

# An Analysis of Your Turn to Die: Death Game By Majority

(Spoilers for the game and slight spoilers for Danganronpa V3)

## Introduction

The game “Your Turn to Die: Death Game By Majority” (YTDD) is a horror game created by Nankidai. The game follows the story of high school student Sara Chidouin, who wakes up surrounded by several strange and mysterious characters in a building where they learn that most, if not all, will die. Currently, the game is heading towards its conclusion with the final part of the final chapter, meaning that many of the multi-endings promised in the description of the game are unavailable. Nevertheless, YTDD still has a lot to analyze. The broad ideas of YTDD focus on the ideas of grief and learning to move forward with trauma and still having hope despite being in a dire situation. It follows characters with different motivations and morals, showing how far someone is willing to go for their own survival.

## Your Turn to Die vs. Danganronpa

YTDD has been compared to Danganronpa, a game created by Kazutaka Kodaka under the company Spike Chunsoft. In that series, it follows sixteen students who are trapped in different locations and forced to kill one another to escape. To compare YTDD to Danganronpa, I am going to focus on Danganronpa’s third game, Danganronpa V3 (V3), to help narrow down their similarities and differences. As I stated earlier, YTDD has constantly been compared to Danganronpa due to their similar themes and genres, but most of these comparisons shift in YTDD’s favor once the game has been played. The reason for this is usually simplified to better writing, but I want to discuss the more in-depth reason as to why these two games are compared so often and why YTDD is the favorite of the two. Both are death games with characters of varying personalities, both have moments of hope only for it to be ripped away, and both are mysteries, although in Danganronpa, the mystery is the murder, and in YTDD, the mystery revolves around escape room situations and trying to decide the best way for most of the characters to survive. The last similarity is important to note, because it will tie in later to the narrative and atmosphere.

In Danganronpa there is a formula: they are given a motive, someone kills, and they discover the murderer. The formula does not change throughout the games, which gives it a simplicity that is fun for solving the case but takes away some of the immersion of the game. There is only the illusion of choice, and the player has the chance to fix their mistakes over and over without any real consequences. The biggest problem with this formula, and the reason YTDD is considered the better death game, is the writing. Due to the formula, there is not a lot of space left to connect to the characters. There are free times that reward the player for interacting with

characters by giving them skills for the trials, but these interactions are more so for the player's sake than the character they are playing as. In other words, the player is left with more knowledge of who that character is but not understanding that character in the present time. Also, these interactions are limited, which means that during an initial playthrough the player is not getting any background on the character. The issue that arises from this is that when the deaths come, there is not as much emotion as there could be, and characters that could have been more impactful fall flat because they did not have enough time to connect with the character the player is playing as. The free times are fun, but they tend to feel out of touch with the rest of the game.

YTTD also has a lot of characters, but what it does to help the player connect with not only the character they are interacting with but also Sara, the character they are playing as, creates more impactful and meaningful interaction and, by extension, deaths. The characters the player interacts with also reveals background knowledge, but that is only a part of their dialogue. Most of the time they are connecting to each other through their current experiences and sharing empathy towards each other. The time between action may seem longer than Danganronpa's, but that is in favor of the game. It gives the player time to understand each character's thoughts and feelings without feeling the need to stop the action of the game to do so. Each part of their backstory ties into the narrative later, making each word a character says crucial to pay attention to. This point also ties to another problem Danganronpa has: it does not dwell on consequences of death and grief. In each Danganronpa game, there are moments where the characters will grieve, but due to the formula of the game, most of these deaths are brushed to the side quickly in favor of focusing on the next motive. The issue here is that that breaks the immersion of the player, who wants to connect to the characters, both the living and the dead, but cannot since they are not talked about in a way that means anything. In V3, the main character grieves over the loss of their friend, but it only occurs in points where their character flaw needs to be emphasized. It makes the death less so about grief and more so as a way to highlight a point in the main character. Even their speech at the end with all of the deaths does not feel as impactful because it was saved for later, rather than dwelled on. On the other hand, YTTD makes sure the player never forgets the characters and how they impact each of the characters, especially Sara. Characters that were not given as much time on screen to develop before their deaths are still remembered, and even given more background. The game makes the player look back at their past interactions with those characters and come to appreciate them for who they were and regret what they had missed. They did not get the full story of their lives, but what they did know counted.

Also, for a brief section, I wanted to talk about the biggest comparison to the two games, and that is the secondary antagonists. While the antagonists of both games are the masterminds of their respective death games, both stories also have secondary antagonists to mess with the main characters. The reason I chose to compare V3 is because of this comparison. A lot of people compare the two secondary antagonists of the games and claim that YTTD's secondary antagonist, Sou Hiyori, is better written than Kokichi Ouma from V3. I agree with this position to an extent. Both are liars, choosing to manipulate the people around them for their own benefit. The main difference between the two is that with the limited dialogue Danganronpa has for its free time, Kokichi was not given the same opportunity to display his character as Sou had. His

character was meant to be chaotic and to get in the way of the protagonist, and because of his lying nature he was never seen as sincere. By the end of the game it is hinted that Kokichi was actually helping the group in his own way, but that is never acknowledged by the characters themselves, making him into an irredeemable secondary antagonist. The issue is not that he is irredeemable, because there are plenty of players that love chaotic characters for their immoral decisions, but the issue is that that does not seem to be what Kokichi was meant to be. In the end he is only an obstacle in the way rather than a sympathetic character trying to do what he believes will help everyone, even if that means pushing them away. Sou, on the other hand, is also chaotic and manipulative, but it is for his own benefit. He creates the same chaos and aggravation that Kokichi does, but the player is given the clues as to why he is this way as the story progresses. That means that the player has what they get for Kokichi in hindsight and if they took the time to analyze: empathy. Sou didn't need to be a redeemable character, and in some ways maybe he isn't, but the player can understand why and, in turn, it makes their decisions harder as the story progresses.

In conclusion, for this section, Danganronpa forces the player to connect the dots outside of the game to understand each of the characters, whereas YTTD is designed for the player to connect to the characters within the confines of the game.

## **The Gameplay**

The gameplay for YTTD revolves around the usage of a mouse. Investigating, interacting with other characters, and progressing the story all rely on clicking around. The game also offers the player the ability to pause the game and save but only outside of more crucial moments. These crucial moments revolve around difficult choices, as if to tell the player that they must make the choice and live with it. They cannot save and go back. Or at least they can't save too close to the event. One of these events involves the choice that takes you onto the two main routes: The Emotion Route and the Logic Route. These routes highlight how your choices affect the game in a crucial way, meaning that your choices do matter. There are small choices that mean nothing, giving the illusion of choice, but assuming that there is no way to choose costs the player in some places. The game trains you to click on everything in the beginning, but when Sara begins her path of grief and trauma this mindless clicking without consequence can be detrimental to her. It causes the player to understand how much their choices affect the character they are playing as and then, by extension, themselves.

The game's mechanics for solving the mysteries around the chapter start off simple enough. There is a tutorial on the mechanics and an overview of what is expected, but as the player becomes more immersed in the gameplay, creating a state of flow, the challenges become harder. Not only do you lose points for getting the answer wrong, but the game adds small mechanics in different places to keep the player from falling into a set formula of gameplay. For example, in Chapter 2 rather than the point and click investigation that was what made up most of Chapter 1, the player is invited to play minigames. These minigames can range from memory dance to simple clicking games, each with their own main objective. These minigames add a unique twist to the chapter that makes it unique to Chapter 1 and allows for the player to interact and understand the gravity of their situation; that these characters are

fighting to survive these interactions, and for as difficult as it may be for the player, they also have to realize that that is the characters' reality. There are also small moments of choice that affect the way the player can view the characters and develop their connections to them, further creating this sense of teamwork between the player and characters as they all try to survive. That in turn makes the deaths later have a greater impact.

There is also a point in the game where the timing matters. In this section, the player is left with the thought that they could lose the character they have come to care about, and they are told that it is because they are messing around with all of the options. This idea forces the player to focus more on each of the clues and what they mean for each component of the mystery. Now the game is less about the player losing and more about the characters losing, the ones that they have been connecting to.

### **Players and their Flow**

According to Bartle's Taxonomy, there are four kinds of players: Achievers, Explorers, Socializers, and Killers. Out of these players, the explorers would be the best for this game. The game is about clicking and exploring through different areas of the building, learning how to connect each of the clues and using that to form an idea of escape. Achievers would have their place in the game as well with the different achievements and routes that can be done. Socializers would love the game for its connections to other characters, being able to connect and learn with them. Lastly, the killers would have their fun in choosing the more chaotic choices and routes, aiming to achieve dominance in the game. In these ways each of the players would have some fun in one way or another, and with the community that YTTD has they also have more space to explore their different areas of gaming.

YTTD keeps each of these players engaged through the self-determination theory, which creates a state of flow that allows for the players to engage with what they are seeing as their reality as Sara. The game sets one main goal: survive the death game. But along the way there are several smaller goals that keep the player in a constant state of alertness. These examples were mentioned in the previous section regarding the minigames. The game also provides the player with several forms of feedback. During the Death Game, or any arguments, the player is given visual and audio feedback when they chose the right statement, providing motivation to keep going and to pay closer attention to each of the details. The statements are also very particular, with only one statement being the correct one at one time. That means that even if one statement sounds correct, that is not the answer they are looking for at the time. These obstacles cause the player to take a step back and reassess the situation, knowing that there is more and having to connect the pieces to get there.

Music is also very important to the gameplay. It presents what emotion the player should be feeling in that moment, whether it be the despair of losing another character or the determination to move forward in spite of everything that happened. The music during the Death Game is intense, and there are songs that are faster that are meant to sound stressful. This also ties into the idea of connecting with the characters, since the music is also a reflection of the

feelings of Sara, the character they are playing as. This music creates a stress that continues to push the player forward into the game.

### **The World of Your Turn to Die**

YTTD takes place inside a mysterious building. Nothing about the layout makes sense at times, creating a sense of curiosity and confusion that is reflected on the characters. The atmosphere is mysterious and uncomfortable, which further projects the danger that the characters are in. Despite how much the player explores, there is always more that is hiding just out of sight. There are times when things that could not be explored before are now crucial to their discussions. It creates a world that is both big enough to explore but small enough to be concerned for the safety of the characters. The player is told to click around and investigate, but as they progress, there are enough dangers lurking at every corner to the point where the player would feel a sense of hesitation, similar to how Sara is, further connecting the player to the character.

### **The Characters**

There are a lot of analyses on the characters of YTTD. They are each unique in their own right and the writing of the narrative allows them to develop and grow as the story progresses. The characters each have their own personalities that makes the stories they share about themselves impactful as well as suspicious, as alongside Sara the player does not know these characters. What the player sees is what Sara learns, and so they are usually seen from only one point of view.

The story makes the player face the consequences of being too suspicious or of being too trusting. Characters that are seen as dangerous later are shown in flashbacks of their life being good or at the very least not what Sara took them to be. Characters that have Sara's full trust are believed in by the player only for them to later betray her trust and by extension the player's trust. The story makes sure that each of these characters are fully fleshed out, even smaller roles that may not seem as significant at the time can come back to be impactful. The player sees the characters at their best and then is forced to see them at their worst. In the game, morals are difficult and each of the characters knows that they are each facing death, and what they choose to do in their panic does not represent who they want to be but rather who they are when they have their backs to the wall. There is a lot to discuss about each of the characters, but this paper is more focused on the wide range of the game and so this is only a broad overview of what the characters offer.

### **The Importance of Roleplay**

The importance of roleplay has been mentioned constantly throughout each of the sections, but in this section I will summarize what all of those points were. Roleplay is crucial to YTTD. It is how the player connects with the characters, especially Sara, who's life the player is taking into their own hands. In the game the player is not a spectator but rather Sara herself, a part of a game that is a game to the player but not to Sara. The player can choose to make

choices that they decide, but these choices affect Sara as well and the game makes sure that that is known. The best example is the two available routes. While the player is free to choose whichever route they want, they will then have to face the consequences that are afflicted upon Sara. The player's actions have consequences, even if they are not fully immersed in the gameplay as Sara herself.

## **Personal Experience**

Like any online game, there is a community. They share art, tips and theories about the game, and complain that development is taking longer than expected. There is an opportunity to connect with others through the game despite it being made only for a single player to play at a time. There is also a small and not extremely impactful mechanic where the player can choose the name of one of the later characters. The game does give small rewards for people who try to use the names of the characters, but aside from that the name does not matter. Nevertheless it brings people together as they have fun with the name and how that affects the dialogue.

My analysis on the game is only how I interpreted the game, and so it makes sense to share in this section my overall experience with the game.

I first played the game by myself after deciding that I would rather play than watch a YouTube video on it. I played through the very beginning of the first chapter, barely scratching the surface, and at the time I felt like it was like Danganronpa. I was enjoying the game the same way, but I was not fully immersed in the story. I did feel some shock and frustration with the first escape game, but assuming that that was how the game would be I moved on from it after learning from my initial mistake. The first death came as a slight surprise, but it was not impactful.

Then I lost my progress and waited a while. I finally decided to play the game with my brother. This made the experience more engaging as I now had someone to bounce ideas about the game with. We started the game by joking around, and when the first death hit we were not impacted a lot, but that was the same reaction we had playing Danganronpa. The game made us pay for that. It started to show us more background on the character, we learned how impactful the death was for other characters, and little by little we were connecting to the game and falling into a state of flow. We started to interact with the characters, taking tropes we had seen for granted, and then we were hit with the next death. After everything we thought we knew, we were left realizing we were left in a terrifying situation in which we knew nothing. We began to think as Sara would, even when playing her side story. We stopped being ourselves and immersed ourselves into who Sara was. The deaths that followed were not only impactful for their brutality but also because we had connected to the characters.

The best example of how good YTTD develops their characters comes in the form of the secondary antagonist, Sou. My brother and I despised Sou. He was frustrating and manipulative and we believed that that was how he was. We were both ready to let him die in place of other characters we cared for more, because the game made him out to be an obstacle in the way to

a clear conclusion. Then in Chapter 2, with only a few words of dialogue, we both changed our minds. It got to the point where we hesitated to choose Sou to die.

This choice was not actually as sudden as we both thought it was. Throughout the game we had begun to understand Sou as a character. We were also understanding that everyone had their backs to the wall, that each character was flawed and that we could not hold every grudge we had against them. We had the pieces to Sou's character throughout our interactions, and in that final moment we tied everything together and came to appreciate Sou for who he was. A lot of the characters do this, showing the worst of themselves while also coming out with the best of themselves. This also ties back to the section about the comparison between Sou and Kokichi. Kokichi had the pieces for him to be a sympathetic character like Sou, to have everything that he did come together and make sense, that all of the misunderstandings and harsh words had a reason, that the enemy was not him but the person who put them into that situation in the first place. The problem is that these pieces were not given enough depth or impact, and so the empathy my brother and I developed towards Sou fell flat when it came to Kokichi. We played V3 before YTTD and there were times I had to explain backstory for my brother to like or appreciate the character. Neither of us had to do that for YTTD.

## **Conclusion**

The game is still in development, and so it might still have several bugs and pieces that I missed in my analysis. I would probably want to add profiles for the characters into the pause screen, but this was an initial suggestion that does not seem to fit the air of suspicion that is created from not knowing any of the characters until they divulge their own information. I would still appreciate having the names. I think that the game does a good job of balancing moments for dialogue and character development alongside the mystery gameplay that is the Death Game. I think more interaction with the deaths, similar to the beginning deaths, would also create more of an impact on the player.

Overall, the game is not perfect, but it achieves what it seeks to do. It creates a tense atmosphere of suspicion and teamwork between the player and the characters. There are a few frustrating moments where mechanics do not make sense or that the choice of the player could come more into play. The game is ultimately a great recommendation for players who want to experience a horror adventure game.