Facade

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High Concept Statement

Facade is a game about a soul stuck in limbo, being mindful of his fuel while navigating the darkness. The light burns, while the darkness illuminates.

Genre

Horror/Survival

Platforms

PC

Target Audience

A game for teenagers and young adults who enjoy simple horror experiences, such as those who have enjoyed other games such as Slenderman. It plays with the fear of the unknown while enabling the player to create their own suspense.

Storyline & Characters

There is nothing but void, a darkness you cannot begin to comprehend. Then there are the whispers, faint at first but growing louder. You hear them, lifting up your hand to brace for the source, just for it to suddenly stop. In its place, the flicker of a fire roaring to life: an old lantern. Regardless of its origins, you still pick it up, drawn to the warmth and light it provides. It flickers, briefly revealing a mark upon the ground: a path. So you follow it, looking for a purpose that eludes you.

You are a soul stuck in limbo, having forgotten who you are. The lantern you recovered provides light that staves off the whispers in the dark; however, it also blinds you to the path before you. As the player navigates through the void, they will go through the fragmented remains of miscellaneous locations from someone's memories, searching for the "light in the darkness." Upon finding said light, the lantern is restored; however, the longer the player wanders, the more the lantern decays. As it decays, the player will hear whispers as the background music fades, before ultimately cutting to silence then losing.

The character is featureless, both to enforce the soul in limbo aspect as well as to put the player in the character's shoes.
His only ability is to use the lantern.

Gameplay

Overview of Gameplay

Core Mechanic: Pressing a button to shut the lantern, turning off the light.
Core Loop: Player shuts off lantern, tracking the direction they must go, then opening it up to not succumb to the darkness, repeat.
Core Gameplay: Player controls the lantern: turning it off to see the path forward, while keeping it on to stay alive. The player restores the lantern at designated lightsprings so it doesn't decay and leaves them in darkness. Ultimately collecting fragments of memory from each lightspring to restore themself.

Player Experience

Start: You see nothing but a void and various odd shapes. Upon closing the lantern, you see arrows on the ground. You follow the arrows, walking through what seems to be a courtyard, before coming to a gate with a lightspring in front of it. You restore your lantern at this lightspring, obtaining a memory fragment from it. The gate reacts with it, opening the way to the next area.

Gameplay Guidelines

There will be no immediate threat, the sound and environment must reinforce fear of the darkness.

There will be no dialogue or language of any kind, the player will be led using visuals and audio.

Even in the light, the environment must seem uncanny and impractical. It must maintain that almost alien philosophy.

If the lantern decays, the game will not end until some time has passed with the whispering and/or silence. It must build suspense before a payoff.

Game Objectives & Rewards

List ways of how the player is rewarded and when.

Upon reaching a lightspring, it rewards a memory fragment (key) to aid moving forward, restores the lantern to full, and provides the immediate area with light.

Discuss things that hinder the player from progressing.

If the lantern decays, there will be no light to help the player see; and if left in the dark for too long, the player will lose.

Discuss the difficulty levels within the game.

The only difficulty comes from light management while navigating the odd environments.

Gameplay Mechanics

There is simple WASD movement in a 3-D space.

A toggle on Mouse2 for the lantern: allowing the player to shut the light off to reveal the hidden guides or to open the light to keep themselves alive.

A fuel gauge that adds a sense of urgency while also showing the player how much fuel they have left.

Gates that serve as a barrier between levels, checking to see that the player has collected all lightsprings.

Lightsprings that act as keys as well as restore fuel to the lantern, essentially a safe zone.

Level Design

Three (Four?) levels:
The first being an open area with a single lightspring and gate: serving as a tutorial. With scattered objects around to serve as a barrier for the play area.

The second being a building with many hallways that twist and turn (essentially a basic maze) with two lightsprings hidden within rooms inside. Complete with one large room containing the gate to exit the level.

The third being a seemingly normal-shaped home, composed of multiple rooms, with one containing a final lightspring. Which, upon obtaining, causes the lantern to shatter, teleporting the player to a brightly lit open field with grass and a sun/sky above.

Control Scheme

Button/ Touch Input	Action it Performs
WASD	Basic Movement
Mouse2	Open/Shut Lantern

Game Aesthetics & User Interface

It will be a flat, grayscale world with odd shapes to portray areas the player moves around. There's nothing alive or moving, just a still, colorless world with uncanny environments. As the player obtains the memory fragments to open the gates and progress, each following level will seem more structured than the one previous: an open expanse of shapes, to an odd series of hallways and rooms, to finally a complete house.

It's meant to embody the feeling of being in limbo: a place with no real definition, just an expanse of filler with the remnants of human involvement (such as gates). As such, the goal is to make the player feel uncomfortable and alone, while also reinforcing the idea that something is there in the darkness.

There will simply be a transparent bar/circle in the middle of the screen, showing how much fuel is left in the lantern. There are no other UI elements.