

# Run to You: demo

GDD Template Written by: Benjamin “HeadClot” Stanley

Special thanks to Alec Markarian  
Otherwise this would not have happened

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# Overview

## Theme / Setting / Genre

- Themes: Loss, Hope, Acceptance, Change
- Setting: Recently Dystopian? War?
- Genre: Runner/Platformer

## Core Gameplay Mechanics Brief

- <Running>
- <Parkour>

## Targeted platforms

- PC

## Influences (Brief)

- <Up>
  - Movie
  - Opening Montage, with Carl and Ellie, but with a boy growing up.
- <Dustforce>
  - Game
  - I love the flat art, looks to be what I'm going for
- <Mirror's Edge>
  - Game
  - focus on the parkour, what makes a game without combat fun?

## The elevator Pitch

A Story Driven 2D parkour runner about Hope and Friendship persevering through hard times.

## Project Description (Brief):

Run to you is a 2D-side scrolling parkour game that relies heavily on storytelling without words. Players will play the role of multiple characters as they weather out a war between two countries. In the demo (the emphasis for the current project), the player will play one of two characters as they grow up together.

## Project Specifics

- Heavy Story
- Stand-out art style (hopefully)
- Compelling 2D runner Gameplay

## Core Gameplay Mechanics (Detailed)

### - <Running>

#### - <Details>

The player will be running a lot through the game. Running is not controlled by the player, and will drive the story forward.

#### - <How it works>

You run automatically

### - <Jumping/Vaulting/Climbing>

#### - <Details>

The Player will have to jump/vault/climb over obstacles to move forward. This is the most used mechanic and will be used to overcome a majority of obstacles.

#### - <How it works>

Pressing the “Jump” key will allow the player to perform said action depending on the type of obstacles they face

### - <Sliding/Crouching>

#### - <Details>

The player must slide under some obstacles to keep moving forward and maintain speed. Adds dimensionality to the game.

#### - <How it works>

Hitting the “crouch” key near a relevant obstacle will begin a slide

### - <Grab>

#### - <Details>

The player must grab on to certain things to move forward or when it pertains to the story. This add options for obstacles and a feeling of involvement in the story when it needs the player to be more than an observer.

#### - <How it works>

Hitting the “grab” key near a relevant object will begin a grabbing interaction. This could be poles, ladders, ledges, or other people

## Story and Gameplay

### Story (Brief)

“Run to You” mainly follows the story of a boy returning to his home after years abroad, only to find his country sieged by a neighbouring nation and his best friend, who he hasn’t seen in years, missing. Believing that his friend is still alive, the boy scours the city for her, running through gunfire and artillery.

### Story (Detailed)

First Level: Growing up

This level will start with the boy moving in to a new house, he exits the car reluctantly and clings to his mother (Grab Button), who is single. As the mom puts down a box, she gives the boy a push, urging him to go play in the backyard. The boy is hesitant, but goes after a bit of prodding. As he reaches the backyard, he notices a girl leaning over the fence, waving at him.

After an initial greeting, the girl beckons him over, but he doesn’t budge. She climbs over the fence and shows him how to climb it, and the boy reluctantly follows. He chases her down the street into a playground, where he learns how to parkour for the first time, clumsily jumping over benches and tables. They run into the school, get scolded for running in the halls. He gets picked up by Mom, she shoos him to go play with his friend. They both leave.

A passing car marks the change of time as you see an older boy (about 11) running through the park and balancing on a railing with the girl right in front. They make their way to his house, where his mom passes them some lemonade.

As the boy walks through his house, he ages yet again, growing to a teenager (14), he follows the girl through a city: ducking under railings, vaulting over benches, climbing on to rooftops and jumping from roof to roof. This is where

the player learns how to swing from railings and canopies. At some point he gets a call from mom, who's worried about him, he tells her (without words) that he's fine and he's heading home. The girl at some point disappears. The boy runs through the halls of the school again, he is scolded. The girl is in the class, she looks out with a worried look. The boy shoves the teacher aside and runs out into the forest.

A passing tree reveals a young adult (19) running through the trees, swing from branches and vaulting over tree stumps and old logs. At some point and it starts to rain, and he gets a call. He slows down, he stops, the music changes. He speeds up, running recklessly out of the forest and through a neighbourhood, this part is difficult and he's expected to trip, to fall, to get mud on him.

He arrives at his house, the girl is standing outside. She tries to comfort him, but he shrugs her aside, and enters his home. He's met with a soldier, Mom has been hit by a stray bullet when she wandered too close to a skirmish between countries A and B. You are now the girl.

The boy comes out of the house, press e to grab him by the shoulder. He shrugs you off. He runs, you chase him. When you catch up to him, he stumbles, you both stop. A bus passes and stops. He looks at it, then back at you. E to hold him. He shrugs you off, and walk on the bus, the bus leaves. (End of Demo)

## **Setting**

### **Geography**

Sitting on the border between Airen and Blithinia (The countries' names don't matter, they are never mentioned), City is a medium sized city with large, expanding suburbs. Tensions have been high among the two countries, and military buildup has caused City to be a hard place to live. Over the last few decades, people have slowly been leaving City to find a safer place to live. As such the price of real estate drops, the poorer folk from Airen have replaced the once more affluent members of City's population.

### **Background of The Boy**

Since her divorce with The Boy's estranged father, money has been tight. Left with no choice, Mom reluctantly moves her and The Boy into City's cheap suburbs. While the boy is reluctant at first at the thought of an unfamiliar place, the decaying environment of City provides a fun and exciting place for

The Boy to grow up and explore. As he grows, he revels in the freedom of being able to run around City without order, going where he wants to go and doing what he wants to do.

### **Technology**

The technology of the world is very similar to modern day, with the exception of a few things. Cars a bit more advanced in this world, and some things are more chrome than you would imagine from the real world. War is also different. While the armies of both nations still employ some human soldiers, a good deal of the military has been mechanized, with mech suits being the most heavily used Urban assault vehicle.

### **Narrative**

#### **Artistic Choices, themes**

As mentioned, the theme of the story is loss and hope, and several game mechanics add to the narrative and these themes.

First is the inherent nature of 2D sidescrollers. Because the camera is 2D and always follows the profile of the character as they progress through the game, it is very similar to the lateral tracking shot in film. This shot is very well known to be used for movement, and thus is perfect for the dynamic nature of the game. The other advantaged of the shot is its ability to make natural transitions without cut (think camera through a wall), something a game needs, as games cannot be constantly cut. The shot conveys a sense that you are an observer rather than a participant in the story, which conveys that you cannot help The Boy as his mother dies, you cannot help The Soldier come to terms with the chaos around him, and you cannot help The Girl as she grows more and more frustrated with not being able to save people. A good example of how you get this feeling is the opening montage from “Up”, where you feel helpless as you observe Karl and Ellie face that tragedy. In a way, this game HAS to be a 2d sidescroller because of the camera and the nature of the shot.

Characters will run from left to right normally, but will run right to left when running away. This provides a visual element to the narrative that is translated to the mechanics.

Although this story doesn't have to be set in the future, the addition of mechs not only provide an inhuman element to the war, but also the potential for

parkour on broken as well as moving mechs. Also, who doesn't want to run up a giant robot?

## **Structure**

The Story will be told through the eyes of the 4 characters and will feature real time events as well as past events. The first part is where the characters are introduced, you get a bit of their backstory and their goals. The Boy wants to find The Girl and save her from this city, The Girl hears about a old army stash of medical supplies she wants to find, the Doctor wants to keep what's left of the City together, and the Soldier hears of a safe haven run by non-combatants.

The Second part follows each character as they attempt to reach their goal, and their paths cross. The Solider passes The Girl by they don't talk to each other. The Boy meets The Solider and they assume each other to be enemies. The girl finds the building where the stash is. The Boy and The Solider fistfights (neither have a gun anymore) and The Boy wins but spares The Soldier. The Soldier tells The Boy the location of The Girl, and The Boy tells The Soldier where The Doctor is. In all of this, we are shown the devastation the war has caused.

The third part sees the girl trapped where the stash is by military forces. The Boy finds the building where she is trapped and is stricken with fear. He could come back later, maybe they'll have moved on. She might not even be in there. He forces himself to face reality, and decides to distract the militants so that the girl can escape. He is injured in the pursuit. After the dust settles, the girl finds him and carries him back.

## **Characters**

### **The Boy**

#### **Design**

The Boy has several designs as he grows up. Generally, he is clean shaven and his hair is messy such that it resembles a star on head. In his earlier years, he wears a simple t-shirt and shorts, which gives way to a progressively unkempt school uniform as he ages. In the majority of the game, which takes place several years after the prologue, he wears a dirty Green army uniform, only accented by a bright red scarf he finds later on.

#### **Background**

Growing up in a single parent home surrounded by the ever-looming shadow of war isn't easy for The Boy. While his mother tried her best to keep him on the

right track, she had little time to parent between the long hours it took to put food on the table. The Boy grew to be less scholar and more delinquent, finding that the only way he could escape the shackles of a dying city and an empty home was to run. Running gives him freedom, gives him purpose and, most importantly, lets him cast his problems behind.

His mother dies in his 18<sup>th</sup> year, caught by a stray bullet fired in a skirmish between the two nations. Fed up with everything around him, he runs a way from the City, hoping to start again. Years later, he is drafted into the army and comes back to the City to partake in an attempt to take it over.

### **Story's Start**

Very little of the initial skirmish is seen by the audience, only the end. The Boy's team is hit by a cannon shell, and all but The Boy and one other heavily wounded soldier is killed. The Boy Carries the soldier to a nearby building, give him his pistol (The boy's rifle is damaged in the impact) and heads off to find help. After finding The Doctor, The Boy finds himself unable to gather the strength to continue to fight, but is reminded that The Girl was still in the City, and decides to go look for her, eventually finding her red scarf.

### **Role**

The Boy is the main character of the story, but this isn't just his story. In a way, he is the most flawed character. He has a chip on his shoulder, he doesn't like to confront his past or his present, and he'd rather take the easy way. He thinks the world is out to get him, and can revel in his own melancholy. His role in the story is to be flawed, to be a little too engrossed in his own problems, and to provide a piece of humanity.

### **The Girl**

The Girl, like the boy, has several designs. Generally, she is well kept and wears her hair in a short low ponytail which resembles a crescent moon and has crescent shaped bangs. Her design as a child is t-shirt and shorts like the boy, and is later replaced by a school uniform, accented by a red scarf. In her later years, she assumes the role of a non-combatant medic and wears a dirty white coat with black parkour shorts and carries a brown satchel.

### **Background**

While growing up was hard for the girl, she had a loving family and a drive to move towards her goals. As she grew, she grew apart from The Boy, preferring to study instead of running through the City as he would. She was determined to become a doctor, even more so after The Boy's mother had passed away. Unfortunately, she did not get the chance to complete her education before



war erupted. Even so, she decides to stay in The City to help out those who couldn't evacuate and wounded from both sides, along with The Doctor.

### **Story's Start**

The Girl's story starts with her running around the city, avoiding soldiers and trying to get to injured civilians caught in the conflict. She comes across injured of all kind, including soldiers, but isn't always able to help them all, opting instead to give them morphine to ease their last moments. At some point, she loses the scarf trying to run from a mech.

### **Role**

The Girl is the paragon. She is smart, dedicated, kind and brave. In a way, she is what The Boy, and maybe the Audience, wants to be. In any other story, she is the hero, the Captain America, the Simba, the Desmond Doss. However, in this story, she is a bystander. Through her eyes, we see desperation and hopelessness, as she finds herself unable to help in times where that's all she wants to do. While she might be a hero in our eyes, she isn't in hers. All she sees is all the pain she cannot prevent, and highlights the tragedy of war.

### **The Soldier**

A man with short black hair in a gray army uniform. He has a bullet graze on his face and some dried blood he didn't clean.

### **Background**

The Soldier comes from a more privileged upbringing. He comes from family of money, from propaganda that the other side is evil, and joins the army because he feels that it is the right thing to do.

### **Story's Start**

The Soldier is met not with the glory of vanquishing evil, but the horror of ending someone's life and seeing your friends die around you. After his squad is wiped out, The Soldier runs away from his army. Knowing he'll be shot if he went back, he ventures into the City to find Refuge.

### **Role**

The Soldier's role is to show reality, that maybe not everything is black and white. He is also the Boy's counterpart, being brought up in a great environment and full of ideology. The war becomes the first time The Soldier finds himself lost without direction. He runs past burning buildings and dead people, trying to find peace in the chaos.

### **The Doctor**

A man with graying hair in a dirty white coat. He has some bandages wrapped around his wrist and a brown bag like The Girl. In flashbacks, he wears an army uniform with a white armband.

### **Background**

The Doctor is a former combat medic who decided to stay in the City to help civilians.

### **Story's Start**

The Doctor is introduced when The Boy finds him in a building treating the injured, and agrees to treat The Boy's friend.

### **Role**

The Doctor is more a seasoned and experienced individual, and his role in the Story is to develop the history of the conflict between the two nation and to show that things were just as bad in his younger days.

### **Gameplay**

The gameplay will consist of the player moving from one direction to the other, while jumping, swinging and sliding past obstacles. The player has no control over the horizontal movement, and will not be able to choose the direction of movement, but missing obstacles will slow the character down. Some parts of the game will reset (reach a fail state) if the player takes too long or is caught by or fails to catch someone. The difficulty of the game comes from timing actions correctly such that the player does not slow down too much.

Running not only shows the vastness of the conflict and allow the user to observe the story, but is the driving force behind the characters. They run away from their problems, they chase their ideas and they move forward. Thus, running is not only the main mechanic, but also serves to drive the story and symbolizes, in a way, the lives of the characters

## Assets Needed

### - 2D

#### - Characters

##### Chapter 1

- The boy (7)(implemented)
- The boy (11)
- The boy (14)
- The boy (19)(implemented)
- The girl (7)
- The girl (11)
- The girl (14)
- The girl (19)
- The Officer
- Mother (younger)
- Mother (older)

#### - Environment (interact)

##### Chapter 1

- Swing
- Slides
- Swings
- Bench
- Mailbox
- Railings
- Tree Stumps
- Logs
- buildings (Air conditioners, generators, changes in elevation)
- walls
- Fences
- Barriers
- Car hoods
- Bike Racks
- tables

#### - Environment (background)

## Chapter 1

- Slides
- fences
- trees
- houses
- shops
- school (Classrooms, lockers, etc.)
- Cars
- People
- Skyscrapers
- Environment (Foreground)

## Chapter 1

- House
- Cars
- Trees
- Class

## - Sound

- Sound List (Ambient)
  - Outside
    - Childhood song
    - Growing up song
    - Sad song
    - birds
    - cars
    - teacher
    - mom
    - city
    - bus
- Sound List (Player)
  - Character Movement Sound List
    - grunts
    - footsteps (walk)
    - footsteps (run)
    - footsteps (on wood)
    - footsteps (on metal)
    - rolling

- sliding
- landing
- swinging
- falling