player hides from it

[Rake Rip-Off]

- If the player is within its grab radius, it will try to grab them

Art and Video

Overall Goals

I want it to be a mix of 3D and 2D art, with the characters being 3D models and backgrounds/objects being 2D. All 3D would be on the more low-poly side. I am also debating making the game all in 2D.

Games that I am looking at for inspiration in art:

- Knock Knock
- Limbo/Inside
- This War of Mine

2D Art

Backgrounds and items would be 2D. Color wise, it would be more on the muted side, with important items staying more colorful. Style would be less realistic, and more stylized. All shapes would be kept very simple, but feel very drawn in the way where color could bleed outside of the lines.

3D Art

All characters and monsters would be low-poly models. The color would be different to make them more distinguished from the background.

Sound and Music

Overall Goals

Most of the music should make the player feel tense and on edge. Even on the start or pause menu, the player shouldn't feel safe. The only time where the music should feel softer is when the player is at home or during one of the happier [Story Items] memories.

Sound Effects & Music

While the player is in the stealth sections, there should be very minimal bug/animal sounds, but more abnormal sounds. All the creatures have certain sounds they make, all of them being something that could be human, but just slightly *off*.

Story

World Overview

A post-apocalyptic world inhabited by *Silent Hill*-esque. monsters. This world came about via the fears of humanity manifesting as monsters. The world split into the layers as people succumbed to fear. There aren't many humans left, but there are notes strewn about that indicate life. The monsters aren't all necessarily evil or harmful, but more just driven on instinct.

Story Overview

The game starts with the playable character, Thana, living in the ruins of a house. She is in a locked room with her father, who is not really seen in game. Her father is lying on a makeshift bed covered in blankets and has a cloth covering their face. Thana is running low on supplies and decides to venture outside her house to get more supplies, since without them, both she and her father would die. As she's unlocking the door to leave, her father tells her not to leave. It's too dangerous. Thana looks back, thinks about her actions, then leaves.

She is spit into the main area of the house, where she hears inhuman voices saying nonsense. She comments on this then continues to the front door of the house. Thana comes across [Crawlers], and has to sneak past them by knocking on walls, hiding and general stealth.

Once outside, she sees that there is nothing but forest and a few rundown and broken houses. She says that she needs to find medicine and food before continuing on. She doesn't travel for long before encountering more monsters that she must sneak past, and eventually reaches what once was a convenience store.

Inside, she finds items that can help her and her father survive, along with [StoryItemOne]. If the player chooses to interact with it, there is a bit of flavor text from Thana, and then a prompt saying "Do you want to take this with you? You might have to leave something behind." Otherwise, Thana says that she doesn't have time for that and returns home.

This process repeats, introducing more monsters, and areas each time she ventures out. As the player progresses, Thana, her father, and her home change.

Mom Storyline

Mom died some years ago (we'll say Thana was maybe like 12/13) when the monsters first appeared. This was before people really knew how to survive with these creatures wandering the earth. When they first appeared, the family decided to hide in their panic room, assuming the military would come for them.

While in the panic room, they realize they have enough food for a while, along with a radio, a flashlight crank thing, water filtration from rain water, and board games and junk. After being there for a bit, there are some people talking on the radio that isn't just the same message. The mom runs to it and they all listen. It says something about how there's a safe place and given a location and a code to get in. The parents determine its distance, and start arguing about whether or not they should go. The dad says no because they won't be able to make it outside with Thana and they don't know what's out there. The mom says it will be a safer place than this and they won't run out of supplies. They argue, but eventually choose to stay.

They wait longer and there are occasionally more broadcasts, but the family ignores them until one day they say it's your last chance to get in. That they know of a place or have a way or something so the monsters can't get in. This spurs another argument. While Thana is trying sleeping the parents argue again in another layer so they won't wake Thana but she still notices and listens in.

The mom convinces the father to go and they pack backpacks of supplies and get ready to go. Thana sticks close with her mother as they venture out. At this time they don't think there is anything in the house, so they are a little careless. Thana bumps into something and makes a noise and they hear something move upstairs so they hurry out the front door. Once outside they see everyone and try to sneak through. Thana hears a mimic and starts to follow it to where a [Rake Rip-Off] is hiding.

The mimic tricks her into going into the layer where you can't hear, very close to the monster. Her mom and dad are frantically searching for her, but can't find her. Her dad starts yelling for her even though it could attract other things. Thana can't hear over all the noise, but starts screaming when the thing goes to grab her. Her parents hear her and run after her, where her mom pushes her out of the way and gets grabbed. She starts screaming that they need to run and get somewhere safe. Thana is frozen, but her dad grabs her and starts running as fast he can home. Thana is in a shocked state at this point and has basically just isn't responding to anything.

When they get home the father locks every door and starts pacing and crying and general "my wife just died via monsters" type thing. Thana is very much upset. Her father just hugs her and they exist there for a long time. Neither of them talk for a long time.

A few days later the radio goes off replaying the same message that they heard earlier. The dad just gets up and switches the station. There are a few more that play a similar message but with different voices. One of the voices sounds extremely similar to the mom, and the dad just stops. Thana starts asking questions and he just ignores her by turning off the radio. When Thana goes to

turn it back on he stops her from doing it and puts the radio somewhere where she can't reach.

Multiple Endings

“Move On” Ending

If the player interacts with each [StoryItem], the game ends with her father's death. Thana realizes that she can't cling to the past, and needs to face reality. No matter what she does, he is too sick and she needs to accept his death.

The final scene is her standing over her father's grave and saying a few words. She then walks off, leaving the house behind and starting off on anew. Credits.

“Return” Ending

If the player doesn't interact with any of the [StoryItem]s, the game ends with Thana being with her mother and father. She reverts to her younger self when both her parents are happy and healthy, and monsters didn't roam freely.

The final scene is her returning to her home. The outside is still broken, but the inside is clean and normal. She walks to where her father is and finds both her parents waiting. They say something along the lines of “We're so happy you're back. Welcome home.” and Thana runs to hug them, leaving the door open. The camera lingers on them, happy, before glitching to show Thana crying over her fathers (assumedly) dead body, and [Monster] starting to enter the room. It flashes back to them happy, then to the [Monster] touching her, back to happy to [Monster] attacking, back to happy. The camera zooms out, and ages into the photo that Thana carries around in the game before fading to black. Credits.

“Somewhere Between” Ending

If the player interacts with some, but not all, [StoryItem]s, it leaves the player feeling unsatisfied with the game ending. The player doesn't know the full story of the world, or of Thana's mother.

The final scene is Thana speaking with her father, telling him she'll save him. He says something that the player can't understand. Voices are heard at the door, but Thana ignores it. She then hears a woman's (her mother's) voice, and looks toward the door. She says nothing and the screen fades to black. Credits.

Level Overview

Locations

Home

- Has 2 stories, is two bedroom & 1.5 bath
- Panic room is built into the house where a basement might be
 - Can get in by either by
 - The basement door under the stairs
 - A trap door that opens in the main hallway
 - Which is a straight shot to the front door
 - Rain water is collected and funneled directly into the panic room

Forest

- Not too big/thick
 - Imagine just like a baby forest buffer between houses and a highway
- See other houses in the distance
 - Most are run down
- Some knocked down trees
- It's oddly quiet
 - very few bug/animal noises

Various Stores

- One of those gas station stores but it's missing the gas station parts
 - [Story Item]: Candy
- A convenience store
 - [Story Item]: Movie
- Grocery store
 - [Story Item]: Tea
- Pharmacy (like a cvs)
 - [Story Item]: Music Box
- Costco-like store
 - [Story Item]: Jewelry

Story Items

A specific brand of terrible candy

- Something they bought once out of curiosity but was just so bad
- Just the worst combinations that cater to a specific person that probably doesn't exist
- **Memory:**

- “Even if you were the last thing on Earth, I don’t think I’d eat you”
- In the store getting stuff for a movie night and they come across it. They bought it *ironically*
 - “If the movie is going to be bad, then the food might as well be also”

A type of tea

- The only brand her mom would buy
- Very common flavor but ONLY this brand
- **Memory**
 - “She was so particular and stubborn. If it wasn’t this one, she wouldn’t use it. The one time Dad bought the wrong brand she was mad at him for days...”
 - Flashback to them arguing about whether or not they should go to safe house

A music box

- Plays a song her mom used to hum
- **Memory:**
 - “...She used to sing this to me” *Hums along to the song*
 - Flashback to Thana listening to the radio where the mimic stole her voice and her and her dad getting into an argument over it

A bad movie

- One in a series of cheap movies that they used to all watch together
- Literally anything made by Blumhouse
- **Memory:**
 - “I wish we had a TV... Dad would love to watch this one again. I think he unironically enjoyed it.”

Jewelry of some sort

- Something similar to what her mom used to wear
- Some kind of gemstone?
- **Memory:**
 - “Mom used to have something like this. She always told me when I was older I could have it”
 - Flashback to her death