

# Forlorn

Game Design Document

Game 150-D

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## High Concept

A surrealistic, text-based, exploration-and-puzzle oriented adventure title with elements of combat based on a rhythmic meter.

## Game Overview

*Forlorn* is an exploration-oriented, puzzle-heavy text-based adventure game set against a surreal interpretation of southern Spain in the late 1700's. The game begins with the player assuming the role of a deceased woman's spirit. The spirit's intent is to exact revenge on those who wronged her in life, but the player is not aware of this until the end of the game—at which point the player will come to the realization that they just acted as a spiritual vigilante in a fashion rather at odds with contemporary justice. Exploring and interacting with the world will be completely parser-based: the player will move, inspect, and act via a list of logical, easy-to-use commands.

Uniquely, *Forlorn* also incorporates a rhythmic meter that represents the player's psychological state: when calm, the meter beats slowly; when agitated, the meter beats faster. This meter, called the Cerebral Timbre Gauge, will be implemented solely during combat. Upon entering combat, the game will abandon parser commands in exchange for hot-key input. The success of the player's attack will be based upon their ability to utilize the CTG. To expound, if they press the action button at the correct time, and the attack succeeds; otherwise, it fails and the protagonist takes damage. Since the game places more emphasis on world interaction than combat, there will be only a very limited weapon roster, comprised of a pan flute, a cello, an upgraded cello, and an organ.

The levels the player will encounter throughout their journey include a beach, a forest, a haunted mansion, a town, a mill, a grotto, a haunted ship, a cathedral, a graveyard, and a clock tower. While each area has its own distinct feel, some will be connected. For example, the forest and the mansion are interlinked; the grotto and the ship are interlinked; and the cathedral and the graveyard are interlinked.

The player will be rewarded for their curiosity, since the game is largely exploration-based. To increase the gratification of gratuitous wandering, *Forlorn* will incorporate numerous hidden elements, including a multi-piece weapon and an optional level. Furthermore, to completely understand the story behind the game, the player will *have* to engage in quite a bit of reconnoitering—so, essentially, the reward of exploration is the story itself. Punishment, while not exceptionally harsh, comes in two forms: either the player executes an obviously foolish maneuver or they are unable to either surpass a puzzle or defeat an enemy. The motivation to play *Forlorn* lies in its powerful story and captivating atmosphere. Interestingly, the player will be encouraged to replay the game multiple times, as story fragments (journal pages, diary entries, etc.) will be scattered about in places the player would most probably not expect to look. After beating the game, the player will be informed of how many fragments they missed and, consequently, how much of the story they have yet to unravel.

## **Key Features**

### **Exploration**

*Forlorn* will require the player to engage in a fair amount of environment interaction, for a multitude of reasons. Not only will the world be relatively sizable—asking the player to move around between large, interconnected levels—but the keys to many puzzles will exist in out-of-the-way places, meaning the player will have to utilize quite a bit of ingenuity when navigating the world in order to solve their way through the game. Furthermore, a number of story fragments will be placed outside the main path of the story; therefore, the player will have to actively engage in world exploration in order to fully experience the story.

### **Puzzle-Solving**

The puzzles will be an important focus of *Forlorn*, since we are aiming to create a psychological game that forces the player to flex their mental abilities. Despite our inability to graphically render these puzzles, every effort will be taken to ensure that the player is not forced to do basically the same action repeatedly—we will not let a limited interface dictate level composition.

### **Rhythm System**

The Cerebral Timbre Gauge is the central mechanic for combat. A metronome-esque meter ticks out a rhythm, against which the player must correctly time their input. This system adds a level of action to the game, as well as appealing to a larger audience who enjoy rhythm based games.

### **Combat**

Although not the central focus of *Forlorn*, it incorporates a number of unique and engaging fights that will give players a chance to relax their minds and challenge, instead, their reflexes.

## Story

Several years prior to the events of *Forlorn*, a foreign woman came to the small coastal village of Fe Fuerte, located in roughly the same area as the real-life town of Cadaqués. English by birth, she left her family following a dispute over her profession—she wished to become a traveling musician, a desire that less than delighted her parents. Friction quickly arose, and eventually her frustration grew so unbearable that she decided to prove her independence and left. Intending to land somewhere in France, a number of unfortunate calamities led to her arrival in Fe Fuerte.

The residents of Fe Fuerte, unfortunately, were less than kind. Just shy of outright forcing her from their community, the citizens avoided communicating with her in all but the most basic of ways; that is, she could work, buy, and attend church. Nothing else. None would talk to her. None would befriend her. None, that is, except for the brother of the town's blacksmith, one Apolinar Eliseo.

Apolinar tended to the town's clock tower, where the foreigner often took refuge, utilizing the isolation to practice her music. It took Apolinar some time, but eventually he worked up the courage to begin speaking with this mysterious woman. To his surprise, she opened up quite easily—and was nowhere near as sinister as the townsfolk made her out to be. Her name was Alicia.

Their relationship quickly blossomed, but it was one of secrecy and charades. After all, were they to have made their courtship public, Apolinar's whole family would have been thrown into a maelstrom of disgrace. So it was that not even Apolinar's brother Anacleto knew of his growing relations with Alicia. The exposure of their romance, however, was indeed inevitable. Unfortunately, that time was closer than they would have desired, as they soon discovered she was pregnant.

She managed to conceal her pregnancy until the end of the fourth month, but beyond that it was impossible. The community exploded, and insults were flung like stones at the Eliseo family. Anacleto was enraged, but Apolinar defended his love valiantly. Unfortunately, such an effort was emotionally taxing, and soon his feelings soured. And so it continued for several months—strained and tense, with dark glances and acidic mutters flying as freely as the birds.

Then the child, a healthy young boy, was born. Alicia, however, had had enough. She was ready to leave. Apolinar was enraged, and madly his mind searched for some way to keep his child. No longer did he care for his wife; the months of bitter feuding had ruined his feelings for her. But still he cared for his son. And so, in desperation, he conceived a plot to both clear his name and rid himself of his wife. He denounced her as a witch.

The populace of Fe Fuerte, who had been all but looking for an excuse to dispose of Alicia, jumped at the accusation. Several townspeople attempted to ensure the trial was fair, but the effort was wasted. She was burned at the stake within the week, on the beach just beyond the town walls. Finally, Apolinar had his son and his reputation, and life in the town once again returned to normal.

But, as the months wore on, Apolinar's conscience caught up with him. Regret slowly subsumed his mind, and depression set in like a timeless fog. Recognizing that his sorrow would soon render him incapable of caring for his son, he charged Anacleto with rearing his boy and left the town. Many surmise that he didn't travel far—he probably lived in the woods, out of society's reach, but close enough to the site of his loved one's death.

In *Forlorn*, the player assumes the role of Alicia's vengeful spirit, although this fact is not revealed until the finale of the game. The ruse will be maintained partially by the gender ambiguity of the avatar; that is, the player's gender will *never* be specified. As the player unknowingly guides Alicia toward her revenge, he or she will encounter areas both highly surreal and completely natural.

The surreal areas belong to the spirit world, the world crafted from Alicia's memories following her death, the Mundus Obscurum. The majority of the game takes place in this realm, but a select few levels exist in the real world.

The first area encountered—aside from the beach—is the forest, which exists in Mundus Obscurum. Here the player is introduced to the basics of combat, after which they are presented with a branching path, which leads either farther into the forest or into the mansion. In the mansion, which also exists in Mundus Obscurum, the player finds a story fragment alluding to Alicia's departure from her home, as well as a locket that allows Alicia's spirit to pass between Mundus Obscurum and reality. From there the player travels to Fe Fuerte, where they first must enter the mill. The majority of the mill level exists in the real world, but the very end transports the player back into Mundus Obscurum and suggests the possible circumstances of Alicia's demise. The player is then transported back to the beach, where the protagonist wakes in the same place as it did at the game's intro. The game then leads the player back into the forest, which is now represented in the real world; there they are given hints as to the fate of Apolinar. The next area is the grotto, which also exists in Mundus Obscurum, as does the ship, which follows thereafter. In the grotto, the player is shown a token of Apolinar's, proving his demise, and on the ship the final details concerning Alicia's departure are revealed. Afterward, the player travels to the cathedral, which exists at first in the real world. Upon exiting the cathedral, the player enters both the graveyard and Mundus Obscurum; after returning from the graveyard, the cathedral is now trapped in Mundus Obscurum. Once the boss of the cathedral has been destroyed, the player exits out to find Fe Fuerte completely consumed by Mundus Obscurum—the only place left to visit being the clock tower.

## Storyboards

A screenshot of a Windows command prompt window titled "C:\WINDOWS\system32\cmd.exe". The window has a black background with white text. The text displayed is as follows:  

```
+-----+  
| Vacant Beach  
| You open your eyes slowly, for the bright, unforgiving rays of the sun burn  
| painful white circles into your vision. Standing, you look around confusedly.  
| You stand on a beach--a barren stretch of sand several hundred yards long.  
| Behind you sits a forest, its greenery beckoning eagerly. Before you is the  
| ocean, loveless and eternal. You stare out across her waves, thinking, trying  
| hard to remember ... something, anything. But you cannot. Not your name, not  
| your past, not anything.  
| You take a confused step forward, and something rustles beneath your feet.  
| It is a journal; quite tattered and obviously rather old. There is something  
| heavy inside it as well.  
  
|                                     CTG: |      |  
+-----+  
| Action: _  
+-----+
```

[illegible]







```
C:\WINDOWS\system32\cmd.exe
```

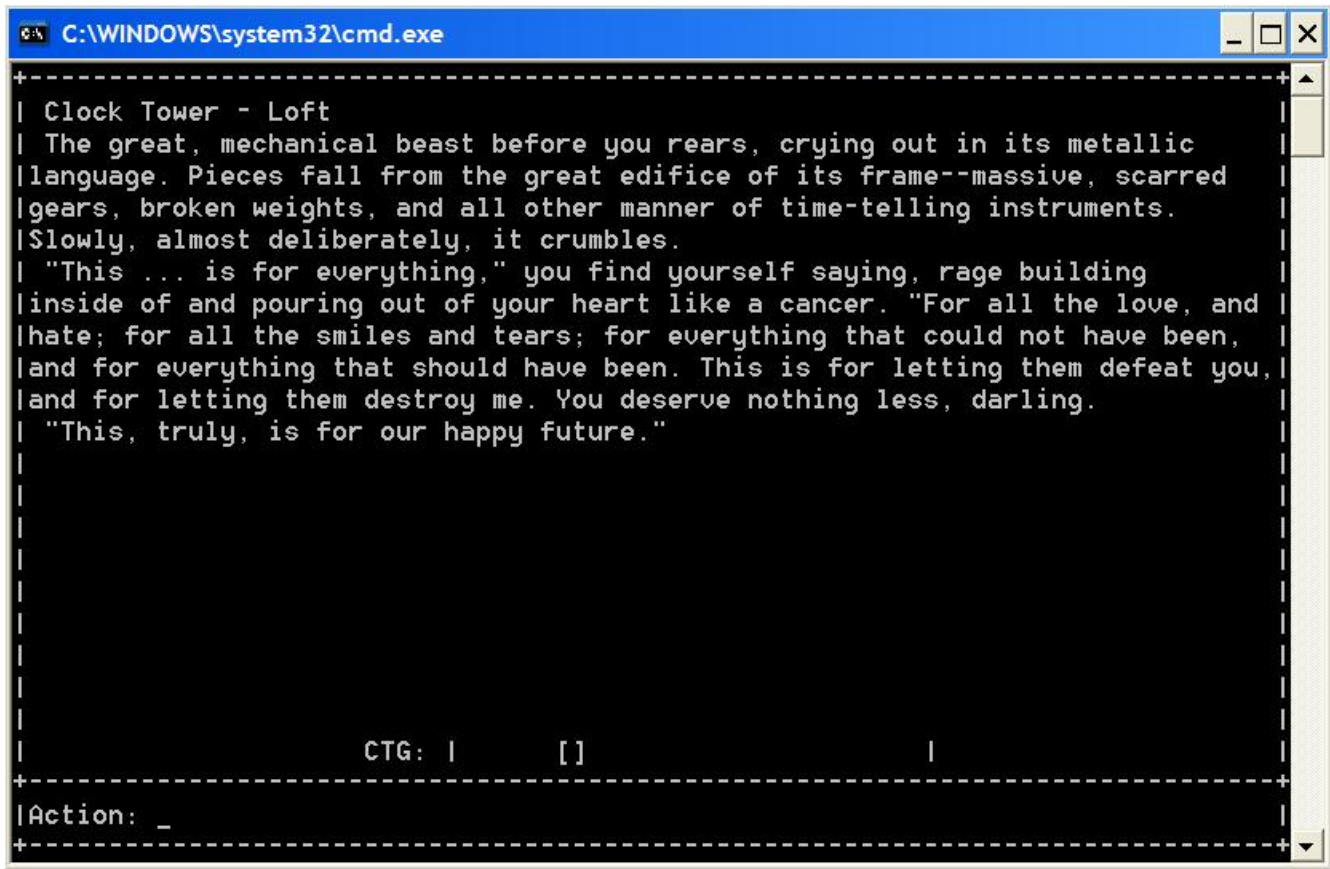
```
+-----+  
| Town - Blacksmith's  
| "Please, you are ... the only one who can do this for me," the Blacksmith  
| begs of you, speaking in a highly colloquial form of Spanish. "My brother, a  
| long time ago, left to live in the forest outside of town, for reasons I would  
| rather not delineate. Regardless, I have not heard from him in years. I do not  
| know if he even still lives. Please, would you discern for me his fate?" He  
| reaches into his pocket and extracts a heavy metal object. "Here is the key to  
| his trunk; this replica was the first thing I ever made as a Blacksmith."  
|  
| You obtained the Trunk Key!  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
CTG: | [] |  
+-----+  
| Action: _  
+-----+
```











## Characters

Alicia: A young musician, this tragic girl left her home following a confrontation with her father. After landing in Fe Fuerte and falling in love with Apolinar, the keeper of the clock tower, her life took an unfortunate but inevitable turn for the worst, resulting eventually in her death.

Apolinar: The destroyer himself, Apolinar is a romantic turned murderer. After the conflict arose concerning his relations with Alicia, he became bitter and malevolent. His wife's desire to leave with his newly birthed child pushed him over the edge, and he accused her of witchcraft so that he could be rid of her but keep his child.

Anacleto: Apolinar's brother, Anacleto was one of the townsfolk who originally berated the lovers for their relationship. Now, years later, he deeply regrets this act—it ruined a life, broke a man, and left him in charge of the remains.

Alicia's Son: The harbinger of Alicia's demise, his conception led to the couple's feud and eventually Apolinar's accusation. He now lives peacefully with his uncle, blissfully unaware of his family's tragic history.

Alicia's Father: A rather stern man, Alicia's father is a retired sergeant. His daughter's wish to become a traveling musician enraged him, and—although he loved her dearly—the friction created by his wrath drove her out into the world.

Protagonist: The physical manifestation of Alicia's spirit, this strange, eerie character is dead-set on obtaining vengeance for the death of its living form. Of course, the player is not aware of this until the conclusion of the game.

Cave Gentleman: A mysterious, cave-dwelling hermit, this man has hidden from civilization for most of his life, spending his time working out a series of wickedly clever, competitive diversions. If the player succeeds in finding this man and besting him at his own games, they may acquire something quite useful.

## Setting

The events of *Forlorn* take place during the final years of the eighteenth century, in a small, imaginary town on the Southern coast of Spain, and all the levels of the game adhere to the historical truth of this setting. From the beginning, there is the forest, for which southern Spain is renowned—specifically, the region of Andalucia, in which Fe Fuerte situated. The mansion, obviously, follows the building standards of the day: pre-Victorian styling is implemented, no electricity is mentioned, and the toilet is *highly* primitive. Although the flushing toilet as we know it was not crafted until the middle of the 1800's, patents for attempted copies had been circulating since 1596; following Alexander Cummings' creation in 1775—one involving a water trap under a bowl—it's logical to assume that a wealthy family would have owned such a commodity. The mill fits in perfectly as well, since nothing beyond wind and water power came about until the 1800's. Originally, the grotto was planned as a swamp; however, a swamp doesn't really coincide with the geography of the setting. A grotto, however, works flawlessly, since the beaches of southern Spain are littered with small caverns and fissures. The ship is laid out according to the blueprints for an eighteenth century Spanish passenger craft, so that level obviously falls within the historical parameters. The cathedral and graveyard, clearly, would have been integral aspects of every town in pre-Victorian Spain—as they still are today. Little explanation is needed for those levels. Finally, the original pendulum clock was invented in 1656, and improvements in timekeeping over the next hundred years allowed for watches that had a fallibility of less than ten minutes per day. Needless to say, a clock tower is more than possible; it's basically guaranteed.

## Mundus Obscurum

Mundus Obscurum is a realm that exists between reality and the afterlife. It provides a sort of buffer between the two planes, containing the vengeful souls of the deceased and preventing them from exacting revenge on those they wish to destroy. Passing between reality and Mundus Obscurum is nigh on impossible, for obvious reasons; the only way to rend the dimensional barrier is to concentrate astoundingly intense emotions in a single point, such as within a memento belonging to the residing spirit. The locations manifested in Mundus Obscurum are specific to the spirit—that is, each spirit exists within its *own* Mundus Obscurum, the geography of which is crafted from the spirit's most profound memories, resulting in a world that appears as a twisted representation of the life the spirit once knew. Interestingly, these locations, while physically resembling their counterparts in reality, are colored by the feelings of the spirit. As a result, these areas are often melodramatically stylized, usually in either an idyllic or hellish sense. Furthermore, as in reality, Mundus Obscurum has its own native flora and fauna, the majority of which are predatory in nature. Some of these beings feast on sentimental energy and are drawn directly toward powerful emotional forces; these beings are quite destructive, acting in the game as mini-bosses. Even more powerful, however, are the creatures sporadically birthed into the ecosystem by the recollections of the residing spirit. These abominations are unnaturally ferocious and seemingly invincible—built of the spirit's own passion, they are just as powerful as the spirit's feelings toward them and can only be conquered via a change in the spirit's sentimental disposition.



## Game Play

The overall object of *Forlorn* is to allow Alicia's spirit to exact it's revenge on those who wronged her, while at the same time piecing together the events that led to her demise. Interestingly, the former is the goal of the avatar and the latter is the goal of the player. Although considerably different, they are both intertwined; one cannot be completed without the other. This will lead to an interesting recognition sequence at the conclusion of the game, wherein the player will realize that, although they did attain justice for Alicia, it was acquired in a rather reprehensible manner.

## User Interface

### Title Screen

Initially the screen is blank and the intro theme begins to play. The title fades into view, followed by the menu selections.

New Game Starts player at beginning of game.

Load Game Loads previously saved game state.

Audition Practice mode for musical instruments; more options as player progresses.

Commands Displays initial parser commands and control scheme for combat.

### Sample Game Screen



Area Name Displays name of game world and room in level.

Game Text Describes room and events.

CTG The Cerebral Timbre Gauge, box scrolls back and forth between bars.

User Input Text box for player to input parser commands.

## Controls

In general, *Forlorn* uses a parser based interface for exploration and interaction. A standard set of commands is provided to the player. However, contextual commands will be utilized as needed to allow the player to complete logical actions. During combat, control switches to real-time input. By tapping keys on the keyboard the player may 'play' musical instruments to fight monsters.

List of Parser commands.

Go / Move

Look / Inspect

Take / Get

Use

Inventory / Menu

Read

Map

Save

Load

Help / Commands

*Contextual Commands – THESE ARE ROOM SPECIFIC*

## Sample Turn

DISPLAY ROOM TEXT:

You stand in the foyer of the abandoned mansion. Age hangs in the air like a disease, corrupting all surfaces, fading all colors. Silence falls upon your ears like a castle portcullis, stifling all but the whispers and sighs of the building itself. The dark, shadowy hall before you appears, not as a corridor, but as the maw of a beast, an ancient and emaciated beast waiting to devour any hapless traveler that happens to wander into its clutches. To the west is a door. The foreboding hallway leads north. To the east is another, smaller hall.

AWAITING PLAYER INPUT:

Go west

DISPLAY ROOM TEXT:

It's locked

AWAITING PLAYER INPUT:

Go north

DISPLAY ROOM TEXT:

Now in the middle of the hall, you feel a creeping sense of asphyxiation, as if the walls around you were sucking the very oxygen from the air, desperately trying to force you from its corridors. To the west is an entryway leading to a kitchen. Further along the left-hand wall is a door. To the east, further ahead, is an entryway to the living room. Also, the hall continues on to the north.

AWAITING PLAYER INPUT:

Go north

DISPLAY SCRIPTED EVENT TEXT:

You stand just inside the entrance to what appears to be the den. A shape lumbers quickly toward you from the opposite end of the room, knocking over a table in its haste. An instant later the ghoul is upon you.

BATTLE SEQUENCE ENSUES

## Rhythm Gauge

The Cerebral Timbre Gauge scrolls back and forth at the bottom of screen, ticking away like a metronome. Ever present, the CTG monitors the rhythm of the game. To play an instrument during combat, the player must press keys in time with the CTG. Combat outcome depends on timing.

Initially, the pace of the CTG is slow. As the player takes damage, the movement speed of the bar increases, thus making it more difficult to match the key press with the beat—that is, at either end of the bar.

## Audition Mode

In addition to the main game, we will offer the player a chance to practice using the CTG. Accessible from the main menu, this mechanic will be relatively limited at the outset of the game, with only one instrument, one song, and one tempo available. However, as the player progresses through the story and reaches new levels, the corresponding instruments, songs, and tempos will become accessible in Audition Mode.

## Musical Instruments

Pan Flute A series of tubes of different lengths, all tied together.

Effectiveness 3 Beats; weakest instrument.

Location In the player's inventory at the start of the game.

—

Cello A large stringed instrument capable of producing low tones, suited for solo play.

Effectiveness 5 Beats; average instrument. After finding the cello early on, it may be used throughout the game.

Location Mansion basement.

—

Cello Obscurum It is possible to restring the cello with better strings, infused with the energy of Mundus Obscurum. This results in the production of more resonant tones.

Effectiveness 7 Beats; cello upgrade. Most powerful of the mobile weapons.

Location Four strings necessary to upgrade the cello are found scattered across the game world.

A – Found in ship.

D – In grotto's inner water chamber after driving out boss.

G – Locked mansion closet.

C – Mill storehouse.

—

Organ A massive ornate device, evoking awe-inspiring sound.

Effectiveness 8 Beats; extremely powerful, but utilized in only one encounter.

Location Cathedral.

## Combat

Combat will be a mixture of scripted and random battles. Random encounters occur in several areas—specifically, the forest, mansion, grotto, graveyard, and cathedral. Fights will be turn-based. Each round, the player will be given a selection of notes that they must play, called beats. This selection is weapon sensitive—the pan flute requires the player to play three beats, the cello requires five, and the upgraded cello requires seven. Each level will hold a specific progression of notes, which correspond to the area's battle theme. From this list, the weapons will pull a number of notes equal to the number of beats the player must play. To successfully play a beat, the player must press the key representing the note in time with the CTG.

Alternatively, there is a version of combat that asks the player to instead memorize the sequence of keys they must press—which correspond to directions the protagonist would dodge—and press them whenever the CTG changes from the green '#' symbol to a purple 'X'.

Furthermore, certain fights will transcend this scheme and ask the player to perform area-specific actions. For example, in the Mansion, the song to defeat Alicia's ghost is predefined. The boss for the Cathedral has a predefined song as well, but the song to be played IS the area theme. Therefore the player will not be informed of what notes they must play. Yet another boss forces the player to use the CTG only to dodge.

Also, each round of combat will be dictated by the player's ability to play the song. To expound, if the player walks onto a panel that contains an enemy, they will be notified of the encounter and the combat sequence will begin. Then the player will be asked to play a number of beats. For every beat they play successfully they will deal a certain amount of damage; however, for every beat they miss they will incur a respective amount of damage—all of which is based upon which weapon they have equipped. Using this system, the player never experiences a static turn; they are always directly involved in every moment of combat.

Finally, damage dealt is determined by a player's performance. That is to say, the closer to the beat the player presses the key, the more damage they will deal. Likewise, the further from the beat the key is pressed, the more damage the player will receive. Additionally, the CTG itself represents both the protagonist's health and mental state, which are intertwined. The more wounds the protagonist receives—or, similarly, the more mentally agitated they become—the faster the CTG will beat.

To ensure a solid suspension of disbelief, the game will not implement any healing items. Instead, since the CTG represents the protagonist's health *and* mental state, it will only decrease in speed—and thereby *increase* the protagonist's health—at specific way points, which are essentially story-centric events in each level that could be perceived as “calming”. Usually, these events center around the defeat of a boss. Also, so the player isn't left hopeless, simply moving around the world will moderately augment the player's health and psychic condition, but only by a very minute number.

## World



## Area Overview

### Beach

Calm and serene, the empty beach provides little beside the sound of waves washing in.

Number of Rooms 3-4

Enemies None

Puzzles None

#### Key Items

Journal An empty, tattered book.

Pan Flutes Initial instrument, found on the protagonist's person.

Gent's Ascimajig The reward the player receives for besting the Cave Gentleman, found in cave between beach and town.

Connects To Forest, Town, Grotto, Ship

### Forest

A dark forest laced by a twisting path. One branch leads to a mansion, the other deeper into the looming trees.

Number of Rooms 25-30

#### Enemies

Violent hare Looks like a large rabbit with a poisonous scorpion's tail.

Venus bear-trap A flower with a taste for flesh. Its name comes from the fact that it is large enough to eat a bear.

Deerbeast A deer transformed into a raging beast. The antlers on its head resemble fierce claws.

Ember fox A servant of the Everto Canis, the ember fox, although less dangerous than its master, is still a considerably potent foe.

Everto Canis A wolf-like creature that stands as tall as a grizzly bear, with two slobbering  
[BOSS] heads. Drawn to the region by powerful emotional energy.

#### Puzzles

Endless Footsteps A trail of footsteps leads deep into the forest. The footsteps eventually form an endless circle. If the player continues to follow them, they may end up running into themselves.

Clearing A clearing in the forest. Here the player encounters Everto Canis.

#### Key Items

Torch Used to solve puzzles within the mansion, and at the camp site.

Apolinar Page A page of Apolinar's diary.

Connects To Beach, Mansion

## Mansion

The abandoned mansion is a tall, ominous, pre-Victorian era structure, one that has apparently been without residents for some time. Not only is it bereft of life, but also it exudes an aura of quiet terror and lurking malevolence.

Number of Rooms 30-35

### Enemies

- Ghoul Nondescript, undead foe. Relatively simple and easy to defeat.
- Restless Armchair A violent, living piece of furniture.
- Living Books Randomly attack player inside library.
- Not-Man A tall, hulking being. Perhaps once a human, it is now grotesquely disfigured, with seven spider legs growing from its back and tusks jutting from its jaw.
- Alicia [BOSS] The ghost of Alicia's youth. A tormented soul that can only be soothed by the song she once loved.

### Puzzles

- Letter Halves Must obtain both halves of the letter in order to know where to search for Alicia's song; first half found in fireplace, second half found in den—both thrown in fireplace so words will be burnt on their surface.
- Hang painting Must hang painting found under bed in master bedroom on wall above fireplace; from this, the player obtains the key to Alicia's room.
- Axe Alicia's door Must use the axe on Alicia's door in order to force her from her room.
- Mirrored library The rows of the library are endless corridors until the player breaks the mirror in the kitchen, which depicts nothing but the library.
- Lineage puzzle Using the lineage document obtained from the study, the player must arrange a series of statues in the correct order to obtain the Unearthly Ornament.
- Defeating Alicia If the player has both letters, they'll know where to look for Alicia's song, which they must use to defeat her.

### Key Items

- Torch Obtained from forest.
- Half a letter Document's Alicia's desire to leave and become a musician, as well as parents' wish that she not.
- Letter's other half Details location of Alicia's song.
- M. bedroom key Found in study, on desk.
- Lineage document Found in study, used on statue puzzle.
- Painting Found under bed in master bedroom. Hung on wall over fireplace, to obtain key to Alicia's room.

Bedroom key Falls out of painting. The key to Alicia's room, it breaks when the player attempts to use it.

Broken key Absolutely useless.

Axe Found in bathroom on first floor. Used to attempt to break into Alicia's room; destroyed by Alicia.

Library key Found on sinister coat rack. Only necessary if player didn't destroy door to library with axe.

Basement key Found in library.

Cello A powerful, resonant instrument; found in the basement.

Practice music Found in library. When played, master bedroom transforms.

Unearthly ornament Obtained from statue puzzle. Removes wall of faces blocking the master bedroom following its transformation.

Ethereal key Key to Alicia's room. Obtained from transformed master bedroom.

Alicia's song Found under Alicia's bed. Used to defeat her.

Cello string Found upon return to mansion. Used to regain upgraded cello.

Connects To Forest

### **Town**

The town is, for most of the game, a bright and sunny place, where people walk about, performing daily tasks, almost completely ignoring the protagonist.

Number of Rooms 5-7

Enemies None

Puzzles None

#### Key Items

Trunk key Given to the player by the blacksmith. Opens the trunk in the cabin hidden within the forest.

Technical manual Contains instructions for using the clock tower mechanisms; found in clock tower, after using Gentleman's Asciimajig

Connects To Beach, Mill, Cathedral, Clock Tower



## Mill

A plain structure, this average looking building sits upon a hill just off the center of town, towards the sea. Extending out of the squat structure is a wind mill, its blades shifting slowly from the gentle breeze coming up off the coast.

Number of Rooms 4-5

Enemies None

### Puzzles

Nine Men's Morris Player must drag bags of flour to correct positions on floor to unlock adjacent storehouse.

### Key Items

Cello string Found in storehouse; used to regain upgraded cello.

Connects To Town

## Grotto

A series of caverns and water filled tunnels adjacent to the beach.

Number of Rooms 10-15

### Enemies

Many-Eyes Shadowy figures with many glowing eyes that come out into the tunnels.

One-Eyes Primitive beings of Mundus Obscurum, they resemble the many-eyes, but are weaker

Flying Jelly Aggressive, but relatively harmless, amorphous creatures.

Ceiling Creeper Falls onto the player from the ceiling of the cave.

Tentacle Horror Boss dwelling in sea chamber. Resembling a fearsome squid, this writhing [BOSS] mass of tentacles seeks to drag the player out to sea.

### Puzzles

Reflecting pool Player must swim through pool.

Inner water chamber Player must search around for narrow ledge to center of room. If they attempt to swim through water, they are pulled out to sea by tentacles.

Glowing chamber This room appears to be a dead end, but by solving the puzzle of colored pebbles, a passageway to the east will be illuminated.

### Key Items

Cello string Found underwater in the inner water chamber after defeating the Tentacle Horror. Used to regain upgraded cello.

Apolinar's token In the sea chamber, after defeating the Boss, the player finds an object left by Apolinar.

Apolinar Page A page from Apolinar's diary.

Connects To Beach

## Ship

The spiritual manifestation of the passenger vessel Alicia rode on her journey to Fe Fuerte.

Number of Rooms 15-20

### Enemies

Ebon Wights Phantasmal creatures, these spirits hide within the bowels of the ship.

Brine Ghoul Similar in features to the ghoul of the mansion, but much stronger.

Scarecrow Part man, part decaying crow, this monstrosity only attacks players that have ascended the ship's masts.

Tentacle Horror After being defeated in the sea chamber of the Grotto, the tentacle horror Revisited retreats and takes up residence in the ship.  
[BOSS]

### Puzzles

Locked safe In the Captain's cabin resides a safe containing a master key to open all doors on the ship. The safe's combination may be found carved into the masts of the ship.

### Key Items

Decorated key Found in locked safe, opens door on the passenger deck.

Rusted key Found inside the crew's quarters this unlocks the door to below decks.

Cello string Found in passenger's room; used to regain upgraded cello.

Alicia's Pages A number of pages from Alicia's journal.

Loft key Unlocks door to loft.

Connects To Beach

## Cathedral

The Cathedral is a beautiful, peaceful looking building on the outside. Upon entering, the magnificent illusion disappears. The inside of the building is in good shape physically, but it is rather unkempt, especially the rooms behind the scenes of regular services.

Number of Rooms 10-15

### Enemies

Clergymen Never to be engaged in combat, if they catch the protagonist in the cathedral, the player will find themselves ejected.

Will of the Darkness A malevolent, nearly invisible manifestation of the darkness consuming the cathedral.

Raging ghoul An undead foe, the raging ghoul seethes with hatred, it's flesh practically afire.

Daemon Shade Throws object at the player; dodge ten times to defeat, as sun will rise and [BOSS] force it to flee.

Possessed Priest Agitates the player with spells, obfuscating the interface. Defeated with organ.

[BOSS]

Puzzles

Cryptic scroll Awkwardly written scroll reveals location of a book in the treasury.

Key Items

Cryptic scroll Found in coffin.

Ambry key Hidden in book on shelf in treasury.

Skeleton key Found in ambry.

Shed key Found before fighting Daemon Shade.

Vasquez's Pages The pages to Father Vasquez's research journal

Connects To Town, Graveyard.

### **Graveyard**

A spooky gated cemetery. It looks like it has been neglected for years; however, fresh dirt shows the signs of recent use.

Number of Rooms 10-12

Enemies

Bat Bats occasionally ambush the player and try to bite them.

Puzzles None

Key Items

Vasquez's Pages The pages to Father Vasquez's research journal

Connects To Cathedral

### **Clock Tower**

A clock tower stands at the edge of town. It exudes an aura of fear and mystery. Though tall in the real world, the clock tower of Mundus Obscurum towers over the landscape in a much expanded form.

Number of Rooms 2-5 per Floor, 10 Floors

Enemies

Living cog A piece of clockwork brought to life; it attacks anyone who passes nearby.

Clockwork horror A living clock. Throws gears like daggers.

Beckoning Regent A stately harbinger of death, this creature calls to the protagonist, asking them to return to the land of the dead.

Apolinar's Spirit The spirit of the clock tower's former keeper, and Alicia's lover.

[BOSS]

" " Incarnation A manifestation of the clock tower's former keeper, merged with the tower  
[BOSS] itself.

" " Wrath The clock tower itself as a living entity, malicious and terrifying.

[BOSS]

#### Puzzles

Gear puzzles Three clock faces are on the wall. They seem to be attached to a mechanism on the table with four levers. A gear is missing. Placing the proper gear in the machine enables operation. Each of the first three levers rotates the hands on the clocks a different value. The time must be set to midnight before pulling the fourth lever.

Password door A door on the 2nd floor can only be opened with a secret code found on the 4th floor. The player must enter the code—which can be found in a cabinet in the Hall of Records—to open the door.

Clock A wooden clock sits on the 9th floor. The second hand and minute hand look like they're removable. Taking a piece from the clock unlocks some doors, but locks others. The player must replace the Bronze Minute Hand and Bronze Second Hand with their wooden equivalents. Taking the Bronze Minute Hand unlocks a door on the 8th floor, but locks the door to the 6th floor. Taking the Bronze Second Hand unlocks a door on the 9th floor, but locks the door to the 8th floor.

Balance puzzle An old balance sits on the table. There are three holes on each plate. There are 6 spheres next to the balance. The player must place all of the spheres on the balance so that it is even.

#### Key Items

Metal rod Unlocks a door; used as a makeshift key.

Iron clock key Unlocks most doors in the Clock Tower.

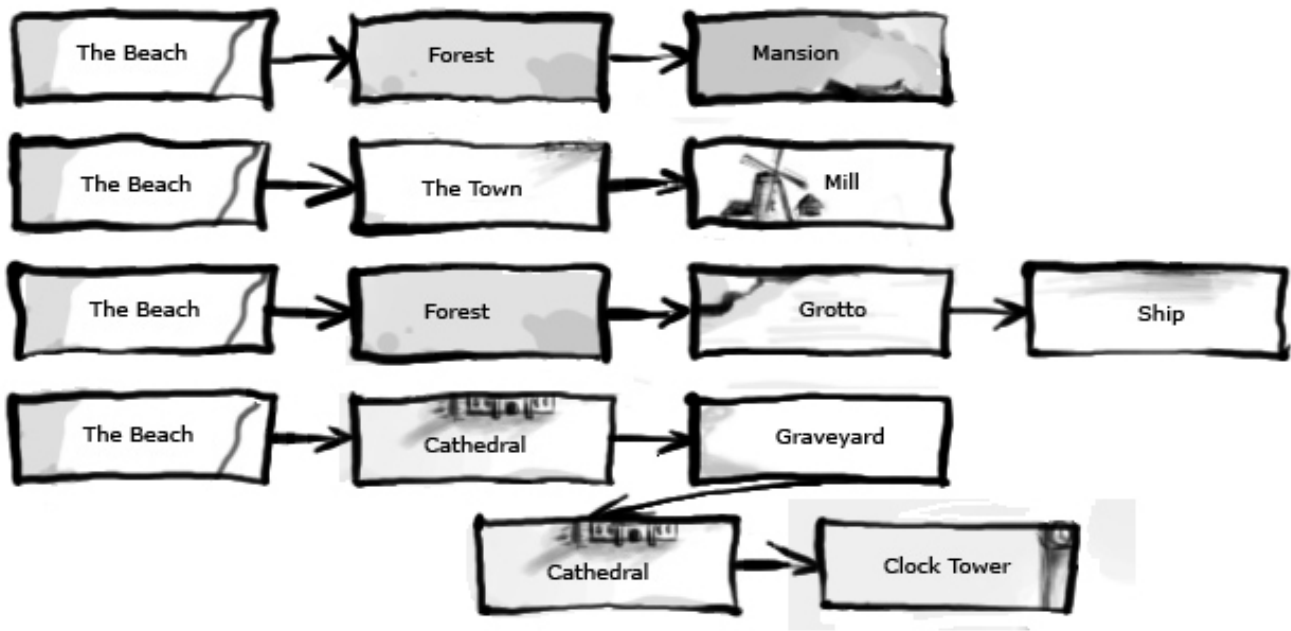
Gears 8, 9, and 12-Tooth Gears used to fix clock machinery.

Bronze clock pieces Pendulum, Clock Face, Minute Hand, Second Hand, Clock Casing made of bronze.

Wooden clock pieces Pendulum, Clock Face, Minute Hand, Second Hand, Clock Casing made of wood.

Connects To Town

### Ideal Game Path



The protagonist awakens on the calm shores and finds the tattered bindings of the journal next to them, along with a set of pan flutes. Wandering around the sandy dunes reveals a rocky tunnel that leads to the town, the path leading into the forest, the pool which leads to the grotto, and a lonely jetty jutting out into the sea.

Upon entering the forest, the first battle occurs, introducing the combat system. A twisting path leads deeper into the forest. Traveling through the forest, the player will be assaulted by denizens of Mundus Obscurum. Eventually the path splits and the player may travel to the mansion or deeper into the woods. Heading deeper into the woods the player finds a cabin and clearing. Inside the clearing the player is assaulted by a demonic wolf-like creature with two heads, haloed in fire. When the creature is defeated, the center of the clearing erupts into a blazing pyre. The flames burn without heat. Using this fire, the player must light a torch for use in navigating the basement of the mansion, though the fire burns until the player exits Mundus Obscurum for the first time, allowing the player to return to the forest. Additionally, it is possible to almost entirely complete the mansion area before finishing things in the forest. In Mundus Obscurum, the cabin is barren and deserted. Later the player will return to visit the cabin in the real world.

When the player first enters the mansion, they should go toward the fireplace and retrieve from it one half of the letter detailing Alicia's departure. Proceeding thereafter toward the den, they will fight a ghoul and, afterward, retrieve the other half of the letter from a fallen table. Taking these things back to the fireplace, they will begin to put them in the fire but retract them as words are burned onto their surface. After this, the player should trek upstairs and retrieve a key from the desk in the study, which will open the master bedroom, as well as a document describing the lineage of the mansion's previous inhabitants. Once inside the bedroom, they should look under the bed, where they will find a painting. When they hang it on the wall above the fireplace the image will change, and the key to Alicia's room will fall from it.

When player attempts to unlock Alicia's room, a loud noise will issue from behind the door and the key will break. A series of banging sounds will issue from somewhere on the main floor; when the player goes to inspect, he will hear that the clatter is coming from the bathroom accessed via the kitchen. Upon entering the previously locked bathroom, the player will notice an axe sitting in the toilet.

After defeating the enemy in the bathroom, the player should take the axe back up to Alicia's room and attempt to axe down the door. However, this attempt will be averted, as Alicia will float through the door, grab the axe with her left hand—which resembles a claw—and destroy it. She will then begin to float about the mansion.

Following this, the player should return to the main floor. There he will find, next to the entrance, a sinister-looking coat rack, on which hangs a single, rotted jacket. In the pocket of the jacket the player will find a key to the library. However, when they open the library, they will notice that the rows between the bookshelves stretch forward infinitely. To remove this effect, the player must break the mirror in the kitchen, which reflects nothing and depicts only the library.

Once the mirror has been broken, the player can enter into the library and retrieve a key to the basement. Before venturing into the basement, the player must have in their inventory the torch from the forest, which will enable them to see.

In the basement the player will find the cello; immediately after retrieving it they will have to battle the Not-Man. When defeated, the Not-Man will drop some practice music, which, when played, causes the master bedroom to transform. With this transformation, a wall of faces is erected before the door, blocking the player's passage. Now the player must trek to the living room again.

In the living room, the player must place several statues in the correct order according to the lineage document found in the study. Upon completing this task, an unearthly ornament drops from the chandelier, which the player can use to dissolve the wall of faces.

On the way to the master bedroom, the player will encounter a final ghoul at the foot of the stairs, which must be defeated. Upon entering the master bedroom, which has shifted hues and is now eerily red, the player must search the bed in order to find the *true* key to Alicia's room.

Once in Alicia's room, the player must inspect under her bed and, per the instructions of the torn letter, find the sheet music for her favorite song. Without the letter the player cannot find the music, which is necessary for calming Alicia's spirit. When the player successfully plays Alicia's song, the protagonist's vision will begin to shake, and a loud rumbling will echo throughout the mansion. Moments later the protagonist will black out.

When the protagonist wakes on the beach again, the cello in their possession will no longer be the upgraded cello, but instead be the regular cello. Also in the player's inventory is a locket, which they must use to cross between the spirit realm and the real world. Now, after traveling through the cave to the town, the protagonist will emerge in the real world, and the town will be alive and populated. While it is possible to enter the town before this, the protagonist will still be stuck in Mundus Obscurum, and as such the town will be deserted.

While traversing the cave connecting the beach to the town, the player has a very small chance to encounter the Cave Gentleman, whose dwelling they will randomly stumble upon.

Upon entering the town, the player finds himself or herself standing before a large fountain, in the middle of which sits a tablet inscribed with a foreign phrase. From here they may proceed northward, westward, or eastward. Going north, the players may reach the cathedral, which is locked at this point. Going west, the players may reach the clock tower, which is also locked. To the east is the mill, which is where the player must proceed to next.

While exploring the town, the player will notice that all the residents completely ignore the protagonist. This level of recognition is more or less static, except for story-centric NPCs, such as the boy outside the mill and the blacksmith, as well as several clergymen.

Outside the mill a small boy approaches the protagonist. He has lost his dog and thinks it ran into the mill. The building is not locked, but the child feels afraid of entering. Once inside the mill, the dog comes up to the player, then runs outside. Nothing appears out of the ordinary, at least not on the first floor. The mill's sails turn slowly in the wind, creaking with age but fully functional. Nothing is exceptionally frightening.

A spiral staircase leads into the mill tower. Ascending, the player reaches a landing at the top of the tower. Here they may look out over the town. From this vantage point, a curious design of stone paving in the floor reveals itself. There are three concentric circles, with each side connected from outside-in at the midpoints. Gouges in the floor show signs of the dragging of heavy objects. Grain barrels and bags of flour sit upon the intersections of lines in the design. The barrels are too heavy to move. By dragging the flour bags into proper locations, a series of switches are triggered.

After tripping the switches, the mill storehouse door becomes unlocked. Inside the storehouse, the outside world darkens. A series of stairs leads downward. Following them down, the player blacks out and wakes up on the beach. If the player turns to climb the stairs, they find themselves on the landing atop the mill tower. Smoke pours through the window; the mill appears to be on fire. Descending the stairs, objects that used to be arranged on the floor are missing. The door is gone. As fire consumes the building the world fades into a ghostly image, before the protagonist wakes up on the beach.

After the player has completed the mill level they will be unable to find the boy, who has apparently run off to some other corner of the town. Instead, the player will be accosted by the blacksmith, who speaks of his long-lost brother and his cabin in the woods—essentially, he asks the protagonist to discern his brother's fate.

When the player returns to the forest, they will find, in the cabin, several documents belonging to the blacksmith's brother, Apolinar. These detail profound feelings of remorse, as well as the fact that this sorrow drove him from the town. The player is not notified as to what act wrought these emotions. Also, the pages speak of a grotto, which Apolinar would visit to soothe his soul. This, obviously, indicates to the player that they must go search for the grotto.

The beach gives way to gravel, then to impassable cliff side. Out past the crashing waves an opening in the rock is visible. It is impossible to swim to in the rough water. In the rock ahead is a small opening that holds a small reflecting pool, most likely left behind by the tide. Though no indication is given, by swimming underwater, an unseen tunnel is found. The player may swim through it. This is the main entrance to the grotto. Inside, luminescent rocks light the cave. The player is free to explore unhindered until they find a large cavern, with another body of water. It seems to be another dead end. Luminescence gives way to darkness. The player may attempt to swim. Upon entering the water, tentacles wrap around the protagonist and it deeper, after which the protagonist again wakes on the beach. Searching this room reveals a narrow ledge along the wall, which the player is able to inch around to reach the far side.

The player must carefully travel along the ledge without falling in. The ledge juts out into the water, eventually widening to a small platform. A hole in the center of the platform is filled with water, light faintly shining within. After swimming through a lengthy tunnel, the player finds a chamber lined with glittering rocks and glowing fungus. Deciphering the relationship between the colors of rocks and fungi allows the player to discern an open passage from a rock wall.

From here the player should follow a short winding path, which leads to the final area of the grotto, essentially a large cavern. Light streams in from outside. Large tentacles attack the player, attempting to drag them into the water. After defeating tentacles, the player finds themselves in the cave visible from beach. In a secluded area looking out on the water the player finds a token of Apolinar, an indication of his fate, as well as a diary page telling how he had his wife burned at the stake. It does not state her name.

After defeating the tentacle in the sea chamber, it is safe to swim in the inner water chamber. This area provides a bonus item not necessary to complete the game; specifically, a string for the upgraded cello.

Upon emerging from the grotto, the player can now see a large ship anchored offshore, along with a rowboat docked along the jetty. The player must take the rowboat out to the ship, which they board. This level is completely optional, but it *must* be attempted at this point in the game, for soon the player encounters the point-of-no-return; after crossing this point, they will be forced to end the game.

The ship is fairly calm. The door leading below decks is locked, but a key found in the crew's quarters in the forecabin unlocks it. Below decks are passenger rooms, some of which are locked. The key you already have doesn't fit in them. The Master key is found inside a safe in the captain's cabin on the stern, which can be opened with a series of numbers found carved into the crow's nests of the fore, main, and mizzenmasts. Inside the room occupied by Alicia during her travels are pages from her travel diary. As the player goes to retrieve them, tentacles burst through the wall and grab the player. Dragged into the water and back into the lower reaches of the ship, the player must fight the tentacle horror once more. Upon defeating it for good, the player must hurriedly get to the above decks before the damaged ship sinks. The path upwards leads past the passenger room containing the journal pages, though it is up to the player whether or not to stop and pick them up. When the player successfully reaches shore, the bells in the cathedral are ringing.

Once in town, the blacksmith stops the protagonist, asking about his brother. When he learns Apolinar's fate, he vaguely surmises the repentance of his brother. Afterwards the protagonist once again blacks out and wakes on the beach.

From here the player should reenter the town, where they will hear the church bells ringing. A funeral is being held for Apolinar, since his death has been confirmed. Obviously, this is the next focal point of the game.

A dirt path leads through trees on the far end of the town. The trees open up to a large open field, and the enormous castle-like cathedral is revealed. The sun is shining and the sight of this grand cathedral is a peaceful one. The cathedral cannot be entered until the sound of bells is heard.

Entering the cathedral, the player sees a long center aisle and a row of pews on either side. The walls are full of stained glass windows. There is an altar to the east. There is a small service going on in the front of the cathedral for Apolinar. There are several people scattered about the pews. Searching the pews, the player can pick up extra unneeded information. The priest stands at the altar saying blessings. He is wearing a white robe and a gold necklace cross. The clergymen in the cathedral can recognize the protagonist's spiritual energy—thanks to the research of Father Vasquez—and a few walk accost the protagonist and throw them out. The CTG beats faster as they get approach. If the player is caught and thrown from the church, they must then walk through seven screens before the door is opened again. Ideally, the player should dodge into a side room, avoiding the threat—or possess the Cave Gentleman's shirt, which will inspire fear in the clergymen and cause them to abandon their chase.



After this encounter has been evaded, the player will emerge from the side room and notice that the people who were attending the service are now all gone. The altar is now accessible and can be explored. It is fairly empty; however, one prominent thing stands out – a locked ambry. One of the side rooms is a chapel. Of the things in the chapel, one is a globe-type map with blocks representing several countries with meaningless names. The countries have numbers on them. The countries represent the rooms of the cathedral. The numbers show the recommended path to complete the cathedral.

From the altar screen, the player can either go to the crypt to the left, or find a staircase to the right. There is a door immediately to the right, which leads to the treasury. The crypt holds several coffins, some open and some closed. One of the coffins, upon inspection, traps the player and forces a game over. Another, less sinister, coffin has the end of a scroll sticking out from under the lid. The scroll has the writing, "third bookcase, second book," on it. Also, the text was written at a 180 degree angle. This hint reveals a location in the treasury.

The treasury is filled with books and scrolls and other documents of religious purpose. There are three bookcases. The third bookcase has a row of books and several rows of scrolls and maps. The second book is a blue book that has the center of the pages carved away; in this space sits a small key, which unlocks the ambry behind the altar. The ambry holds the skeleton key needed to enter the graveyard.

Also in the treasury is the entrance to a meeting room. The player can hear sounds coming from this room, and if the player tries to open the door, the people inside will capture the protagonist and lock them in the crypt, forcing a game over. The player will have to go through 4 screens before returning to the treasury in order to allow the meeting to close. This time the sounds are gone and the door can be opened without incident. Once inside, the player will notice the mess of papers left from the meeting. One is a journal page. Also, upon exploration of the shelves, the player finds a key, which later opens the shed in the graveyard.

If the player continues past the door to the treasury, the player comes to the organ. The organ looks fairly standard, and can be played. However, this isn't particularly useful until the player returns from the graveyard.

The belfry is a fairly plain room with a few bookcases and a few chairs around a table. After the small key is found a spirit appears and steals the protagonist's cello; thereafter, it begins to throw books and chairs at the protagonist. The player must dodge the items thrown by using the CTG. After dodging ten items, the sun will rise and light will filter through the windows, making the boss retreat with the cello still in its possession. Before doing so, he reveals the way to the graveyard by pushing aside one of the coffins in the crypt. This exposes a doorway in the wall.

In the crypt, the open hole in the wall leads to a tunnel. Inside, the tunnel is dark and there's not much to see; here the player will have a random chance of encountering bats, which they must dodge.

In the graveyard the player must find the protagonist's cello, which the malicious spirit has hidden. Upon returning to the cathedral, the player finds that Mundus Obscurum has completely subsumed the cathedral. There are now random encounters with phantoms and ghouls throughout the screens. A journal page can be found in the treasury. Arriving again at the organ, a boss appears. The boss is the priest from before at the service. He is wearing a black robe and the gold necklace cross. The room has now become totally engulfed in darkness. The priest chants cryptic spells at the player and sends bouts of pain throughout the player's body. The player must play the level's theme song on the organ to defeat him. Once defeated, the priest's robe turns from black to white as the force of Mundus Obscurum retreats. He explains that he tried to fight it, but it took control of him. As the power of Mundus Obscurum fades, the cathedral begins to shake and crumble. The protagonist pleads to the priest to leave the cathedral, but he says that

he can't leave and runs out of the room and vanishes. A journal page is left in the organ room immediately after the fight. The player must exit the cathedral within seven screens before the cathedral collapses.

Outside of the cathedral, the town is gone. Apparent ages have passed, stone foundations and crumbled archways are covered with vibrantly colored moss. In place of the clock tower is a massive structure in a Gothic style. Ten stories tall, the towering monument resembles the original structure, on a grandiose, fantastic scale.

Entering the clock tower, the player's progress is halted by a large grate. It appears to be controlled by a non-functioning pulley system. On the third floor a metal rod is stuck in the gears. Removing it allows the pulley system to raise the grate. Farther up the tower, a key may be found hanging just out of reach. However, the metal rod allows the player to retrieve it. This key unlocks many of the locked rooms within the tower. In the workshop area, the player can find a Technical Manual that explains the workings of various devices within. There is a large mechanism composed of three clock faces, several levers and the connections between. By fixing the mechanism with gears found throughout the game, and setting the proper time, the player is able to retrieve additional pieces of the bronze and wooden clocks. A balance puzzle rewards the player with the last piece of the wooden clock. By removing the bronze clock pieces from the wooden clock and replacing them with their wooden versions, the last area is opened. In the final area of the clock, the player comes face to face with Apolinar; or rather, a malevolent representation of Apolinar, who melds with the tower after being defeated once, then consumes the tower and transforms it into an automaton after being defeated a second time.

Once this fight is over, the player awakes on the beach.

From here, the player is allowed to explore the world a bit more. Upon entering the town, one of two endings will play out. If the player has not acquired every story fragment, they will be shown an image of the town, desolate after the final confrontation with Apolinar. Otherwise, if the player *has* acquired everything, the young boy—Alicia's son—will approach the protagonist and shout, "Mama!"; similarly, the town will appear as normal, as though nothing had ever transpired.

After this, the credits roll.

*NOTE: MORE PATHS THAN THIS EXIST, BUT THIS IS MOST PREFERRED*

## Enhancements

Following focus group testing, the following enhancements will be added to *Forlorn*:

### World Exploration

- Contextual, room-based parser commands; for example, in a room that mentions a hallway to the south, the player may now type “go hall” as opposed to “go south”.

### Combat System

- There are now two command schemes, which the player may alter at any time via the help menu. The first is labeled 'Musician Mode', and is the *de facto* standard for *Forlorn*; its mechanics rely on transforming the keyboard into a piano. The other mode, 'Normal Mode', is much simpler—each note is represented by its corresponding key, and sharps are played by hitting the correct key and [SHIFT].
- Also, the game now highlights which note the player should be playing at any given time.
- Finally, there is now a combat entry screen; empty of content, it simply notifies the player that they are about to enter a combat sequence. This was included to ensure that players didn't accidentally type their way through a fight if they were attempting to navigate quickly from one area to another. A combat exit screen was also implemented to ensure cohesion.

### Menu Interaction

- In addition to the [B] key, players may now exit any menu with the [ESC] or [BACKSPACE] key.
- Items can now be used directly from the menu, as opposed to typing “use bedroom key” into the parser.
- Parser command 'read' pulls up story fragments menu.

## Marketing Strategy

### Target Demographic

*Forlorn*, since it incorporates a serious, emotional plot line and engaging puzzles, along with a text-based user interface, is targeted toward an older audience, one that will not be bored by its slow pace and advanced lexicon. That is, gamers aged sixteen and older will most probably enjoy *Forlorn*. Both males and females should enjoy the title, since the gender of the main avatar is never directly specified, and its previous, living manifestation was that of an adult female. In order to increase mainstream appeal, *Forlorn* utilizes a rhythmic, timing-based meter that directly engages the player in the action of the game—the CTG. This allows *Forlorn* to break from the stereotype of dungeon-crawling, text-heavy games, which will undoubtedly increase player satisfaction.

### Target Rating – E

Although *Forlorn* draws upon some rather dark subject matter, maintaining an 'E' rating will not be a difficult task, thanks to a number of game play and storytelling mechanics we have chosen to implement. First of all, no characters actually die during the course of the game—all the deaths involved in Alicia's tale occurred before the outset of the player's journey. Similarly, all the deaths will be handled in a very mature manner; the journal pages will eschew harsh, brutal language in favor of semi-vague allusions. Not only will this keep the implied violence to a minimum, but it coincides with our plan to craft a psychologically demanding story that forces the player to build the whole picture for themselves. Also, for the battle system, we've written it so that the focus isn't placed on barbarously assaulting enemies with weapons; instead, the player using music to inflict otherworldly damage. Furthermore, of all the enemies the player encounters, not one is human. This completely removes realistic violence from the events of the game. And, although the enemies are mostly phantasmagoric entities, terrifying in nature, there is no way to graphically represent them in the game, meaning that our linguistic descriptions are the only source from which the players will be able to build images of the enemies. Obviously, we plan to hold these descriptions within the realm of reason.

### Risks (OVERCOME)

Implementing the Cerebral Timbre Gauge represents the largest challenge. One of the major features of the game, a working rhythm system is essential to successful realization of the design. We must have a precise timing system to reference user input. Interaction through the rhythm gauge must be fun and engage the player. While our game could be produced with a standard RPG combat system, losing the CTG battle would take away from the uniqueness of the game. Success with the rhythm system is a necessary component of this game.

Another challenge will come from the size of the game world. With ten distinct areas, each possessing its own flavor, a substantial portion of our time will be spent crafting vivid environmental descriptions. This is necessary to instill a sense of reward from in-game exploration. Since exploration and puzzle solving remain at the heart of the game, there must be enough meat to satisfy the player. By setting and following early milestones, we shall be able to spot trouble here before time runs out. If necessary, the scope of the game world is scalable, and may be reduced to provide a richer presentation.

Closely tied to presenting an interesting world, it is just as important to maintain *Forlorn*'s atmosphere. The tone of the game is serious and mysterious. Skilled writing and presentation are required to successfully pull off the story. Both going over the top or slipping into ridiculousness could ruin the experience. While the nature of the world permits events stretched beyond the constraints of reality, adhering to an internal consistency aids the suspension of disbelief.

## System Requirements

Standard PC Performance requirements are modest enough to be satisfied by most any PC.

Sound Card Music and sound are central to this game. Without audio support a combat system based on playing music falls rather flat.

## Sound Requirements

Successful implementation of our game relies on use of audio. In-game sound will incorporate stereo effects to build atmosphere. Additionally each area will have it's own game play them and battle theme. To handle sound, we've chosen to use FMOD Ex. An audio engine for game developers and sound designers, FMOD Ex provides sound functions supported by the C, C++ language. It gives us the tools and features needed to include exciting, high quality music and sound effects in our game.

### File Format

Ogg Vorbis An open source, patent-and-royalty-free, general-purpose compressed file format. Provides access to stereo sound.

### Music

- Opening Soft, hopefully nostalgic piano piece.
- Beach Gray static, with soft, soothing melody.
- Forest Ambient "organic" noises shape a soundscape wrought by pizzicato cello beats and bells.
- Mansion Atmospheric sound of the mansion, including creepy door creaks, rattling shutters, and shifting movement.
- Town A beautiful, cheerful song featuring a limited range of instruments playing in harmony.
- C. Gent's Theme A smooth dub-beat groove.
- Mill A moderately dissonant accordion duet, emphasizing the repetitiveness of the mill's existence.
- Grotto An ethereal, aqueous mixture of ambient static and sparkling noise.
- Ship The sounds of waves in the ocean, surrounded by a foreboding amalgamation of string instruments and pad effects; oscillates between quiet and explosive parts.
- Cathedral, 1 Simplistic music that plays throughout most of the cathedral. A remixed version is played after returning from the graveyard.
- Cathedral, 2 A demented remix, emphasizing the melody to be played on the organ
- Graveyard Haunts the player with unearthly sounds, promoting a feeling of uneasiness with a syncopated beat.
- Clock Tower, 1 Peaceful, easy music that reassures the emotional impact of the location.
- Clock tower, 2 Hard-hitting, over-the-top epic track, rife with electric guitar licks and a steady techno beat.
- Ending Opening theme rephrased to include a dramatic resolve

There is also a battle theme for each level with enemies in the game. In addition, each battle theme has a progression of notes used by the instruments to play over the music.

### Sound Effects

Ambient in-game sounds.

## Competitive Product

### **Eternal Darkness**

Nintendo Gamecube

Developer: Silicon Knights

Publisher: Nintendo (GCN, 2002)

*Eternal Darkness* is a psychological thriller, which focuses on a survival horror environment. It showcases an epic story line spanning two thousand years as players take the role of different characters in various places and times throughout history. Like *Eternal Darkness*, *Forlorn* places the player in a creepy, horror environment and places emphasis on psychological stunts to simulate the player. The story to both games unravels through the finding of journal pages. Both games return the player to a recurring setting after each level is completed.

*Eternal Darkness* relies heavily on action, while *Forlorn* uses a text-based parser system. *Eternal Darkness* borrows its story from literature and mythology. It also places a heavy focus on magick and uses a sanity component in the game. *Forlorn* uses none of these, instead using exploration and a musical system to propel the player through the plot line. *Eternal Darkness* also casts the player in multiple roles, while *Forlorn* plays out the story of a single character.

### **Myst**

Personal Computer

Developer: Cyan, Inc.

Publisher: Brøderbund (PC, 1993)

Both *Myst* and *Forlorn* are puzzle-based adventure titles that make use of elaborate, psychologically demanding plot lines, surrealistic settings, and variations on the classic theme of text-based environment interaction. Both require the player to be fully immersed in the game world, as the story is delivered only through vague, fragmented references.

*Myst* accomplishes environment interaction via a graphical interface and a first-person perspective; *Forlorn* utilizes a more primitive, text-based parser system. Also, there are no situations for combat whatsoever in *Myst*, but *Forlorn* includes a fair number of fight sequences, as well as powerful bosses at the end of most levels. Finally, *Forlorn* utilizes rhythm and timing via the Cerebral Timbre Gauge, a meter that directly represents the protagonist's psychological state. *Myst* has nothing of the sort.

### **Shadow of the Colossus**

Playstation 2

Developer: Sony Computer Entertainment International (SCEI)

Publisher: SCEI (PS2, 2005)

*Shadow of the Colossus* is an action-adventure video game created by the same development team responsible for the cult-hit *Ico*. The game play revolves heavily around exploration leading to epic battles against living statues of monolithic proportions. *Forlorn* has many similarities to this title. Both games feature much exploration and sporadic battles, and the story unfolds as the player progresses further into the game. Both feature unique combat and puzzle-solving systems, and both rely heavily on the player's immersion into the game world as part of the play factor. Lastly, *Colossus*' story is rather vague and cryptic, and much of it is implied or alluded to; while *Forlorn*'s tale is not nearly as tenuous, much of it will be implied as well, provided in the form of journal pages throughout the game.

Unlike *Colossus*, however, *Forlorn* is, first and foremost, a text-based adventure game, whereas *Colossus* relies heavily on its stunning and beautiful visuals. *Forlorn*'s story is also more of a psychological tale than an epic of heroes and monsters. *Colossus* also features multiple game play modes, such as Time Attack, and an increased difficulty. While much of *Colossus*' game play revolves around the game's stamina meter, *Forlorn* features a metronome-esque gauge that battles will revolve around.

### **Elite Beat Agents**

Nintendo DS

Developer: iNiS

Publisher: Nintendo (NDS, 2006)

*Elite Beat Agents* is the North American version of a Japanese game, *Osu! Tatakae! Ouendan*. Like *Forlorn*, it features a rhythm-based system. That is, the player is required to make input at specific times, usually in sync with the in-game music. Both games use real-time input during the rhythm portions.

However, they do have their differences. *Forlorn* is a text-based game, while *Elite Beat Agents* is graphical. *Elite Beat Agents* contains no exploration, no puzzles, and has a multiplayer mode. *Forlorn* is more plot-driven than *Elite Beat Agents*, which contains very little plot at all. Finally, the story of *Forlorn* is much darker than the upbeat story of *Elite Beat Agents*.

### **Shadowgate**

Personal Computer / Nintendo Entertainment System

Developer: ICOM Simulations

Publisher: MindScape (PC, 1987), Kemco (NES, 1989)

*Shadowgate* spearheaded a series of ports of PC adventure titles to the Nintendo Entertainment System in the late 80's. These games were characterized by their point and click interface and its similarity to a computer operating system. In *Shadowgate*, the player must infiltrate the Castle Shadowgate to stop the Warlock Lord's plans to summon a powerful demon. Exploring the dangerous castle requires solving complex puzzles and backtracking to uncover unreachable areas. Puzzle solving takes center stage, though *Shadowgate* does feature some combat. *Forlorn* similarly focuses on exploration and puzzle solving. To solve the mystery of *Forlorn*, the player must pass through several areas of the game more than once. Each pass reveals more information and new areas. *Forlorn*, too, does feature combat, however with more frequency.

Combat in *Shadowgate* took place through the use of items at particular times. When faced with a cyclops or demon, use of a specific weapon would slay the beast. In some cases, the player was free to waste needed items by approaching with the wrong mindset. Differing from this scheme, *Forlorn*'s combat system is based around playing music using the keyboard and a rhythm gauge. The games also veer apart in their user interface. Forging ahead boldly without graphics, *Forlorn* does not attempt to simulate a windowed PC environment, rather embracing a parser-based input method, switching to real-time for combat.

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