

# Collective Report on the Playtests

Based on multiple sessions of playtesting with different people, our game creates an engaging horror-thriller experience with pretty strong core mechanics. However, several areas were noted for improvement. Players really enjoyed the dash mechanic and atmospheric elements, but suggested enhancements to tutorial elements and UI features. My report is structured mainly in a list format.

## Strengths

### 1. Core Gameplay Mechanics

- The dash mechanic was consistently praised as satisfying and fun
- Movement controls were generally intuitive for players familiar with games
- Basic objectives (escaping/surviving) were clear to most players

### 2. Atmosphere & Immersion

- Audio elements received positive feedback for creating tension
- The reaper enemy successfully created scary moments, especially when emerging from darkness
- Visual aesthetic effectively conveyed the horror theme
- Blood near exits served as a helpful environmental indicator

### 3. Level Design

- Progressive difficulty increase was decently well-received
- Levels 1 and 2 provided good introduction to mechanics
- Level 3's increased complexity created appropriate challenge, though this was not standard across the board

## Weaknesses

### 1. Introduction

- Multiple players struggled to discover the dash mechanic with no indication of the mechanic
- Several testers wanted clearer movement indicators (WASD, spacebar)
- Initial objective could be clearer

### 2. UI Elements

- Timer visibility and feedback was mentioned for improvement as it was mostly invisible (we fixed this in our final version)
- Dash meter could be more intuitive
- Health system (5 hearts) felt disconnected from one-hit death mechanic

### 3. Level Design Balance

- Level 3 received mixed feedback regarding length and difficulty
- Some players found reaper's hitbox too large
- More environmental hazards/traps requested

### **Engagement**

- Most players had high initial engagement
- Pattern where engagement peaks during chase sequences
- Level 3 was either a peak of satisfaction or frustration point
- Multiple players expressed genuine tension and fear during gameplay

### **Learning Curve**

#### 1. Initial Phase

- Players typically needed time to discover all mechanics
- Movement controls were intuitive for gamers
- Torch mechanic created initial confusion for some players

#### 2. Progression

- Players developed strategies through trial and error
- Common strategy of memorizing layouts emerged
- Understanding of reaper behavior improved over time

### **Suggested Improvements**

#### 1. Tutorial Implementation

- Add clear control indicators at game start
- Tutorial prompts for key mechanics (dash, torch)
- Clearer objective messaging
- Consider checkpoint system

#### 2. UI Enhancements

- Visible timer
- Clearer Dash meter

#### 3. Experience and Interaction

- Adjust reaper hitbox size
- Review Level 3 length
- Consider adding interactive elements
- Implement additional trap varieties
- Add more hazards
- Add more torches in level

### **Audience Insights**

- Appeals to thriller/horror game enthusiasts
- Appeals to players who enjoy challenging experiences

### **Technical Observations**

- Few reported bugs or technical issues
- Dash continuation through spikes noted as a bug/not intuitive
- Collision detection improvements
- Generally stable performance however

Overall, The Shadow That Follows has strong potential in its core gameplay loop and atmospheric elements. The primary areas for improvement are player introduction and UI clarity. However, changes should maintain the successful elements of tension and difficulty. The game seems to pretty effectively create a horror/thriller experience while providing decently satisfying core gameplay.