

Scene 2: The Elwoods' House — Preparing for the Dive & Meeting the Protagonist

Context

The Elwood family remains at the hospital. The protagonist — a trusted relative or friend — is chosen to participate in the experimental procedure. He is at the family's home, gathering personal items for the boy and his parents. This is the first gameplay scene, where the player can freely explore and build an emotional connection with the child.

Intro Cutscene

Darkness.

The sound of fabric shifting. A zipper.

Close-up: **a man's hand** carefully places children's clothes into a duffel bag — a soft sweater, pajamas, socks.

The camera pulls back. We see the **protagonist** for the first time. His face isn't shown — just the silhouette, movements, and breathing.

As the player puts the first item into the bag, an internal monologue appears:

"They're staying at the hospital. I have to get everything — no mistakes."

After placing the bundle of clothes, the character pulls a folded sheet of paper from his coat pocket and unfolds it.

A checklist appears on screen:

Packing list:







- Sweater
- Pajamas
- Warm socks
- Favorite toy
- Toothbrush
- Medicine (already at the hospital)
- Something personal — meaningful to him

The player can collect items in any order. Some items (especially the last) are optional but affect emotional scenes in the dream world.

Gameplay: Free Exploration of the House

The player can move through 2–3 rooms, examine objects, interact with belongings, and learn fragments of the boy’s past.

Interactive Objects

Object	Interaction	Effect
 Photo of the boy wearing a propeller hat	Picked up by the player. Caption: <i>“Summer 961. His favorite hat...”</i>	Increases empathy. Can be packed
 One-eyed plush bear	Triggers inner voice: <i>“He still holds it at night...”</i>	Required item for the neural dive
 Musical greeting card	Plays melody when opened. Image: rocket and boy	Unlocks early memory later on
 Book: “All About Comets”	Inside: note that reads <i>“Uncle Leo — show me when I’m back”</i>	Affects recognition of the protagonist in dream state
 Drawing on the fridge	Family portrait. Note: <i>“Love you. Sorry about the vase”</i>	Emotional color detail
 Single glove	Monologue: <i>“Lost the other one that winter. He cried...”</i>	Links to trauma; affects dream scene

End of Scene

Once the player collects the items, attempting to leave triggers a message:

“Are you sure you’ve gathered everything? You won’t be able to return.”

If confirmed — screen fades to black, leading to the next scene: **connection to the neural apparatus**.