FinalEscape

Escapism is a brilliant important part of gaming. No matter how bad of a day you’ve had, games will always provide that bit of freedom and relaxation that can clear your mind of any stress and negative thoughts. Boss been hounding you over something? No matter, you can disappear into your favourite game for a few hours and re-emerge into the real world ready to once again face the world.

However as with all good thing’s overindulgence can have a negative impact on your life.

Final Escape explores this issue of depression and the use of video games as escapism by following the story of a young boy.

This young child like many is having issues fitting in at school, he’s being bullied and feels isolated and alone. However, there is one place the boy feels happy and in control. In his room playing his favourite game Final Escape. In this world he’s the hero, always confident and never afraid.

As he spends more and more time in the game his experience in the real-world deteriorates, he becomes increasingly disconnected with the real world. He no longer cares about his school work and his social life no longer exists. The only thing he can think about is returning home to escape the real world into the game.

Meaning of the game

I believe games are a force for good, I believe the can have large positive impact on people’s lives. I also believe games can be used to send powerful messages to our players.  One of CheddarCats values is to put the player at the centre of our world. This made my think about our players mental health.

As game devs I believe we have a duty to look after our players, to provide entertainment and provide a respite from their day to day lives. However, I also believe we should try and inform our players of the dangerous of over indulgence and how games aren’t necessarily the solution they’re looking for.

Gameplay

FinalEscape is a 2.5D story adventure game set in two worlds. The Boys “realworld”, a dark cold world and the “gameworld”, a fantasy land in total opposition to the “realworld” with a warm vibrant colour palette.

All gameplay takes place in the “gameworld” where the player must progress to the end of the level. As the player progresses through the game he unlocks numerous abilities (range attack, dash, grapple etc) at the end of every level. At the end of the level the player is taken out of the “gameworld” and shown the life of the Boy in the “realworld” through small gameplay sections. These sections show the boys decent into loneliness and isolation through visual and gameplay storytelling.

Visual Story Telling

As the player progresses through the game the “realworld” will change to represent the boys view of his surroundings. For example, where once the player could have identified a figure on screen as the boy’s mother by the end of the game she become featureless and unidentifiable. This represents the Boy losing touch with reality and being enveloped by his isolation.

The “Gameworld” also undergoes changes as the games story progresses. The enemies may begin to take the shape of the Boy’s school bullies or the boss becomes his teacher. The “gameworld” hero begins to change as well. As the boy imagines himself as the hero the hero begins to take some of the Boy’s characteristic until eventually the “gameworld” hero is identical to the Boy from the “realworld”.

Why CheddarCat?

CheddarCat is a small studio, we don’t have either the resources our manpower to create vast hyper realistic game world like the larger AAA studios. That however doesn’t mean we can’t craft a meaningful impactful game. FinalEscape will play to the studio’s creative strength, it won’t require complex player interactions in the game world, it won’t require a dynamic open world but instead use its narrative points and art style to engage the player.

Game Play

Most of the gameplay takes place in the Game world as the "Hero" makes his way through the world. The player will have two main attacks, heavy and light, both will have advantages, drawbacks and counters. For example, a heavy attack is unlockable but slow and obviously telegraphed meanwhile the light attack will be quick but can be blocked or countered (countering occurs with a perfectly timed block). As the player progresses through the Game they will unlock new equipment and abilities.

Target Customer

Games like Limbo have shown you don’t need a big AAA game to be successful. FinalEscape will attract fans of indie games like Limbo through a combination of unique story points (very little games explore mental health as a theme) and a dynamic eye-catching art style.

Target Hardware

PC is an obvious choice due to ease of development and ease of publishing. It also the platform of choice for our target audience (see Undertale).

Mobile should also be considered as FinalEscape has simple controls and the mobile market is a massive growing market ripe for development allowing FinalEscape to reach more players.