**Dear David**

**The Haunting**

**Genre:** Psychological Horror, Visual Novel

**Platform:** PC (Ren'Py)

**Player Perspective:** First-person, through Adam’s eyes (as a form of direct connection to the player).

1. **Protagonist Design & Backstory**

* **Protagonist:** Adam Ellis, a regular New Yorker who has recently moved into an old apartment.
* **Backstory:** He’s a bit of a skeptic, a rational thinker, and somewhat jaded by city life. He’s not superstitious and initially dismisses the strange events as coincidence or imagination. However, the more David interacts with him, the more his skepticism fades, and the player watches his mental deterioration.
* **Protagonist Traits:**
  + **Skeptical at first:** Adam doesn’t believe in ghosts, especially not David.
  + **Increasingly paranoid:** As the haunting grows, Adam’s paranoia increases, and his tweets reflect this shift.
  + **Relatable but isolated:** Adam’s inner monologue and tweets connect with the player, but he often feels alone, even as followers react to his posts.

1. **Setting & Environment**

* **Primary Location:** Adam’s Hometown in the Philippines. The setting evolves as the haunting intensifies.
  + **Early in the game:** The apartment is relatively normal. The wallpaper is peeling, the lighting dim, but nothing overtly supernatural.
  + **As the haunting escalates:** Objects begin to shift, rooms feel smaller, and the atmosphere becomes unnerving. Hallways start to feel longer, and doors don’t lead where they should.
* **Other Locations:** David's "Realm" (Dream Sequences): Surreal, nightmarish landscapes where David appears. This could include a twisted version of the apartment, dark alleys, or empty spaces with distorted, unreal features.
* **Sound Design:**
  + **Ambient Noise:** Subtle creaks, faint whispers, and distant knocks.
  + **Tension-Driven Sound:** As David’s presence intensifies, the music becomes more discordant, with heartbeats or low-frequency hums adding to the discomfort.

1. **Game Mechanics**

* **Investigation System:** Allow players to examine the environment. For instance, they could look at photographs, search drawers, or even check the history of previous tenants in the apartment.
* Inventory System: Give players a way to collect objects or clues that might aid in understanding the haunting or solving puzzles (e.g., an old photograph, letters from past tenants).
* Tension Meter / Sanity System: The more Adam interacts with David or experiences supernatural events, the more his sanity deteriorates. This could impact his ability to make rational decisions, and it might trigger hallucinations or force certain dialogue options.

**Horror Mechanics**

* **Psychological Horror Elements:** Focus on creating a slow-building tension that doesn’t rely on jump scares. Use sound, subtle visual distortions, and the feeling of being watched to create unease.
* **Environmental Changes:** As David’s influence grows, the environment should shift in subtle ways, such as walls narrowing, rooms distorting, or objects moving on their own.
* **Hallucinations:** Include moments where Adam’s perception of reality becomes distorted. These hallucinations could either be triggered by his mental state (high tension) or by David’s influence. Players might question whether what they see is real.

1. **Narrative Structure & Flow**

**Act 1: Introduction**

* + Adam settles into his new apartment, adjusting to rural life.
* **Tweets:**
  + “Just moved in today. The place is old but nice. Hope I can get some work done here.”
  + “Had a weird dream about a kid with a messed-up head. Not sure what that’s about.”
* **First Encounter with David:** In the first few days, Adam starts seeing a boy in the corner of his eye—David. His first reaction is to dismiss it, but he starts seeing David more often.

**Act 2: The Haunting Escalates**

* **Tweets:**
  + “Something’s off here. I keep hearing weird knocks at night. It’s driving me nuts.”
  + “I swear I saw the kid from my dream in the hallway again. I think I’m losing it.”
  + “Just looked at my photos and there’s something in the background... is it David? I’m freaking out.”
* **Investigating David:** Adam starts researching the apartment, discovering that a boy named David lived there years ago and died under strange circumstances. This drives him to investigate the history of his building, but he finds that information is scarce or incomplete.
* **Choice Mechanic:** Early on, players can choose how to react to David’s presence:
  + Skeptical: Dismiss the events as imagination (which could lead to the haunting worsening).
  + Paranoid: Start investigating immediately (which could reveal crucial details about David).

**Act 3: The Descent**

* **Tweets:**
  + “David won’t leave me alone. Every time I look, he’s there. I don’t know what to do.”
  + “I keep hearing whispers in my apartment, but no one’s here. Can anyone help me?”
  + “It’s getting worse. David keeps staring at me from the corner of my room. What do I do?”
* **Tension Meter:** As Adam interacts with David more, his mental state deteriorates. The tension meter tracks his sanity, affecting his decisions. Hallucinations, distorted reality, and blurred vision appear as Adam's mind unravels.
* **Critical Choice Points:** 
  + Confront David directly.
  + Try to appease David by understanding his past.
  + Call for help, even if others dismiss his concerns

**Act 4: Confrontation & Endings**

The haunting reaches its peak. David is no longer just a figment of Adam’s imagination; he is physically manifesting in the apartment.

* **Ending Variations:**
  + **Escape Ending:** Adam escapes, leaving the apartment and cutting ties with David’s world.
  + **Understanding Ending:** Adam uncovers David’s tragic past, and with that knowledge, he manages to free David's spirit.
  + **Descent into Madness:** Adam succumbs to the haunting, and David takes full control of him.
  + **Ambiguous Ending:** Adam's experiences subside, but he is left questioning if the haunting truly ended or if David is still there, lurking.

1. **Tweeting Feature (Main Game Mechanic)**

* **Phone Interface:** Adam can tweet from his phone at key moments, documenting his experiences. Players have control over how Adam expresses himself:
  + Early tweets are skeptical and calm.
  + As the haunting intensifies, tweets become desperate, fragmented, and more panic-driven.
* **Player** Choices in Tweets:
  + Choose how Adam describes his encounters (e.g., “I think I saw David again” vs. “David is in my apartment right now, HELP!”).
  + Interact with other characters (e.g., Adam’s friends or followers on Twitter) who may offer support or dismiss his claims.
* **Followers:** Some followers will offer advice, while others may dismiss Adam as paranoid or mocking him. Occasionally, you’ll receive cryptic or ominous replies from David himself.

1. **Visual & Audio Design**

* **Art Style:** The visual novel will feature pixelized but with a slightly stylized, muted color palette. As the haunting escalates, the art should grow darker and more distorted, especially during dream sequences and moments of high tension.
* **UI Elements:**
  + **Phone Screen:** Designed to mimic the look of a Twitter feed with text messages, notifications, and photos Adam shares.
  + **Tension Meter:** A visible bar or visual cue that tracks Adam’s mental state. As the tension increases, the screen could blur or flicker.

A cartoon of a person with text

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Incorporating Tweets into the Game**

1. **Tweet-Like Journal Entries:**

* In the game, Adam (the protagonist) could have a smartphone or laptop that he uses to "tweet" about his experiences. These tweets would serve as journal entries or updates on his encounters with David.
* Players can access these tweets in the game through a phone interface or as pop-up notifications. This adds a modern, immersive feel and helps players track the progression of the haunting.

1. **Interactive Tweeting:**

* Occasionally, players could make choices about what Adam posts on Twitter. These choices could influence how Adam’s followers react and add to the tension (e.g., supportive comments vs. dismissive ones).
* For example, Adam could tweet about strange sounds in his apartment, and the player could choose between more casual or panicked language. This would affect his followers’ reactions and how Adam perceives the situation.

1. **Public Reaction:**

* Include interactions with Adam’s followers on Twitter. Some followers might suggest solutions or tell Adam he's overreacting, adding to the atmosphere of isolation or disbelief.
* As the haunting intensifies, some of Adam’s followers could start to show concern or even become suspicious. Some tweets might be supportive, while others may mock him, suggesting he’s just imagining things.

1. **Tweets as Clues:**

* Certain tweets could serve as hidden clues or pieces of information for the player to uncover. For instance, a tweet might contain a cryptic message or a photo that hints at a specific event or location Adam needs to investigate.
* Players could review past tweets for patterns or repeated symbols, potentially leading to a breakthrough in the story.

1. **Dynamic Tweet Threads:**

* Throughout the game, as events progress, players would see Adam's tweet thread evolve. Early on, his tweets might be casual and skeptical, but as the hauntings intensify, they become increasingly frantic and desperate.
* Include moments where Adam receives direct messages or replies from other characters or even from David (this could be a chilling twist where David begins to interact through Twitter).

1. **Notifications and Countdown:**

* Utilize in-game notifications to alert players when there’s a new tweet, creating a sense of anticipation. As the tension rises, the tweets could become more frequent, or Adam could receive disturbing notifications about David.
* A countdown mechanic could be used in tweets where Adam mentions certain time-sensitive events (e.g., “David's been quiet for three days. Should I be worried?”).

**Example Tweet Sequence**

1. **Initial Tweets:**

* “Just moved into this old apartment. It’s pretty cool, but the place is kind of creepy.”
* “Had a weird dream last night about a little boy. His head was all messed up. Definitely not normal.”

1. **Escalating Tweets:**

* “This is getting ridiculous. I keep hearing knocking on my door, but no one’s there.”
* “I think I saw the kid in the hallway again... pretty sure I'm losing it.”

1. **Frantic Tweets:**

* “I’m not alone in this apartment. There’s something here... I think it’s the kid from my dreams. HELP.”
* “It’s following me. It’s getting closer.”

1. **Direct Message:**

* “Adam, you should stop. He’s going to hurt you.”, This could be from a concerned follower, a friend, or even David himself, adding to the eerie nature of the experience.