

Final Project Proposal: After Death

Abstract

A sudden zombie outbreak causes an apocalyptic-level crisis worldwide. Instead of banding together and standing up against this threat to the world as we know it, humanity instead abandons hope and submits to the situations. Here, a zombie wanders around a lifeless forest, shambling across the stories left behind by what remained of humanity.

Full Proposal:

The events of the last couple of years(2020-2022) have had a big impact on the mental health of millions of people. With one tragic event after another, this seemingly never-ending pandemic, and the social pressure to put on a mask and pretend things are fine to survive daily life, many, myself included, have experienced strong feelings of hopelessness through these times. As humans, we like to cling to the idea that things will get better eventually, that we'll eventually reach the light at the end of the tunnel, but sometimes that feeling can become hard to believe, and almost unrealistic at times. Despite this, we manage to find the energy to move forward and persevere through these times. I believe, as corny and cliché as it sounds, that we are able to do this because we have each other to lean on for support.

Whether it's a close loved one who lets you vent your problems to them, a friend who provides a brief escape from reality, or a stranger who is the cause of a positive

story on the news, there are always those who work, intentionally or unintentionally, to keep others uplifted enough to push through tough times. There are also those who provide others with motivation, a reason to move forward, such as when a parent works to provide for their child. Whether we are aware of it or not, our words, actions, and existence can be a great source of hope for others.

But what if we lost that hope?

What if we all collectively gave up on ourselves and each other? What if we all stopped trying to make things better, and reached the conclusion that things won't get better? What happens then?

This idea is what I'll explore in my interactive experience. A world where things are pretty bad, but instead of making an effort to make things better, or at least survive until someone else can make things better, everyone loses hope, which only makes the world's situation worse. While this seems a bit dark, I also hope to communicate that hope is something we should all hold on to, even through difficult times, by showing what could happen if we don't.

This interactive experience, named After Death, takes place in a forest during a zombie apocalypse. Instead of a survivor, the player takes control of a recently-turned zombie. They'll begin outside its former shelter, and are free to wander around the forest. The environment should feel somber and lonely to the player, but eerie and calm

at the same time. I'm using a specific combination of audio, visuals, and lighting to achieve this spread of feelings. The player will be exploring the forest during sunset, which is done using a sunset skybox and light-orange lighting to fill the environment with warm colors that are pleasing to the eye. There are short music clips that play occasionally, consisting of short guitar chords that are calming, yet saddening. There's also ambient outdoor noise that adds to the calmness, but that calmness is abruptly broken up by occasional zombie growls and moans, reminding the player that they're a zombie.

As the player explores the forest, they'll come across other zombies, aimlessly wandering around the forest. These will be done using zombie characters models and setting them up as NavMesh agents. There will be some that wander off on their own, and others that travel in groups. The player can all find small areas of interest as they explore. These areas will be the main methods of interaction of the player. Each will have their own mini-story about the survivors that were there. These stories will be told through a combination of audio, 3D assets(both imported and made with ProBuilder), and writing. Because the player controls a zombie, their interaction with items will be limited, but they will be able to take a closer look at the writings left in the area. The first area of interest that the player will find is where the player starts. If the player gets close enough to the front of the house, they'll hear banging along with a higher pitched growling. Next to the front door will be a sign saying "Please let my son rest." Other areas of interest will include a failed attempt at a camp setup, and an overrun farm.

