**Skinrender playtests - 14th-15th March**

**Comments:**

* Would be nice to have more things to interact with.
* Occasionally went in the wrong direction
* Sound effect of gun not very musket-like
* Starting puzzles not very interactive
* Puzzle 2 needs something to block off the gate area
* Would like it to be night-time so that it is more creepy
* Thought spine was a nice touch, bit more white on the skull would be nice

**Were you drawn into the world/find it immersive?**

* The only aspect that I didn’t find immersive was the lack of movement animation and the occasional environment glitch; the atmosphere of the story is well matched by the art style and the dialogue provides enough context for the game without distracting from the game play.
* Lack of animation/dialogue speed appeared to be the only issues found with game immersion – presumably a more complete game would rectify the former of these issues, occasional errors with rendering were also problematic – aside from these aspects the graphics reminiscent of classic games (Baldur’s Gate in particular) Integrated well with the storytelling and integrated well with the gameplay.
* I was curious about what was going on, I wasn’t fully immersed – but I wanted to play on to find out what happens.

**Were the controls & goal intuitive and clear?**

* The occasional camera pans are useful in focusing the player on their goals. I did occasionally forget a control mechanism [perhaps it would be good to ensure the player has read and understood the control mechanic before advancing with the story].
* The initial introduction was clear and the controls generally led to it being very intuitive by virtue of their simplicity – though I found I favoured between either, mouse or keyboard rather than both.
* I think WASD controls should be supported. Right click controls are nice. I’m not a big reader in games, so initially things weren’t too clear, but it made sense when I stopped to read what was being said.

**What did you think of the Introduction section as a whole?**

* I thought it was well done. It introduced a premise, established relationships between the characters that made me sympathetic to the main character, which was all done very succinctly so it didn’t feel like I was just waiting for the game to begin. I also really enjoy games that allow you to begin in a friendly environment that doesn’t immediately throw you into action, giving you time to get a feel for the game, which this game did.
* Lack of introduction to the setting/premise made me unsure of context though the hints through characters naming and dialogue did help. The transition between the introductive section and the start of the main game was very smooth – I was under the assumption that the game had “started” already until the title card had displayed. It also guides you through the general mechanics of the game before throwing puzzles/challenges at you which works well; allowing the player to acclimatise to the game.
* Layout was a bit confusing after the execution, a few dead ends like the main road. The initial guards aren’t bad for a regular gamer, might need to be a bit friendlier for new players. The dead ends could be cool if there was something to find.

**Did you find the outdoor puzzles interesting/engaging**

* I enjoyed that the puzzles were all introduced with a little dialogue which made me understand Sebastian’s motivations and his reasons for needing to solve the puzzle. They tied together the puzzle element and the story well, which made the puzzles more engaging. The time critical nature of certain puzzles also elevated the difficultly of the puzzles without adding restrictions that seemed arbitrary: it was clear why those restrictions would be realistic in the context of the story while adding new dimension to the puzzles
* The objectives of each puzzle were very clear – like the graphics they were reminiscent of old stealth games. It was interesting to study the patterns of the guards so that you could time your movement – which encourages the player to engage more given that it’s all but necessary to complete the puzzles. I particularly liked the integration with the environment [guard shooting the bottles] which added an additional layer of depth and complexity notably that you must pay attention to where guards are looking as well as what they are doing in order to pass safely. The uncertainty of when guards are about to turn around also adds to the suspense of the scenario.
* The initial speed does throw you in at the deep end if you aren’t familiar with the puzzles the game will have, it does make it very quickly engaging. The introduction puzzles aren’t very interesting, but I’m not sure they need to be as an introduction.

**Were the outdoor puzzles challenging enough for a tutorial section, or do you think the difficulty should ramp up faster?**

* I felt confident that I understood the mechanics of the game once I finished the tutorial.
* The first one was as complex as I expected as a basic introduction to a fundamental mechanic, the second one is appropriately challenging – it’s not immediately obvious what to do.
* It doesn’t need to be faster, maybe a tad slower. Just as long as the ones after begin to ramp up after the player learns the basic mechanics.

**Was there enough ‘going on’ outdoors, or was there too much walking without anything interesting happening?**

* The artwork was interesting enough to keep me engaged even when I wasn’t completing a puzzle. I also find that, with games, it’s more fulfilling the less linear the game feels; discovering where I needed to go based on small lines of dialogue from Sebastian felt like an achievement in itself.
* Being able to freely look around the map makes it all but impossible to get lost despite introducing optional routes [which lead to dead-ends] which is appropriate and realistic given the setting.
* The scripted things were good, not sure if a tad long or if that’s my attention span for text stories. It could do with a few more things going on as you walk around, perhaps a patrol or two more. Making it feel more claustrophobic, given you’ve just escaped. Perhaps block the road in some way so it appears your forced to the building.

**Bugs found:**

* I got Sebastian caught on his execution rock, and his head disappeared in a section of wall just before the puzzle to get passed the guards blocking the entrance to the inn.
* I moved Sebastian into a location where his leg was clearly on the other side of a wall I had moved up against.