

Goodnight, Sweetheart

An Interminable Game

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ELEVATOR PITCH

Imagine: something is coming for you, and if it catches up to you, the world as you know it will cease to be. *Goodnight, Sweetheart* is a hidden object horror game that takes place inside a child's dream. The game explores the frailty of childhood innocence while keeping the player constantly on their toes.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

STORY

Imagine that one night, as you are falling asleep, you slip into a lucid dream state. Everything in your dream looks almost exactly the same as it does in your waking life, but something is wrong. Something is coming for you, and if it catches up to you, the world as you know it will cease to be. That is reality for the child protagonist of *Goodnight, Sweetheart*.

Goodnight, Sweetheart takes place entirely inside the dreams of an unnamed child living in the present day. Beginning in their bedroom, travelling to school, and ending in their own backyard, their dream tells the story of their day-to-day life. However, something is wrong. Like all kids, there is a lot they don't understand about the world, and what they don't understand is terrifying. Blink once, and everything they know about their world can change into something horrible. Their dreams are rapidly turning into a continuous nightmare. The unknown, personified into a monster, is constantly chasing them, taking control of their dreams and changing everything about their world. If they can't find the one constant that the nightmare is unable to touch, they might be trapped in this dream. Forever.

To keep all of the terrifying unknown at bay, the child has a security object: a blanket. Comforting, sheltering, familiar. As they traverse the rapidly-deteriorating nightmarescape of their dreams, their blankie is the only thing that they have to hold onto. *Goodnight, Sweetheart* explores the frailty of childhood innocence while keeping the player constantly on their toes.

GAME MECHANICS

Goodnight, Sweetheart is a hidden object horror game which will be played primarily using the mouse. The player will interact with items in the environment by clicking on them. They will need to successfully interact with a certain set of environment items in order to complete the game's three levels. The interactions necessary, however, can vary from one playthrough to the next. There will be a set of predetermined possible variants of each level, which will be randomly selected at startup; alternatively, the player may select the playthrough they want if they choose.

The levels of the game each consist of three phases, separated by the protagonist's blinks. In the first phase, everything in the scene appears to be completely normal, but in each subsequent phase, the environment and the objects within it become successively more warped and sinister, and the environment will begin to fight back against the player, creating a feeling of horror. Depending on how long the player takes to complete a level (before the "death phase"), the room will begin to darken, background music will begin to fade, and ambient sounds will start to get louder. If the player is unable to navigate the level before the end of the third phase, the "death phase" will be triggered. In this phase, the monster that has been hunting the protagonist throughout the level will leap at the protagonist, who will promptly meet with some sort of grisly demise. In each successive level, the three phases will become shorter. The lengths of the phases are randomized slightly. In this way, the game will build tension because the player will be unsure of exactly how much time is left. In the last phase, a timer will be presented that will count down to the death phase. Players can win the game by successfully completing all three levels without dying.

STYLE GUIDE

Each level of the game has three phases that cycle through as the time limit on the puzzle runs out. Each of these phases becomes darker and scarier than the previous phase, until the player either finds the blanket or runs out of time. The lighting and color palettes are intertwined, as the lighting will be made by an overlay that allows it to change more gradually than the morphing of the objects and characters. It will start with an early evening yellowish orange tint and progress to a purple-blue midnight color. As the art style, colors, and lighting are all affected by the environmental change, so the style guide has been broken up by those phases.

Phase One

Phase one is the normal state of the level. In this stage, everything is calm and familiar. The art style is designed to cater to this feeling: the lines are clean and precise, the colors are bright and inviting, and the environment itself is brightly lit. There is little motion in the first phase, save slight idles for friendly character objects.

The art style is completely digital, with heavy black lineart and visible aliasing. The shapes are large and flatly colored, like many children's cartoons. We have chosen examples from older children's media, like Mumin, and newer media, like the PBS show, Cyber Chase. In addition, these levels do take video-game based inspiration from the children's point-and-click adventure games made by Humongous Entertainment.



Figure 1: Cyberchase



Figure 2: Mumin



Figure 3: Pajama Sam (Humongous Entertainment)

Phase Two

Phase two acts as an in-between for the first and final phases. This is the phase where the player can feel the nightmare encroaching, but it has not fully taken over. The lighting grows dim as the player continues to try to solve the puzzle. Everything in the room is just slightly off--things have fallen over, doors start to creak open, the tire swing in the backyard blows in a nonexistent breeze. The corresponding art style becomes more sketchy: the environment is painted digitally, but the original, traditionally-drawn lines come through. This would emulate Disney animated films like *The Aristocats* and *101 Dalmatians*. These films feature painted backgrounds with visible sketchy lines underneath. This will be done by drawing the assets on paper with pencil and then bringing them into Photoshop for light coloring that allows the pencil lines to be seen. This will bring in a slightly less clean style that corresponds well with the creepy-but-not-scary art assets.



Figure 4: *The Aristocats* (Disney)

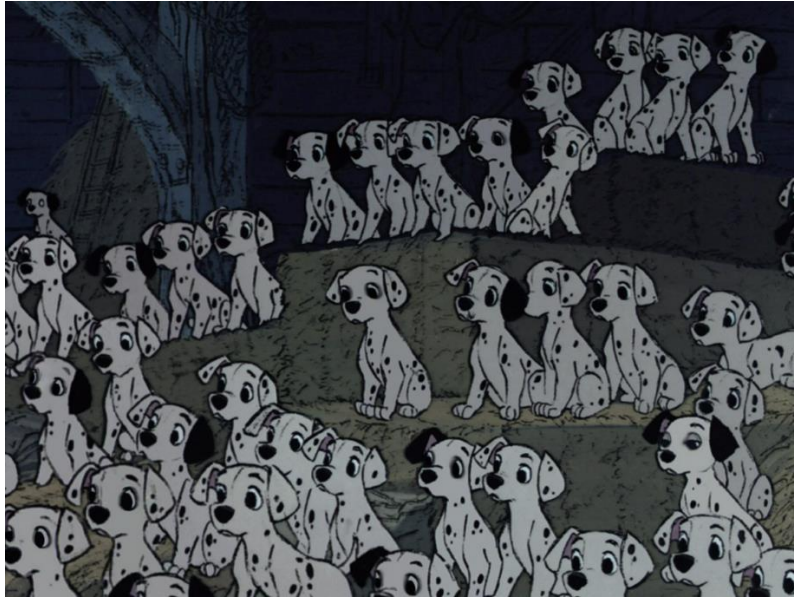


Figure 5: 101 Dalmatians

Phase Three

The third and final phase of each level is total nightmare. Many of the objects in the environments have transformed into monsters and the environment itself is darker and more unkempt. This phase is drawn and colored traditionally with pencil, ink, and watercolor. Although watercolors usually create a soft, comforting feeling, the darkened color palette and heavy black lines will make the “splotchy-ness” of the watercolor look dirty and decaying.



Figure 6: Creepy ink art (found via Google Images)



Figure 7: "Monster" by Tim Burton

Concept Art



Figure 8: The Monster



Figure 9: Bedroom, Phase 1

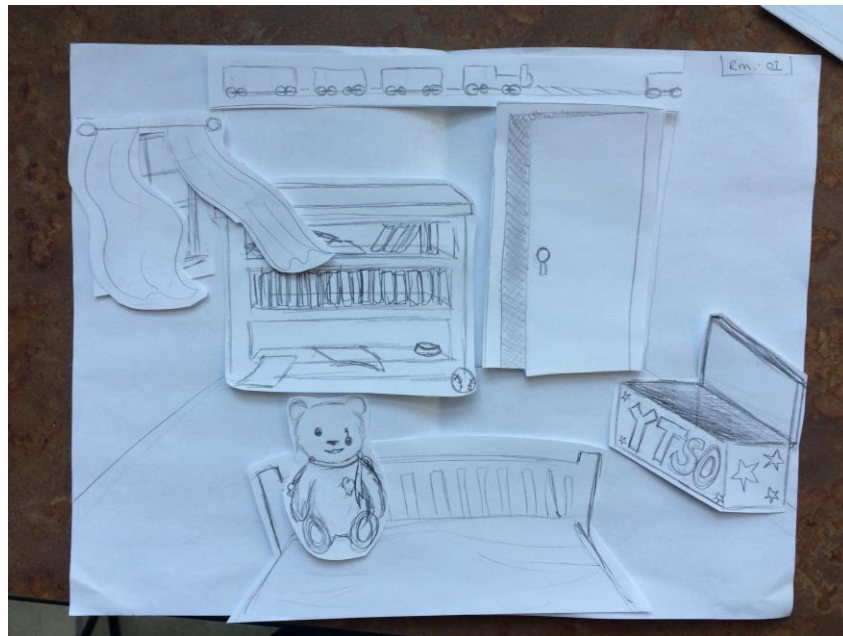


Figure 10: Bedroom, Phase 2

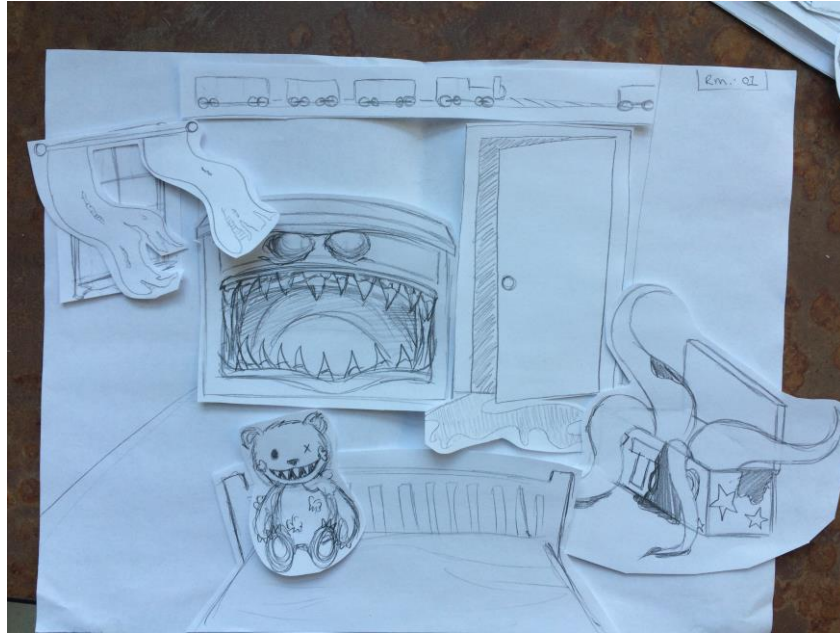


Figure 11: Bedroom, Phase 3

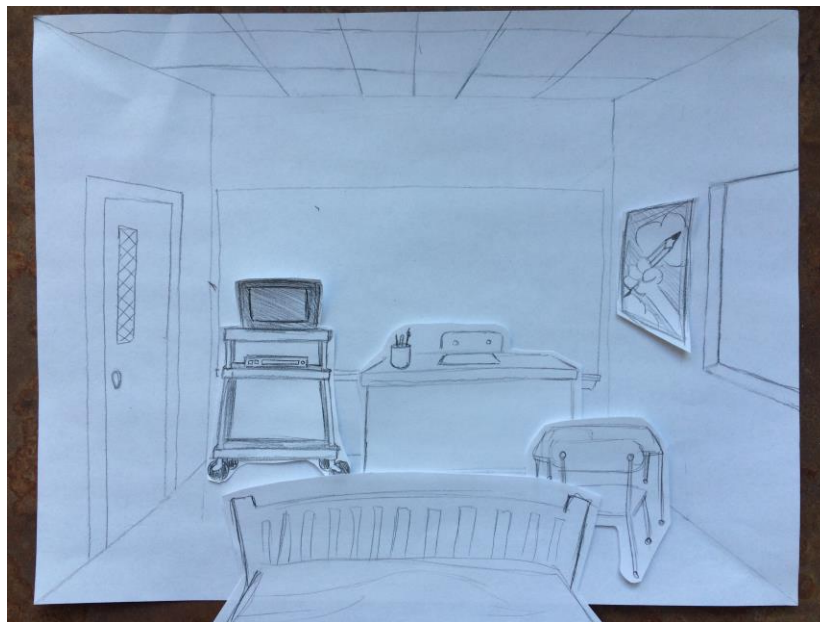


Figure 12: Classroom, Phase 1



Figure 13: Classroom, Phase 2



Figure 14: Classroom, Phase 3

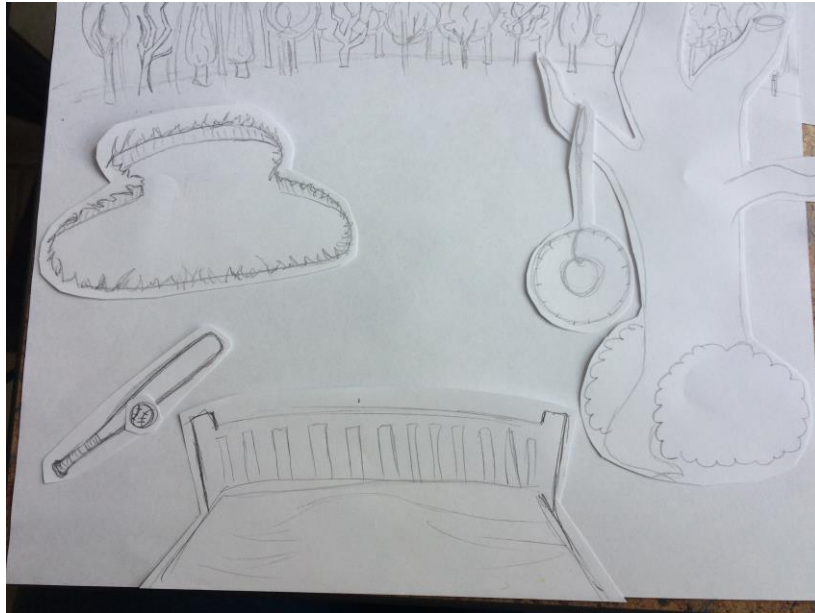


Figure 15: Backyard, Phase 1



Figure 16: Backyard, Phase 2



Figure 17: Backyard, Phase 3

ASSET LIST

Characters

- Monster (in yard phase)
- Mother (in room phase)

2D Objects

- All phases:
 - Bed
 - The bed stays the same for all levels and level phases.
 - Blanket
 - Several versions of the blanket must be made so it can be draped over different objects. (3 hiding spots per level). Total: 9

Level One - Bedroom (3 phases for each)

- Room Background
- Curtains
- Toybox
- Door
- Bookshelf
- Teddy Bear
- Wallpaper Border

Level Two - Classroom (3 phases for each)

- Room Background
- Desk (student & teacher)
- Chalkboard
- TV + Stand
- Posters

- Windows
- Door

Level Three - Backyard (3 phases for each)

- Yard Background
- Pond
- Baseball + Bat
- Tree
- Tire Swing
- Background trees

Audio

Background Music (Phases 1 & 2)

- Quiet, possibly involving a music box.

Ambient Sounds

- Bedroom Ambient Track
- Classroom Ambient Track
- Backyard Ambient Track

Triggered Sounds

- Wood Creaking
- Leaves rustling
- Whispers
- Children's laughter
- Monster Scream (death sound)

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Action Mappings - Needed for input to make the character move and interact in the game world. Specifically:
 - Interact/investigate an interactable object - Left Mouse Click
- Audio - Play audio clips after certain interactions. Constant ambient noise during second and third phase of levels, and creepy whispers during the third phase as well. Need to play background music during first two phases of a level.
- Rendering/Animation - Game must render a 2D background for each level and the 2D assets within the level. It must also render all animated objects and handle each of the animations and transitions between animations.
- Randomization - Game needs to randomize how long a phase lasts within a given time range, changing each playthrough. Also uses randomization for playing the different ambient noises during different times at the second and third phase of a level. Blanket location will also be randomized. The method of level randomization will be determined at the beginning of the game either by the game engine or by the player.
- Progress tracking/saving - If the player dies in a level, the game restarts. The player will be allowed to save and quit at any time, allowing them to exit the game and pick up where they left off the next time they open it. There will be a Continue button. Once pressed, said button will remove the save file from the system. Must save the game's state if the player quits and saves the game (there will be an option to quit and save and quit without saving).