**Brain Drain Interactive – Game Ideas**

**Theme:** Love

**Question:** How deep is your love?

**Brainstorming Aspects:**

Sacrifice

Gameplay impairment through choices

Dark, gritty

High stakes

Proving yourself worthy

No traditional love story

Descent (morally / physically)

Horror

Love for a thing or concept

Jazz mutations

Restrictions of space

*Different Formats*

*Exit Option*

*Non-Humanoids*

#01 – A Flicker in the Dark

* Horror stealth game
* Protagonist is young girl of 9 years
* Extreme case of social phobia, fear of other people, can barely be around her family
* Her only love are her toys and plushies
* Games takes place in the mind
* Nightmare of the unconscious
* Dark horror version of her home
* You start on the highest level and work your way down into the basement where the last plushie is hidden
* Distorted, horrified persons (school, family, relatives) trying to catch her
* The only real source of light are the plushies emitting bright light
* Protagonist needs to find and get back all plushies
* Do not get caught by the horror visions
* Death = reset to the last place where you found a plushie, does not remember how she got there, explanation: all happening in the mind so potentially harmful is just forgotten
* Core aspect: Anthropomorphism and loving the inanimate
* Core mechanic: First plushie can be pushed to emit light
  + If you use it, you can better assess your surrounding and see potential enemies
  + If you use it, you become visible for enemies nearby and they’ll see you
  + Risk and reward
  + Core mechanic tied to an object so you start loving that object
* Shortly before the end, this first plushie is taken away from you forever
* With every plushie you find the world lights up a little and becomes less terrifying
* Visual storytelling
* Stories about the horror characters and the plushies in between as voice over dialogue
* Adapted brainstorming aspects
  + Gameplay impairment -> Use light or not? Not using this mechanic impairs you but using it does so too
  + Dark, gritty -> Horror, only light from plushies, dark atmosphere
  + High stakes -> Mental health of a young girl
  + Sacrifice -> Overcome own fear to collect beloved plushies
  + No traditional love story -> Love for objects, young girl, Anthropomorphism
  + Descent -> Physically going down the house, mental descent into unconscious fears
  + Horror -> Obvious, fear on all levels (theme, narrative, gameplay)
  + Love for a thing or concept -> Love for an inanimate object we perceive human
  + Restriction of space -> House as self-enclosed space, restriction of movement because of monsters
  + Different formats -> Different, surreal style for monsters and plushies (maybe even 2D)
  + Non-Humanoids -> Surreal, inhuman monsters and plushie animals / objects, only the girl itself is really humanoid

#02 – Cave of Cause

* Exploration game
* Tragedy, Horror, Time Travel
* Ex-girlfriend of a man committed suicide
* Ancient place of magic called the “Cave of Cause”
* A person can go there once in their life to try to revive a beloved person by proceeding to the deepest point in the cave
* Man still loves girlfriend and feels guilty because he decided to break up
* In the cave, man gets to see the key scenes of the relationship and is able to act differently
* The actions have direct consequences for the present day man
* You try to do the right thing so the relationship remains intact and the suicide is stopped
* Integration of gameplay losses through choice (e.g. you decide to protect her from a car approaching quickly and lose your sight on one eye for that)
* Every choice leads to a worse situation than before
* No matter what you do, it will end in the suicide
* Storytelling: Cause and effect, reliving the situations and giving context
* Maybe finding notes and changing what they say
* Horror is subtle: Inescapable destiny, things get worse no matter what you do, agency is an illusion kind of
* Meaning: Some things can’t be changed no matter how far you go to try change them, living with guilt after such an incident will not make things better, not a single person can be responsible for a tragic thing like a suicide
* Physical limitation in organic space and going deeper
* You can always go back and leave the cave, cave closes and game ends with fade to black and “Let go”
* Flashbacks and immediate consequences maybe as cave paintings – easier to animate, unique style, fits the setting, merge of 2D and 3D
* Tragic element: You can see what’s going to happen and the end remains as tragic
* Protagonist gives up a lot to alter reality, so much that the girl feels like she’s responsible for his situation and still commits the suicide
* Game ends with death of the guy too so at the very end they remain together
* Adapted brainstorming aspects
  + Sacrifice -> Not certain you will return from the cave, sacrificing of gameplay elements to alter past
  + Gameplay impairment -> Choices affect current state of protagonist (car accident example)
  + Dark, gritty -> Uneasy cave atmosphere, subtle horror of the inescapable fate
  + High stakes -> One and only chance to save the live of a beloved person
  + Proving yourself worthy -> Can you alter reality by doing the right choices this time?
  + No traditional love story -> Partner is no longer existent actually, only spiritual traces of a relationship that did not end well, no happy ending, relationship is already over when the game starts
  + Descent -> Into the depths of a cave, into the past of a relationship, moral descent because people (and protagonist) are just lines on the cave without real value, destructive narrow love
  + Horror -> Subtle psychological horror of the inescapable fate, the double, determinism
  + Restrictions of space -> Cave environment, restriction of possibility and consequence space
  + Different formats -> 3D cave experienced from a first person view, 2D cave paintings in a completely different style
  + Exit option -> You can always go back and leave the cave, valid option and might actually lead to a better ending

#03 – Feathers of Freedom

* Sad but hopeful, touching, and meaningful story (-> no horror)
* Fantasy world inhabited by all kinds of birds that act and speak like humans
* Protagonist is teenage bird, only one in the whole village who can’t fly!
* Bit of an outsider
* Only thing he ever wanted to do is to fly and find a place where he belongs
* Eldest of the village tells him he can learn to fly if 3 other birds willingly give him one of their feathers
* Protagonist searches for birds that’d be willing to do so
* Has to help each of them to get the feather
* Every feather needs to be earned in a “short story” focusing on a different aspect of love
  + E.g. magpie torn between love for his wife and shining things (constantly nicks the jewelry of his wife, she starts suspecting him)
* During the fetching of the feathers, you slowly notice that the bird never wanted to fly because of flying itself but to not be an outsider anymore
* On the journey you make some real friends for the first time in your life
* In the end, you get all 3 feathers but decide to sacrifice them
  + Old owl is injured and can’t move anymore
  + Her last wish is to fly with her husband once more
  + To fulfill that wish, you give her the 3 feathers you earned
* The protagonist is heart-broken and thinks the whole journey was pointless
* All the birds who gave him a feather come around and comfort him
* In the final scene, they pick him up, tell him to hold onto their backs, and start flying
* At last, you got everything you ever wanted: A sense of belonging somewhere and being able to fly without any wings or feathers
* Adapted brainstorming aspects
  + Sacrifice -> You sacrifice what you think your love is for the dream of someone else
  + Gameplay impairment -> You can’t fly and live in a world that is built for flying creatures, navigating around is hard
  + High stakes -> If you can’t get the feathers, this bird will never fly. Loneliness and depression are the alternatives (at least until you see the ending)
  + Proving yourself worthy -> Test of fetching 3 feathers, help others first before demanding help
  + No traditional love story -> Love of a concept (flying and thus freedom), loving something you don’t have, different types of love in the short stories
  + Restrictions of space -> Village built in the sky, protagonist can’t fly so a lot of the areas and the whole of the sky can’t be reached
  + Non-Humanoids -> Bird creatures behaving like humans but also with characteristics associated with the animals (e.g. magpie)