

User Story 1 - As a health point, I want to leave, so that the player loses

This story highlights the special property of the health system that the health points have a goal, they want the player to lose. This is probably the most unique part of our game and there should be a user story focusing on this part alone. The reason it isn't "as a family member" is that the focus should be on the aspect of health points being "sentient" and wanting the player to lose, so that rather than the team receiving our design taking the "family members being health points"-part as the main attraction and a big chunk of ideas that couldn't possibly be separated, they would look at the "not even the health points want you"-part of our "loneliness-aesthetic" and hopefully do something unique with it. The team is aware that our idea is not perfect, but we are very proud of it, and I for one would love to see what a different team could do with the concept. This story is complete once the health points appear to act independently, and their goal is for the player to lose.

User Story 2 - As a player character, I want to move slower the fewer family members are on screen, so that the player is encouraged to keep as many family members on screen as possible

This story explains the decision to make the player character move slower based on the amount of family members left on screen. This entire idea is translated pretty much straight from the concept document, the only problem was, what did the mechanic achieve? It was never clear in the document just why it should be in the game in the first place. But the way we had in mind was that we wanted this, combined this with some kind of score multiplier, to further encourage the player to play the game the way we want them to. The game is definitely possible to play with only one family member left, but the way we believe the game would be the most fun is with the maximum number of moving pieces to keep an eye on. The player character slowing down based on the family members left is our way of balancing the game getting easier the more mistakes the player makes. Combined with the score multiplier that would give the player more points the more family members on screen, we would mostly be rewarding the player when they do well, rather than punishing them when they do badly.

User Story 3 - As a UFO, I want to appear and take away a human when a smaller alien has danced with them for enough time, so that both enemy types have a purpose and those purposes are connected to each other

This story explains the existence of the smaller alien enemy type and the connection between them and the UFO's. It also explains what both the smaller aliens and the UFO's can do. It explains the basic concept of what both the enemy types do and why. If the smaller enemy stays on screen until a UFO appears and takes away a family member this story is complete.

User Story 4 - As a player, I want to be easily able to start, exit the game, and change a few basic options, so that the navigating and basic customizing of the game experience is painless

This story is pretty wide, simply aiming for the idea that any UI or menu design should be obvious and out of the way enough that it's automatic to navigate it. And with the scope of this game that should be relatively easy. Start, exit, an options menu with volume control, changing inputs, a fullscreen-option, all the options in a pause menu, and have it all not be a visual mess. Easy enough but work nonetheless. This is not touched upon in the concept document, but I thought it might be important to include nonetheless. If an uninitiated person can pick up the game, start and exit the game, change the volume, set inputs without confusion, this story is complete.

User Story 5 - As an intro sequence, I want to be quick and out of the way, so that the scene is set quickly, and the game can start almost immediately

I enjoy writing stories and my team know it, but with this game having nothing but the simplest of plots, we had some ideas how we could set the scene and explain the premise and the motivations of the main character and whatnot without it taking more than say 20 seconds. The specifics of what we had in mind can be left out, but I believe 20 seconds to be a reasonable maximum for a short basic intro. If it takes 20 seconds or less from the moment the player presses start, until the player can control the character freely and the core gameplay loop starts, this story is complete.

Reflection

Honestly, I'm scared of user stories. I feel like I've had at least 4 eureka-moments with these things where I thought "oh now I finally get it, that's how they're meant to be used". In retrospect each of those eureka-moments ended up being kind of misguided, and there's no reason this time is any different. What the stories did for me this time is give my design purpose. Why did I make this decision? What does this thing do and why? The answer to this often did not even lie with me. Being a designer right now is not only brainstorming cool ideas and assaulting our team members with the concept of user stories, we have a team to work with and in most cases but mine, also a project manager to butt heads with. Looking at your design like this, sitting by yourself trying to break it down and explain the design decisions, you realize not only that a lot of it doesn't make sense to you by your own standards, it was group work after all, but you also realize that this was the most time you've ever spent actually designing. Time spent coming up with ideas, making decisions and in the end having something to show for it. Maybe the teams aren't only good for communication issues after all. Maybe sitting there and coming up with bad ideas for 4 hours and realizing none of it is useful is better than constantly playing bad games and saying "I could do better than this" but then not putting a single minute of work into it ever. Just a thought.