**Game Design Document: Rusty vs. The Evil Tree**

## Game Summary

**Title:** Rusty vs. The Evil Tree  
**Genre:** Hidden Object + Light Card Combat  
**Engine:** (Flexible - works in vanilla JS, Godot, Unity2D, etc.)

## Core Gameplay Loop

1. **Hidden Object Phase**
   * Takes place inside a surreal, magical box.
   * Player searches for 21 items (10 initially visible, 11 fade in over time).
   * Finding items adds them to Rusty’s hand for the next combat phase.
   * Items fuel attacks against the Evil Tree.
   * Time spent searching drains Rusty’s stamina.
2. **Combat Phase**
   * Takes place inside the same magical box.
   * The Player draws 5 item cards.
   * Plays 2 per turn.
   * Tree shows 2 symbols:
     + Left = current weakness
     + Right = current immunity
   * Damage type and value are hidden until item is used for the first time.
   * Tree retaliates each turn with stamina-draining attacks.
   * If the evil tree’s hp reaches 0, the level ends and the player transitions to the next interactive story scenario before moving to either the next level or the end of the victory screen.
   * If the player runs out of item cards, they start to get default ‘pebble’ items that do 1 dmg and restore 1 stamina cards instead. This allows them to keep fighting until they win or lose even once they run out of found items.
   * If the player’s stamina reaches 0, then the player transitions to the next interactive story scenario about losing in a fight before being shown the game over screen.
3. **Repeat**
   * Game alternates between search and combat phases across 3 levels.
4. **Lose Condition:** Rusty’s stamina reaches 0.
5. **Win Condition:** Evil Tree’s HP reaches 0.

## Systems Overview

### Items

* 21 total items:
  + 17 normal items (types: detection, weakness, emotional, mental)
  + 4 cursed items (heal the tree or reduce stamina)
* Each item:
  + Has a name, type, damage (0–8), restore stamina (0-10) and 3 lines of dialogue.
  + Dialogue is revealed during combat (once per item use in combat).

### Combat

* Tree HP:
  + Phase 1: HP 20
  + Phase 2: HP 30
  + Phase 3: HP 50
* Each combat phase:
  + Tree shows weakness and immunity symbols each turn
  + Players use 2 item cards per turn.
* Tree stamina attack scaling:
  + Phase 1: Low (5)
  + Phase 2: Medium (10)
  + Phase 3: High (15)

### Tree Dialogue

* Phase 1: “You don’t belong here, little detective…”
* Phase 2: “Ask the blacksmith’s daughter what she found beneath the roots…”
* Phase 3: “You opened the box. You *are* the next seed.”

### Symbols

* Detection: 🔍
* Weakness: 🪓
* Emotional: 💔
* Mental: 💭

### Stamina

* Max: 60
* Drain while searching: 0.5/second
* Drain from tree attacks: 5/10/15 depending on phase

## Level Structure

* **3 Hidden Object Scenes**:
  + Level 1: HP 20
  + Level 2: HP 30
  + Level 3: HP 50
* Each scene:
  + Contains 21 items
  + 10 visible on load
  + 11 fade in over 10–60 seconds

## UI / UX Guidelines

### Title Screen

* Logo with intro text and a how to play.

### Hidden Object Screen

* Background: Surreal environment (detective office, forest-void, etc.)
* Stamina bar
* Cursor

### Combat Screen

* Evil Tree with health bar
* Two symbols (weakness left, immunity right)
* Player hand:
  + Draw 5 item cards
  + Use 2 cards per turn
* Feedback UI:
  + 🔥 “Critical hit: 4 DMG!”
  + 🛡️ “IMMUNE!”
  + ☠️ “CURSED ITEM! Tree heals 5 HP!”

## Audio / Visual Style

* Dark, enchanted noir + cluttered fantasy aesthetic
* Box interior is surreal, shifting, and mysterious
* Tree visuals stay consistent; dialogue and FX escalate
* Audio:
  + Ambient hums, whispers, tense background score
  + Tree dialogue is taunting and cryptic
  + Rusty has noir monologues on loading and transitions

## Developer Reference: config.js

A centralized config file defines game content and balancing.

See below for full example to get started.

## Story Content

### Start (Opening Monologue)

“Name’s Rusty. Rusty the Raccoon. Been chasing cases longer than I’ve had this trench coat. But this one? This one smelled… ancient. A wooden box, sealed tight and tied to vanishing people. They hired me to investigate. I opened it. Now I’m *in* it. And there’s something down here with roots deeper than reason.”

### Level 1

“The air here hums. The box stretches wider than physics should allow. I don’t know how long I’ve been falling, but the smell of moss and smoke tells me I’m not alone. That tree… it’s watching me. Time to search for answers. Time to fight.”

### Level 2

“The deeper I go, the more it shifts. The box ain’t wood anymore—it’s memory. Each object’s a clue, a weapon, a whisper. The tree’s not just alive—it’s *aware*. It talks in dreams. It wants me to forget who I am. But I’ve still got my cards.”

### Level 3

“The truth’s close now. I can feel it through my fur. The box is a prison, a trap made to lure minds like mine. But I’m not some rookie. I’ve fought lies before. Just never one with branches. Time to end this.”

### Game Over

*Rusty collapses as roots slither toward him.*

“Guess I got too close to the truth. Should’ve known the tree don’t play fair. Hope someone else finds this box before it’s too late.”

### Victory

*Tree screeches, crumbles. Light pours in through a crack in the box.*

“It’s over. The tree’s gone. But this box… it’s still humming. Still hungry. I leave a note behind. ‘Rusty was here. Solved your cursed puzzle. You’re welcome.’ Then I close the lid behind me. Some cases you survive. Some never really end.”