

*“...even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. And this belief has made me a foolish old man. For there are planes that not even the light of God can shine through to, and his mercy will be absent in response as you cry for his help.”*

- *Letter from Exorcist Father Balth to his young apprentice, 2020*

For my 253 final project, I am designing a point-and-click horror adventure titled, “the lessor key” in which the player must investigate the home of an exorcism gone wrong. The game will be divided into 2 unique sections where in the first half, players will click on various objects in the home to gather information and clues as to the nature of the entity they are dealing with, and the last half where they will perform an exorcism by speaking into a mic and competing in a series of mini-games to see the ceremony through to its end. If the player has guessed the correct entity, they will receive the “good ending”, and if they die or guess the incorrect entity, they will receive the “bad ending”.

Aesthetically, the game will be presented in horror punk style which is a category of illustration that relies on gritty, low-res images and the look of horror films from the VHS era. As for the narrative, it will be a modern update on a classic horror staple of exorcisms going wrong, and touch on the way evil manifests itself in the real world. To back all of this, I have a composer from Germany who has offered to create an original soundtrack inspired by PS1 era horror games such as Silent Hill.

My technical challenges for the game will be to create an engine in which I can easily input multiple objects in a room, keep their positions locked in place, and have the user interact wheel respond appropriately when called over said objects. Additionally, I will be building a notepad in game that players can write on and call back up at any time as well as having a random even generator that will occasionally cause special events to occur when a player enters a room multiple times. As for the final portion of the game, I will need to design 3 distinct, time-based

mini games for the player to complete while also having them read lines via mic input and doing quick-time reflex interactions to stop the enemy from reaching the player.

To ensure that I can meet the lofty goal I have set for myself, I am using technologies and functions I had built in past projects with the idea of using them in my final. Things like menu navigation, sound options, impact collision, and screen navigation are all fairly optimized tools I've built in the past that can be adapted to this project with relatively little adjustment. Between this and the fact I'm building an engine for the game means I should, at the very least, be able to accomplish a full play through experience with little to no bugs.

Ultimately, this game is meant to be an exercise in creating an optimized workflow via a basic game engine of my design as well as the opportunity to integrate narrative structures into my future projects. By learning to balance atmospheric horror, stimulating visuals, interesting puzzle mechanics, and randomly generated mini-events, my hope is I can create a horror game that is accessible to everyone, but representative of the growing genre of queer horror.