Escape

Jared Mason

DART 400

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Introduction

This document specifies the design and gameplay of a game currently referred to with the provisional title "Escape". The first portion of which will be created by Jared Mason as part of his senior thesis project at The Pennsylvania State University.

Scope

Escape will be created using Unity and Adobe Illustrator. It will be designed to run as a built windows (and potentially mac) application.

Game Structure

The goal of Escape is to provide a fun, 2D action-adventure experience. The gameplay loop will follow one typical of the Metroidvania genre. Players will be able to explore three(+) unique but connected areas. Each area will be made of several connected rooms that contain enemies, abilities, and other secrets. Big enemies and important abilities will act as the goals to help guide player progression through the game. Completing them will also open new areas and for progression.

Story / Themes

The main character of Escape is a young child that has recently moved to a new town. The gameplay will reflect them exploring their new environment and while hiding behind a layer of imagination. The character has a blanket to act as a comfort / transitional object. They see it as both a protective layer and a catalyst for their abilities throughout the game. The explorable areas will act as a real location seen through the main characters imaginative lens. This will be depicted by combining aspects from both areas. For example, their school will be represented by a mineshaft area as school often feels equivalent to the grueling work required from the mines, at least by those attending. The other planned areas include a backyard mixed with a forest and a house mixed with a fantasy village. Most enemies occur as part of their imagination; however, the boss types will represent large, real issues.

Aesthetic

The game will be made up of layered 2D vector art style graphics. There will be three layers, with the player and their actions occurring on the middle layer. As such, it will consist of collidable surfaces constructed out of tile maps. This will allow assets to be reused in a straightforward way while also making use of Unity's built-in tools. The foreground will consist of sporadic assets to help make the scene more dynamic, and the background will appear as a blurred-out version of the area's other aspects.

Gameplay

The gameplay will mostly follow a traditional, 2D melee-based system. Players will be able to platform around and attack enemies with a whip like attack. Unlockable abilities will include stealth, a dash, and a grapple hook. However, main boss encounters will focus on portraying the main character as small and powerless. This will reflect their reality in that they are actually a small, weak child. These abilities exist only in their imagination, and thus cannot be used against the real issues these encounters represent.