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Game Design Document for:

The Crew: Escape From The Dark Ages

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Design History

This is a brief explanation of the history of this document.

Version 1.00

Version 1.00 is the original document.

Version 2.00

Version 2.00 is the final version of the game design document.
- Adds screenshots of game
- Updates information in various sections and fixes small grammatical errors

Overviews

Game:

"The Crew: Escape From The Dark Ages" is a video game that is best described as a 1st person horror mystery for kids. The game centers on a girl, Sarah, who is trying to find her friends that have mysteriously disappeared in On're's Castle, a supposedly haunted Castle that until recently was a big tourist attraction. Exploring the castle proves to be dangerous though. There are ghosts littered throughout the castle. The patrol and the only thing Sarah can do is try to chase them into sunlight using a flashlight. The Castle is very old and is falling apart; she will have to find ways around many obstacles. Sarah will have to uncover the mysteries of the hauntings in order to save her friends.

Genre:

Survival Horror-Platformer

Audience:

The target audience for "The Crew: Escape From The Dark Ages" is children from ages 8-15 that are mild gamers.

Gameplay:

The player will play from a first person view and explore a dark Castle. The player will have a flashlight that has limited battery and is charged by standing in sunlight. The flashlight is used to chase ghosts into sunlight. When ghosts are in sunlight they are defeated. The player will also have to solve platformer puzzles via moving boxes, using levers, finding keys, shining lights on special areas, and avoiding/defeating ghosts.

Story:

Sarah and her friends are having a sleepover. Everyone except Sarah decides to go to haunted On're's Castle. After they don't return, Sarah decides to go and see what happened to them. Ghosts start attacking her and then the sun comes up and all the ghosts run. Sarah continues to look for her friends throughout the Castle. She finds out that the hauntings are happening because On're couldn't find his friends before he died. Now he has taken your friends thinking that they are his. He refuses to give them back and you must defeat him to save your friends from being turned into ghosts.

World:

The game takes place in modern day. The player will start in the basement of Jared's house. The player will not spend long here. The player will have to then travel through woods to get to the house. There will be small tutorial obstacles to help the player learn the game mechanics. The woods will be dark and have a small jump scare and create atmosphere for the player. There will be a foyer that will act as a safe room. The foyer will be used to save the game, and recharge the flashlight. There will be a dungeon area that will be one of the toughest areas of the game it will have medieval torture equipment and cells containing Sarah's friends. There will be a tall tower, which will be mainly complex platforming and puzzles. There will be broken sections of stairs. The courtyard will have large amounts of foliage to provide areas for ghosts to attack. The throne room will be the final boss room. Here you will go to save your closest friend. It will have a giant master bed, a giant window with shades, and many boxes and throw able objects.

Aesthetics:

The art style will be cartoonish. It will be kind of like Nintendo's miis and Super Mario 3d world. The safer the areas have a more cartoony/less detailed look. The dangerous areas will have more detail. The change in style is to help set a change in atmosphere between safe and unsafe areas.

Unique Selling Point(s):

The game will have brief moments of comedy after tense scenarios, and there will be a lot of small secrets throughout the game. Players will be able to explore every area over and over again and always find something new. "The Crew: Escape From The Dark Ages" brings the genre of survival horror to younger audiences and rewards them as the play with power up items. There are multiple solutions to every scenario. The game will reward the player for his/her curiosity and effort to fight through obstacles with interesting pieces of backstory and progression elements such as keys.

Story

Plot:

Sarah is 12 years old and has a close-knit group of friends. All of her friends are boys and they often tease her for being a scaredy-cat. One night they are having a sleepover at Jared's house and everyone decides to go explore the supposedly haunted On're's Castle. That is everyone except Sarah. The boys tease her and then decide to go without her. After they don't come back for a few hours, Sarah gets worried and decides to look for them.

Sarah arrives at On're's Castle only to find the front doors wide open. Sarah walks inside calling out to her friends, and the doors shut behind Sarah locking her inside. Ghosts come out of walls and try to attack her. One of them steals her flashlight, another steals her gloves, but then sunlight shines in through the windows and they all run away. The one with the flashlight heads to the tower room. She is saved for now. After all the ghosts leave she sees Kaden's hat on the ground. Sarah is sure of it now; her friends are in this castle. Sarah must try and find her friends and escape the mansion. The mansion is not entirely safe despite the sun being up. Ghosts still lurk in the shadows and can catch Sarah.

As Sarah searches through the first area of the game, the high tower, she finds a ghost that is periodically pestering her. The ghost attacks more and more as Sarah gets higher and higher in the tower. Sarah finds the room at the top barred by religious crosses. The ghost desperately yells at her to leave.

"That's the masters room, no one is allowed to enter."

Sarah gets closer.

"No, please don't!"

You enter the room to find your friend wrapped with medical bandages to the bed. You try and cut away at the bandages, but then the ghost comes in and takes the form of a 16-year-old girl wearing a nurse's outfit. She then morphs into a monster form.

(Battle ensues)

In the ghosts last moments, she realizes that Kaden is not the young master, after seeing the portrait of the young master with a message below it saying

"In loving memory of Niel On're, (March 2nd, 1440 to June 25th, 1457)."

"Master" *sniffle, looks back at you "You're a really courageous girl. Go save your friends. "

*hands Sarah her flashlight back.

*Sarah tears up "Thank you!"

"You know what, you two are really cute together."

"It's not like that" Sarah and Kaden say in unison (blushing)

*Ghost disappears with a smile (dropping a letter)

(It's a love letter with a stone flower attached to the back)

The letter is from the young girl to the master. (talks about her liking Niel, and their moment in the courtyard, It will also talk about the gardener always wanting a pair of gloves[this is to hint that the courtyard is the next place the player must go], and then gives a subtle hint that the Mr. On're, the owner of the Castle is dark).

Sarah returns back to the foyer with Kaden. Kaden is weak and tired. Kaden is unable to go on and he needs to rest. Sarah moves on to the courtyard. Sarah walks into the courtyard to find that the whole thing is covered in foliage that has been turned to stone. Sunlight peaks

through in random spots, but the foliage cuts out most of the sunlight. Sarah makes it through many obstacles, and gets around/defeats some ghosts. Sarah makes it to the fountain that was written about in the letter. Sarah admires the fountain, and out of nowhere the gardener comes out and throws stone thorns at the Sarah. Sarah runs and hides and has to fight the gardener using her flashlight, or turning on all the sprinklers. The sprinkler system explodes destroying the majority of the foliage. The sun shines in and the gardener drops Sarah's gloves and runs back to his gardening shed. Sarah can place the flower from before on the floating ghost flower to return the garden back to life.

In this case the gardener praises Sarah for returning his garden back to normal and hands Sarah her gloves back. The gardener also gives Sarah a hint as to Mr. On're's weakness. The gardener disappears with a grateful smile on his face. Sarah explores the rest of the garden and finds that the garden shed is locked with a key. Sarah runs back to the foyer to find Kaden exactly as she left him. He's still resting. If Sarah decides to interact with Kaden, Kaden says in his sleep, "The walls. The walls! They're fake!" (This hints that there are secret rooms, The walls can be passed through.)

Sarah sees a suspicious patch in the wall above the dungeon. Sarah walks into it to find a secret room. It is lit by candles and there is a large portrait of the On're family and the all the workers. The nurse, Niel On're, and the gardener appears in the portrait. There are black sections silhouettes. (The portrait will fill up, as more and more ghosts are defeated). There is a light shield and a key on the Hunt's board below the portrait. Beating some ghosts in certain ways will create a depiction of them in the picture of how Sarah views the ghost.

Sarah uses the key to enter the dungeon and finds herself covered in darkness. There is no light to help her fight ghosts, just her flashlight to fend them off. Sarah moves through the

darkness and sees medieval torture equipment strewn about along with cells. This dungeon is very scary and has Sarah shaking. Sarah runs into many ghosts in the dungeon. She has to hide in false walls, and must conserve her flashlight power. Sarah finds a map in the dungeon depicting locations of different puzzle pieces that will unlock the throne room. Sarah continuously searches and finds none of her friends. She has failed to make any more progress.

Sarah tracks down all of the hidden pieces and defeats more and more ghosts. Each ghost she defeats gives her a more clear view of the portrait. The ghosts in the dungeon can only be defeated by hitting secret switches in the right order to unleash a giant focus ray of light from the foyer. Some of the ghosts offer more backstory as Sarah defeats more and more. She evens finds a journal or two of the family members of the house.

Sarah finally collects all the pieces and enters the throne room hoping that the rest of her friends are all still there. Sarah as too fight Mr. On're, the owner of the Castle. After using all of the different game mechanics learned throughout the game Sarah is finally able to defeat Mr. On're, and takes her friends back and leaves the castle for good.

Sarah is a scaredy-cat who cares greatly for her friends she will do anything to keep her friends and make sure they are safe. Sarah is scared of many things, but when she needs to protect her friends her bravery is unmatched. She has never really been seen in scenarios like this though, so her friends always make fun of her for being a scaredy-cat.

The Foe:

The main enemy is the Ghost of Mr. On're, who resides in the throne room. He has kept as many of his workers as ghosts as to keep his way of life that he had before he died. His family and friends are nowhere to be found in the castle, and he captures people to turn them into ghosts, so they will replace his family and friends.

Other Characters:

Sarah has 4 friends, all guys, which she is trying to save. There is Kaden, Jared, Nam, and Joe. They all are really good friends and care for her. They act as the damsels in distress, and are what drive Sarah to explore On're's Castle. Some ghosts are somewhat friendly and give helpful hints.

Story Vehicles:

The story will be conveyed mainly with box text and text voice, that doesn't say what the text says, but acts as a supplement to actual voices.

Gameplay

Player Experience:

Players will experience spiraling and unique levels that immerse the players in this unusual world. The game will give off a fun, happy, scary, and heroic vibe that will keep the players interested and asking for more.

Player Character Actions:

- Jumping and running

- Ledge grabbing (Gloves)

- Puzzle like platforming

- Pick up items

- Throw able items

- Keys

- Using light to kill enemies

Player Character End Goal:

The main character's goal is to find all of the keys that will aid her in finding the Ghost King in order to save her friends and return to her home world.

Enemies:

The enemies in the game are ghosts who have taken your four friends and it is up to you the players to stop them.

- Small Ghost

- Medium Ghost

- Big Ghost

- Flame Ghost

- Ice Ghost

- Electric Ghost

Players will be able to use light as a weapon to combat enemy ghosts who haunt the castle. The player will lead enemies into the sunlight in order to kill the ghosts; bosses will be more complicated.

- Puzzles

- Complicated Platforming

- Bosses

- Fun and difficult levels

- **Torches**: Lights up the environment, allowing the players to traverse the levels without
  be harmed by ghosts.

- **Mirror Shields**: Can deflect sunlight in different directions; can also be used for puzzles
  and killing enemies.

- **Batteries**: Recharges the amount of energy in the player's flashlight.

- **Armor**: Protect the player from damage (can only receive one hit before it's destroyed).

- **Invincibility**: Gives the players the power of the Sun; can kill enemies with one touch.

- **Ghost Coins**: If the player collects 100 of these they will receive an extra life.

- **Extra Lives**: Gives player an extra life.

Each level in the game will have different missions that the player can complete; this will unlock

new mysterious levels that are far more difficult than the main levels. Also every level in the

game will play like a non-linear sandbox; this means while the players will have the same end

goals for each for the levels that they are in, the levels can be completed in multiple ways. Lastly

levels can be played in any order, except for the final level.

The Game World

Environments:

The player will encounter up to seven different environments over the course of our proposed game. Since our game takes place in a haunted abandoned castle all the environments are castle themed. Since light is used as a weapon in this game the environments will be mainly dark, but because the castle is old there are holes in the walls and ceilings in order to allow light to come in. These environments will be called The Haunted Forest, The Foyer, The Dungeon, The Tall Tower, The Second Floor, The Courtyard, and The Throne Room.

Key Locations:

The Haunted Forest (or the Castle Entrance depending on whether or not we change the story) will act as the tutorial level of the game and teach the player the controls of the game and provide the setup of the story for the player. Since the game takes place during the day the Haunted Forest will likely be the easiest and brightest area of the entire game.

The Foyer will act as the hub world for the game and give the player access to all the different levels of the game except for the throne room, which the player needs to have beaten all the other levels of the game in order to access it. The Foyer will be moderately lit and will be the game's safe area where the player can be assured that they will not be attacked by enemies here. There will be a sign next to each of the level entrances detailing the level info and difficulty.

The Dungeon will be one of the harder levels of the game and should be played when the player has more experience. The player will have to traverse through the dark dungeon in order to rescue one of her friends. The dungeon will be the darkest level of the entire game and it will

have a focus on fighting rather than platforming. The player will have to fight through various ghosts and monster in order to beat the level.

The Tall Tower will be another level of the game. The player will have to climb an old decrepit tower in order to rescue one of her friends at the top. There will be various bricks missing in the walls that allows light to stream through.   In this level there will be a bigger focus on platforming rather than fighting. The Tall Tower and The Courtyard are about the same difficulty and could be played in either order.

The Second Floor will be another level of the game, where the player will explore the second floor of the haunted castle in order to find one of her friends. This level should be played second. The player will navigate the various rooms that the castle has like bedrooms, kitchens, bathrooms etc. The amount of light that each room has will vary depending on the amount of windows/holes in the walls and ceilings each room has.

The Courtyard will be an intermediate level in the game. The area will be covered in foliage that has been turned into stone. The player will have to navigate through it like a maze. The player will find a fountain, a ghost flower shrine, a gardener shed, and sprinkler systems throughout the level. The foliage will only let in a limited amount of light in, so ghosts will be patrolling the maze. The Tall Tower and The Courtyard are about the same difficulty and could be played in either order.

The Throne Room is the final level of the game. At the throne room the player will fight the ghost king, who was the previous ruler of the castle, in order to rescue the last friend who was trapped in the castle.

Game Flow:

In our game the player mainly moves through the hub world which is the Foyer. All the levels of the game connect to the Foyer. First the player goes through the Haunted Forest, then they arrive at the Foyer. Then the player has the option of going through the Tall Tower, Dungeon, and Second Floor in any order that they want. Finally the player is allowed to enter the Throne Room to fight the final boss of the game. There will be a sign next to the entrance of each level indicating how difficult that level will be.

Interactivity:

The player can interact with various objects in the world. In the tutorial level the player can interact with signs that teach the player how to play the game. In the Foyer there is a book on a table that the player can use to save their game. In the other levels the player can interact with levers to help solve puzzles by moving platforms around. There will be some throw able weapons in the game such as flares that can be used to defeat enemies.

Training:

The Haunted Forest is the games training area/ tutorial level. In the Forest the player will encounter signs that teach the player instructions on how to play the game and how to fight enemies. The Haunted Forest is optional.

In the middle of the game world is the Foyer. The entrance to the Foyer leads to the Haunted

Forest, which the player will use to enter the Foyer in the first place. In the Foyer there are two

staircases one leading up and one leading down the one going down leads to the entrance to the

Dungeon. The one leading up goes to a second floor overlooking the rest of the Foyer, here there

is a door leading to the Second Floor level and another staircase leading to the Tall Tower level.

Back on the first floor of the Foyer between the two staircases leading up and down is a door that

leads to the Throne Room level.
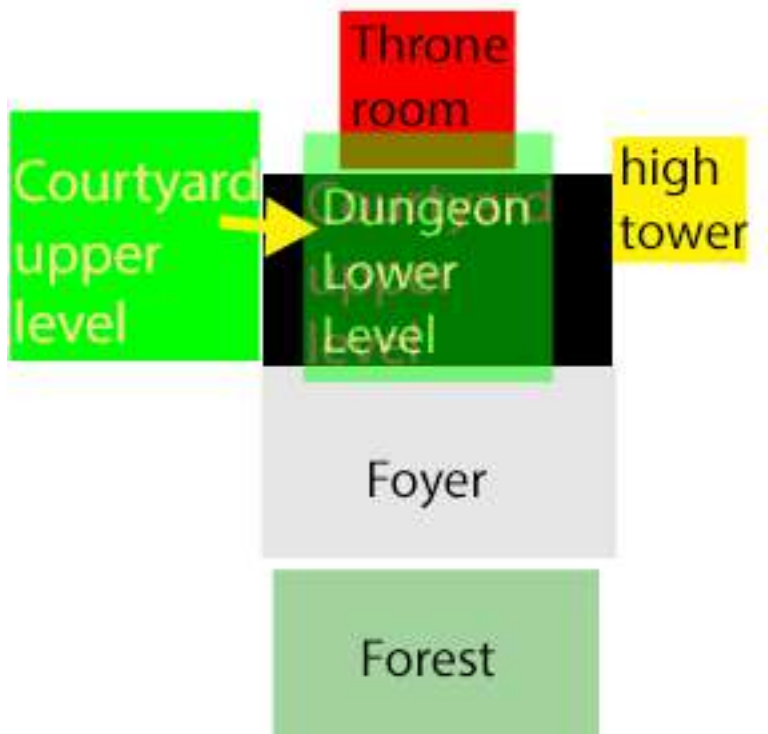
Game world map.

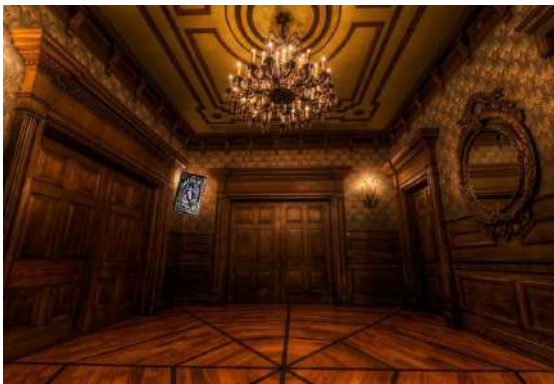# <mark>Art Style / Aesthetics</mark>

 Possible layout of the Foyer.

Possible art style for the entire castle matches the amount of darkness that we are looking for.

This would also be a good indication of what the Dungeon and Tall Tower level would look like.

This is what the design of the Foyer and Second

Floor level would look like.

User Interface / Controls

Interface:

On the User Interface players will see how many lives they have left on the top left corner of the

screen and they will see how many keys they have on the top right corner of the screen.
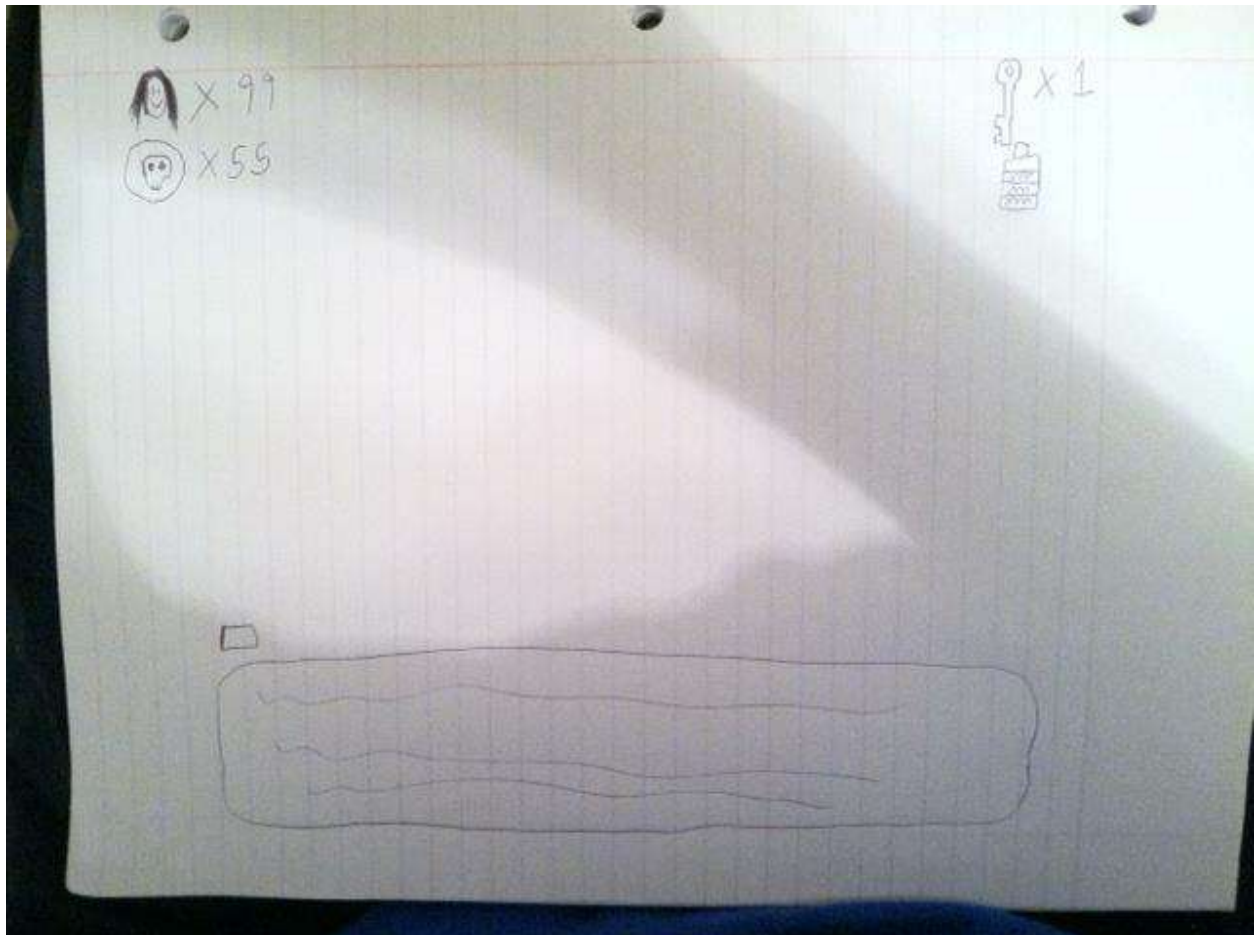
Journal: The Journal includes all progress in the game and everything the player has completed up too that point.

Messaging:

Player characters will be able to interact with friendly ghosts that will explain to the players what exactly happened in that level, so that the players can know what they would need to accomplish to complete the levels. The players will also be able to interact with their friends when they save them from a boss.

Music and Sound Effects

Music:

For music we want to go with a horror theme, so the music will be very ominous and foreboding. We want the music to create suspense and tension for the player as he/she is moving through each level. However for the Foyer we want the music to be nice a calming so they know that they will not be in any danger here. There will also be music whenever the player encounters a ghost, to let the player know that there is a ghost nearby. The music will also change/ play a small audio cue to let the player know that they have solved a puzzle, (like Legend of Zelda). In

all the levels we will have a constant wind track playing in order to keep a spooky atmosphere throughout all the levels.

Sound Effects:

There will be various sound effects in our game. For the world itself we want there to be a lot of random creaking and breaking to signify that the castle is very old and because the sounds will help create the tension and suspense for the player. For the enemies to make a scary sound whenever they are close to the player, so they know when enemies are around. We also want a sound to indicate that enemies are being hurt by the light as well. We would also use a sound effect to indicate when an enemy has been defeated. Another sound effect we will have is one for the levers, so the player will know when a lever has been activated.

List of Sound Effects:

Walking

Running

Jumping

Coin pick up

Key pick up

Door opening

Ghost scared sound

Ghost appearance sound

Menu sound

==Miscellaneous==

This game will be Medieval themed, and historical figures from the time will be referenced along with events. The game will have some fake lore that ties the castle in with large events during the medieval era. These will be included in dialogue and notes.

Screenshots