

Narrative Design Document

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to lay out how the game's narrative is set up and what techniques are to be used. As such this document role will not include any of the general design or any technical requirements; this does not include the usage of ink or other such software.

LINKS

Script: [here](#)

Games Design Document: [here](#)

Techniques used:

For the main part of the game, careful dialogue writing will be the main way the player learns of the world and develops tension. This will be assisted with environmental storytelling. However, environmental storytelling should not take complete precedence over character interactions. Instead, the character should react to the environment. Thus, environmental storytelling assists the narrative.

Dialogue

Since the game is heavily dialogue-focused, due to its nature as a narrated game, The main technique for dialogue is a strong emphasis on first-person dialogue for the narrator. This also results in the game being set in the present with its word choice reflecting both of these facts.

The dialogue needs to be carefully designed so that, despite its slightly comedic ending, the game doesn't become a comedy. This is especially essential considering the short length of the narrative. If the tone leans into the comedic possibility of the game then the player will lose the limited tension the game is able to build.

Overall dialogue is this game's main narrative progressor. This however, isn't the sole way the game's narrative will be conveyed. To aid with the game's narrative, the game will be making heavy use of environmental storytelling and sound, as previously stated.

Art

The game's art style and general aesthetic will also be used as a narrative element, albeit in a more subdued way. To achieve the desired effect from the art style, it is being broken down into 2 main elements: tension building and sci-fi aesthetic.

The reasoning behind the tension building as a main element is thus, for the game to function as a horror game and for the narrator's fear to be explainable the game requires a certain level of tension. This tension can be increased in any number of ways, one of which is the game's art style and general look. It is however, worth noting that this is solely a way that the game tension is built.

The other main element is the sci-fi aesthetic, which is because the player expects the game to have sci-fi elements due to the game's base concept. This being the player is an AI suit that controls the body of the narrator. As such the game's art style needs to play into this genre so that the narrative doesn't feel out of place. Overall the art is going to be used to enhance the narrative experience.

Sound

Sound is arguably the most important part of this game due to its presence in the horror genre. A genre that is dominated by its sound design and music. This is no different in this project as due to the lack of an actual threat, sound will be used to imply a threat is present.

Sound will be used in multiple ways to achieve this feat and make it believable that a threat exists in the game. As such careful integration of the sound and subtle placement will be needed otherwise the player will lose immersion, and the game's narrative crumbles.

One such method will be using empty objects to act as triggers for sounds that imply something is in the room with the player. Such as the creaking of metal, and metal being scraped to name a few.

The first method is being used because it is essential for the horror atmosphere and the game's narrative as a whole. Without it, there would be zero indicators other than dialogue that there is a monster on the station. This makes the aimed twist at the end of the game both boring and lacking any payoff. Additionally, without these sounds, there is nothing to engage the players and keep them interested in the game.

The second method that will be used is voice acting itself. The aim is to have an AI that is unnerving but confident, and a narrator that is a coward thrust into a situation they are terrified of. As such the aim is to have both the dialogue and the voice acting to reflect this. This is also one of the many points with sound that overlap with another narrative technique. This will also be accompanied by the narrator quietly breathing, with this getting louder as they grow more fearful.

The second method is being used because, without the voice acting the player would likely be required to spend just as much time reading the dialogue as they would playing the game. Additionally, this would constantly draw them out of the moment and split their attention, something that should be avoided. Unfortunately for the previously mentioned reasons, this project will be unengaging for consumers who have hearing issues.

The third method will be through something this document will refer to as atmospheric sounds. These sounds are constant throughout the player's experience; however, there will be some degree of variation within the game. This is so that the player doesn't get bored or annoyed by the atmospheric sounds. These sounds would include, but are not limited to, the moving of machines, the player's footsteps etc.

The third method is being used because the player would be disturbed and quickly unengaged without it. This is because the player expects their actions to create some sort of sound as a reaction, even something as small as walking. This is because to a human being sound aids us in understanding something is happening and the impact of what is happening. Furthermore, the sounds are being used to constantly keep the player both immersed and engaged in the horror element of the game.

Events

This section of the document will detail how the events are triggered within each section of the map. It is worth noting that these subsections will not include particular lines of dialogue. Instead, look at these subsections as the theory and placement of the events.

If you're looking for dialogue please look here.

Airlock/Tutorial room

The airlock or as it will be used moving forward the tutorial room, is the starting room for the player and aims to give them an environment where they can understand the controls of the game. Despite this, the tutorial room is also the beginning of the story.

Introduction to the story

- The player starts in an L-shaped corridor, which they have to turn the corner to enter the main room. When the player turns the corner the camera will force them to spot a door on the other end of the Airlock. This door will be broken in an animation.

This will trigger the first dialogue response from the narrator who freaks out at the sight. With the player's AI voice acting to calm him down.

Additionally, within the room, the player can move on to talk to a robot that is moving around the room. This opens up a small dialogue section which will be used to give hints that the player is in the wrong station.

Central Hallway

The central hallway is the room immediately after the airlock contains a single broken robot. When the player enters the lights dim a little causing the narrator to react, and the AI suit to respond. The broken robot can be talked to but it will respond in only a single phrase.

Side Hallway (right)

The side hallway leads to the communications room, this will be the second time the player will 'see' the 'monster' when they enter the door to the central hallway, which will shut and lock. The hallway's lights will then turn off and the player's camera will be locked in one direction. This direction will see them staring as the monster heads towards them. The only part of the monster they can see is the monster's eyes. Eventually, once the monster reaches them the lights flicker back on and reveal the monster the player thought they saw was just a robot.

During that entire process the narrator is freaking out, the AI suit only attempts to comfort after the lights are back on.

Communications

The communications room will contain little narrative and will serve to aid the player relax the narrator's heartbeat. Despite this, some conversation between the narrator and the AI suit to confirm that they cannot get comms reveals that is impossible.

'Underground hallway'

The underground hallway is the first hallway without any sightings of the monster. (The monster was technically within the central hallway when the player saw it destroy the door) This is done to unnerve the player and create a heightened sense of tension. The narrator experiences this, and comments on it frequently, with the AI voice not attempting to calm him within this section.

Side Hallway (left)

The side hallway to the left leads to the medical bay. This hallway will have a robot for the player to talk to, but otherwise is largely dialogue-less. Instead, there will be a buildup of music much like in the underground section.

Medical

The medical room will be in disarray and this will be the first time the AI suit proposes the idea that the monster doesn't exist to the narrator, but the narrator brushes it off. Outside of that, there is a robot inside the room and a puzzle for the player to interact with.

Command room

To get to the command room the player must go through the side hallway (left) and the central hallway. Inside the command room, the musical buildup crescendos and switches to silence. This builds up the final nerves of the player.

Within the room, the player must complete the final puzzle this will give them access to a

console which will inform them that there is no crew. This is the point the music crusadoes. The narrator argues with the AI suit about how is this possible, the AI suit recommends seeing if there are any other rooms the player should explore in case it's faulty data. There are two robots within the room and for the first time, the AI suit confirms the narrator hasn't got authorisation to be here.

Command to the side hallway, right

This is the last room of the game and confirms to the narrator that there is in fact no crew and never was one. As the narrator voices his realisation, the narrator receives a call from his employer who questions him for an update, eventually, together they realise the narrator went to the wrong station and the game ends with the employer demanding the narrator return to the company wants the employer hang up The narrator goes to speak, but is abruptly cut off as credits play.

Characters

This section will contain a description of the characters of the game, their backstory (if they have one) and how they would act. This section is written with the intention of showing voice actors so that they can properly understand their role, **whilst providing them with creative freedom in their acting.**

The character descriptions will give the overall description of the character to allow an actor to imagine how they could act. Furthermore, the script will contain more information about how the character is supposed to act. The script can be found [here](#) or at the top of the document.

Narrator/suit Inhabitant

The suit inhabitant or narrator, as this document and author will refer to it, is the human inside the AI suit. Their gender is unimportant and is decided purely by the voice actor; any use of pronouns is used for convenience and is not set in stone. The narrator's role within the game is to provide a loss condition and to provide the game's main horror element. Since the game has a technical monster, the game explores psychological horror through the fear of another character. This exploration aims to generate fear within the player; as such, the role is primarily one of a character getting progressively more scared as the game continues.

Personality:

The narrator is a coward by nature; the narrator doesn't want to be at the station and shows it. The narrator is blunt with his words and will say exactly what the narrator thinks and doesn't discern who his target is. The narrator is also a follower by nature; he will always switch to trying to reason with a target of fear and give up control rather than take control of a situation. This isn't to say he won't assert himself, he will, but if he receives any pushback back he will submit to their views.

Bullet points of his personality:

- Coward
- Blunt
- A follower

Backstory:

The narrator's backstory is relatively basic; he was hired to be a private investigator for the company Gastro Industries. A private investigator's job within this universe is mandated by law for any company that runs a business across solar systems. It is the private investigator's job to ensure that staff are safe or to investigate any anomalies relating to health.

The narrator doesn't particularly care for the job itself, instead being more concerned about the job security and the pay. It should be noted that in this game, he is never concerned for the 'missing employees' outside of the fact that finding them means he can get off the space station faster.

AI Suit

The AI suit, or as this document will refer to it, the player or player's voice, is simply an AI suit designed to accomplish a task set by the company. It is to the point and concise in its language. Unless trying to accomplish something else, it rarely reacts to anything not mission-dependent. The role of the AI suit within the game is to provide explanations and requirements for the player to progress. This leads to the narrator's fear since he has no control. Additionally, a part of this goal is to draw sympathy for the narrator, while disturbing the player at the thought of being powerless.

Personality

The AI suit doesn't have a personality in the traditional sense; instead, it mimics having one. Despite this, its delivery is flawed and robotic to a degree. Occasionally, the suit will add an 'emotion' into its voice to drive it home. But these injections of emotion are often misplaced and not consistent. The personality this suit mimics is that of a cheery receptionist talking to a friend.

Bullet Points of personality:

- Robotic
- Cheerful
- Overly Friendly - to an annoying/ creepy extent.

Backstory

It is the AI suit assigned to the ship that the narrator used to get to the space station. The suit doesn't have a backstory apart from that.

Robots/Construction Bots

The robots are NPCs that are littered throughout the space station that the player can talk to to figure out where the crew disappeared to. These robots have no set personality and are made to respond most matter-of-factly and concisely as possible. This makes them surprisingly difficult to talk to, since if they interpret your question one way, they will provide only a single answer and not deviate from it.

Personality

The robot's voice is largely down to the actor, but it should be done in a slightly robotic way, which provides benefits and negatives and gives them some creative freedom. But the only real defining trait is their efficiency with their words.

Backstory:

These robots are construction bots and are used to build space stations and other such facilities due to the precision needed to safeguard human habitation.

Boss

The boss is a basic character used purely to give the game its twist ending. Their role is a small end dialogue. The boss is interacted with via a phone call at the end of the game, where he reveals that the narrator went to the wrong space station.

Personality

He is a fairly nice and genuine boss who wants to protect his employees and his company as much as possible. He is relatively understanding with the narrator, but still livid that such a mistake was even made.

Backstory

Team leader at Gastro Industries, he is responsible for overseeing the company's private investigators. A role that is often seen layoff due to its anti-company role. Despite this, the boss tries to maintain his job security by caring for the company's interests even if they go against his job role.