

Horror among indies:
The reason behind popularity of Mascot Horror
among indie developer

Sky Soo Sin Kai
Bachelor of Art (Honours) Game Design

Faculty of Creative Industry (FCI)
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR)

May 2026

DECLARATION

I, Sky Soo Sin Kai declare that this thesis report entitled “Horror among indies: The reason behind popularity of Mascot Horror among indie developer” is my own original work except for the citation from the references. The report has not been accepted or submitted to any party and will only be submitted to Degree of Bachelor of Art (Honours) Game Design under the University Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Signature: 

Name: Sky Soo Sin Kai

Date: 22nd May 2026

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I want to express my gratitude sincerely to both of my supervisor during this Final Year Project, Mr Ts Dr Ang Kok Yew and Ms Chow Mee Mooi, for aiding me on this project by provide guiding, feedback and support.

The groupmates during the development is also needed to be thanks because of their contribution which make this Final Year Project becomes our final vision and dreams.

Lastly, I would like to thanks my family who support my dreams and career throughout my universities. Without them, my dream will never able to achieve.

Abstract

This research aims to identify marketing and economic factors which make indie developers choose the mascot horror subgenre. Despite a number of research papers related to horror media, there is no study devoted to mascot horror. This paper will focus on selected video games released in 2020-2025 in accordance with their design, story structure, and online community interaction.

The qualitative method will be used as the basis for data collection through gameplay analysis, YouTube videos, and Reddit discussion pages. The results prove that mascot horror frequently uses nostalgia, uncanny design, easy gameplay mechanics, and nonlinear storyline construction. Such features enable developers to save on the production budget but maintain high engagement level among gamers. On the other hand, mascot horror involves intense marketing activities via online communities and content generation, which helps attract more attention and popularity without significant costs.

As a result, mascot horror could be considered a promising and effective genre for indie developers. Nevertheless, it should be constantly evolved due to potential market oversaturation.

Contents

1.0	Introduction	7
1.1	Background.....	7
1.2	Problem Statement	8
1.3	Research Objectives	8
1.4	Research Question.....	8
1.5	Significance of the Study	9
1.6	Scope and Limitations	9
2.0	Literature Review.....	9
2.1	Theretical Framework.....	9
2.2	Review of key studies	12
2.3	Research Gaps	13
2.4	Conceptual Framework	16
3.0	GDD.....	16
3.1	System Requirements.....	16
3.2	Design Structure of the Game	18
3.3	About this game	18
3.4	Gameplay.....	19
3.5	Game Story	21
3.5.1	Prologue	21
3.5.2	Act 1	22
3.5.3	Act 2	23
3.5.4	Act 3	24
3.5.5	Ending.....	25
	Normal Ending - REMPIT TAK MATI	26
	True Ending - REMPIT FOREVER	26
3.6	Story Structure.....	27
3.7	Home Country Elements.....	28
3.8	Characters.....	29
3.8.1	Playable Character	29

3.8.2 Non-Playable Character	34
3.8.3 Enemies Design	35
3.9 Game Assets	39
3.9.1 3D Assets	39
3.9.2 2D Assets	41
3.10 Level Design Flowchart	45
3.10.1 Act 1 Flowchart.....	45
3.10.2 Act 2 Flowchart.....	46
3.10.3 Act3 Flowchart.....	47
3.11 Cutscene Storyboards.....	47
3.12 Mechanics and Systems.....	50
3.12.1 Movement	50
3.12.2 Pickup	51
3.12.3 Items.....	52
3.12.4 Inventory	53
3.12.5 Hiding	54
3.12.6 Enemies.....	55
3.12.7 Characters	58
3.12.8 Puzzles	61
3.12.9 Enter rooms.....	62
3.12.10 Haptics	63
3.12.11 Dialogue System	63
4.0 Methodtology.....	65
4.1 Research Design.....	65

4.2 Data Collection Methods	66
4.3 Sampling Techniques	67
4.4 Data Analysis Methods	68
4.5 Ethical Consideration	69
6.0 Result & Analysis	71
7.0 Discussion and Interpretation	82
8.0 Conclusion and Recommendations	86
9.0 References	89
10.0 Appendices	92
Appendix A – FYP 1 Logbook	92
Appendix A – FYP 2 Logbook	95
Appendix D – Promotional Materials	101
Game Poster	101
Design Board – Character Design	102
Design Board – Monster Design.....	102
Name Card Design.....	103
Appendix H - Final Project Title Form	106

1.0 Introduction

1.0 Background

Horror is a extreme physiological feelings where people feels extremely shock or fear. (Horror, 2026) Although it is causing uncomfortable fellings, but people love their exist on different media due to it is happen in a safe place. According to Ellwood (2022), People enjoy horror because it lets them experience fear in a safe environment so the combination of fear and safery will causing excitement instead of unpleasant. Meanwhile, horror is also one of the popular genre and it also have some different sub-genre invented, such as Survival horror, Phycological Horror, Action Horror and our main character today: Mascot Horror.

Mascot horror is one of the genre which popularize around the 2010 era, one of the most iconic franchise is the Five night at Freddy series. The reason of why mascot horror is being called Mascot Horror is because instead of actively threat, masses enemies or intangible horror like other franchise such as Silent Hill or Resident Evil series, they make the design of the thereat to become regconizable, corporeal, or could easily be the mascots of a children's media. (TV Tropes, n.d.).

Mascot horror's utilizing the design that can attract wide range of audience, so it has been a huge success in the market, which inclide children, teens or even adult. These character often trigger nostalgic, safety before the twist which make them a horror threat. For example, FNAF is inspired by the animatronics from the 80s of a robot theme restaurant. This kind of contrast is also what makes mascot horror so special, am it makes the sense of horror more memorable and emotionly impactful.

1.1 Problem Statement

The popularity of Mascot Horror genre among indie developer is only explained only at a surface level. The academic level analysis about this topic is crucial on Marketing for a product in the future and indie developer can find the formula to popularize their own game to become success without repeating the Mascot Horror formula. In this study, we will focus the analysis on the reason of popularity of mascot horror by different view and angle.

1.2 Research Objectives

- Identify the game design tropes that define the mascot horror genre.
- Analyze the marketing and economic factor that causing indie developer favoritism to this sub-genre.
- Examine the role of narrative in Mascot-Horror genre for maintaining the player base in indie titles.

1.3 Research Question

- What are the core mechanics and visual style that makes a mascot - design character memorable, successful in term of marketing in an indie horror franchise?
- How does the social media affect the game design process in Mascot-Horror Genre?
- Is the Mascot Horror genre a sustainable business model for the industry or it is a market bubble?

1.4 Significance of the Study

- Provide a structured framework of what works in this market and they ways to innovate in the mascot horror genre for game designer
- To assist the game studio find the balance of marketing and artistic choice

1.5 Scope and Limitations

- Scope: This study will focus indie games release between 2020 – 2025
- Demographics: Focus on Gen Z/Alpha audience
- The study will not cover AAA titles, such as Resident Evil, Silent Hill etc as the genre, budget, marketing strategies is different.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Therotical Framework

To understand the popularity of mascot horror among indie developers, we can start finding the answer through different psychological, aesthetic, and industrial theories. In this section, we will outline the key perspectives that explain it via different perspectives from the audience and developer.

One of the primary theories underpinning this research is the paradox of horror enjoyment. According to Clasen (2017), humans are attracted to horror media because we have an adaptive tendency to find pleasure via experience highly negative emotions in a safe context. The feeling of enjoyment will emerge from the combination of fear and safety and producing excitement rather than trauma experience. In the context of mascot horror games, due to the threatening figure is presented as a friendly figure or child friendly, this mechanism is more intensifying. The emotional shift of players when moving from a safe state to a threatening one makes them more alert and make the moment more impactful and memorable, and this increases the game's overall popularity with players.

Besides, the concept of benign masochism, which explains why people voluntarily engage in negative emotional experiences such as fear or disgust can also be related to the popularity of mascot horror. According to this theory, people often enjoying negative experience that the brain falsely interpret it as threatening. (Rozin et al., 2023) Meanwhile Horror games, particularly mascot horror titles, created a threatening digital environment to stimulate the fear responses of player through jump scares, unsettling environment background music and uncomfortable character design. The player knowingly places themselves in a fictional danger scenario, transforming fear into a form of entertainment. This controlled discomfort becomes especially effective in mascot horror because the contrast between innocent design and malicious behavior creates emotional conflict, deepening the psychological impact.

The Uncanny Valley theory, originally proposed by Masahiro Mori, suggests that human-like figures that are almost but not perfectly realistic could evoke unease and discomfort feelings. Mascot horror games such as Five Night and Freddy which feature animatronics, puppets, or cartoon-like characters that display unnatural movements, rigid facial expressions, or exaggerated features is one of the great example of uncanny valley. This design

choice had aligned with the concept of uncanny valley, triggering the subconscious of players which causing the fear. Surprisingly, the lack of resources of indie developers somehow makes the animation of the character feel more unnatural, acting as a catalyst to fully amplify the uncanny valley effect. Thus, the limitation during production may unintentionally contribute to psychological effectiveness and making the genre more suitable for small studios.

Nostalgia may one of the reason that impact the popularity of Mascot Horror. According to Cambridge Dictionary, nostalgia is a feelings that will happen when thinking about things happen in the past which will feels pleasure and sometimes slight sadness at the same time. In the current gaming market, the design that utilize symbols of childhood such as toys, cartoon characters or amusement park is commonly can be seen in Mascot Horror.. By adding content that brings contrast into their childhood, people feel uncomfortable when they're unexpectedly turned into scary content. According to Expectancy Violations Theory, people tend to react strongly when their usual social rules or expectations are broken. We can also see this idea in mascot horror, where scary stories evoke feelings of fear by playing on childhood memories.

Besides of psychological appeal, the genre's popularity can also be explained through Participatory culture. The participatory culture refers to a where consumer is not just consuming the media, but they actively engage in the creation and share the media with the others (Ungvarsky & Janine, 2025), in today's world, we called it fanbase. In the digital era, this phenomenon is more widely spreader and forming different sub-culture, and indie games also gather a lot of fans that produce content such as fan art, lore explain video, fan theories, streaming, gameplay video and so on at the world wide web. The mysterious lore, twisted childhood characters and fragmented narrative often appear together in Mascot Horror, which encourage audiences to speculate and collaboratively interpret the narrative. This kind of narrative encourages more

participation among the players with more online discussion and content creation surrounding the game, thereby expanding its visibility across social media and streaming platforms. For indie developers with limited marketing resources, such community-driven dissemination can significantly give more exposure and contribute to the widespread popularity of the genre.

The popularity of mascot horror games among indie game developer is because this genre combines different psychological tricks to when designing the games, such as utilizing unsettling visuals, a twist on nostalgic themes and uncommon narratation of the game's story. Additionally, the popularity of mascot horror in today's indie game scene. It also seems that cultural trends and influences play an important role in keeping this genre relevant. Overall, the popularity of mascot horror may be tied to larger market forces, though broader industry patterns still play a significant part.

2.2 Review of key studies

The theory of Mathias Clasen, Paradox of horror explained that the reason of player are drawn to frightening experience is because horror media can provide a chance for player to experience fear under a controlled and safe environment, and this situation can shift the emotion of fear into excitement. In this case, horror games is one of the best medium to experience these experiences because games is more immrersive than books, movies and so on due to player is experiencing what the characters see, control what the characters do and so on .

Meanwhile, Paul Rozin's theory, Benign Masochism stated that individuals feel pleasure from negative emotions when they perceive them as non-threatening. For example, although people will cry, pity towards a character from the drama, which is a negative emotion, but people found out that this kind of experience is entertaining, and this can apply to horror games too. The

theories of Clasen more focuses on the balance between fear and safety, meanwhile Rozin emphasizes the reinterpretation of negative experiences as enjoyable. From these two different but related theories, we can know that horror games is a structured psychologically response where fear becomes a source of entertainment instead of a threat to us. In the context of mascot horror games, although experiencing discomfort, the behavior of players willingly engage with unsettling environments and threatening characters can be explained

Overall, these studies collectively shows that the popularity of horror games, particularly mascot horror, is influenced by a combination of psychological engagement, visual design strategies, expectation disruption, and community-driven promotion. While each theory addresses a different aspect of the phenomenon, their integration provides a more comprehensive understanding of why mascot horror has become a dominant trend among indie developers.

2.3 Research Gaps

Although a lot of research has been done on horror media, most of it focuses on generic horror media, such as films, literature, and the broad video game genre. But the research that targets a specific subgenre as mascot horror is limited. For example, Mascot horror commonly has traits of child-friendly visuals, nostalgia-based design, and character-driven horror and these have not been deeply analyzed yet in the current literature. Besides that, the lack of research about the reason for mascot horror has become the eye of candy for indie developers and is one of the main gaps in today's date. In this study, I will fill the gaps by focusing more on mascot horror games from 2020 to 2025 and identifying the core design and narrative traits that are unique to this genre.

Not only the lack of focus on Mascot Horror as a specific subgenre, but the current research also over-reliance on psychological theory without game design Context. For example, although the theory of Clasen and Rozin explains why people enjoy fear, it does not explain how the design of the game creates the fear that is felt by the player; the connection between the theory and the actual game mechanics and visuals is missing. To fill this gap, this research will try to find the relationship between the game design tropes and the psychological theories, such as Character design (uncanny mascots), gameplay mechanics (jump scares, tension), and Environmental Storytelling.

The current research is also limited to the indie game development perspective. There is very little discussion of the reason behind why mascot horror is one of the popular choices for indie developers and how the production constraints and opportunities given by choosing this genre. Exploring the low-budget advantages, the accessibility of mascot design, and the strategies of indie production can help fill the gap in perspectives from game developers.

The lack of connection between the different theories from existing studies is also a noticeable gap. Psychological theories, aesthetic theories, and media theories are often discussed in isolation and cause the lack of a unified framework that can be used to explain how the relation between these factors shape the popularity of this genre. This gap will be filled by finding the relations, making them into a single framework from multiple perspectives instead of looking at each theory individually. This study will connect psychological engagement, character design, and participatory culture together. Not only as a game experience but also as a cultural and market phenomenon, it may provide a more complete understanding of how mascot horror functions.

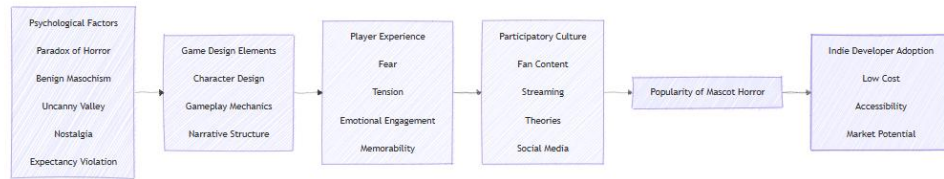
In addition, although participatory culture has been widely discussed in media studies, there are still limited studies which focus on how it influences the success of indie horror games. They did not go more deeper into explaining how the actively creation of fan content such as fan art contribute to the popularity and visibility of specific genres. This is especially important for who often rely more on organic exposure rather than traditional marketing especially indie developers.

To address this, this study will examine how the popularity of mascot horror games affected by community activities such as streaming, theory discussions, and online content creation. By linking participatory culture to actual game success, this research hopes to provide a clearer explanation of how these games gain attention in the digital space.

Last but not least, the lack of discussion about the long-term sustainability of the mascot horror genre. Despite the fact that mascot horror is still popularity among the players in recent years, there are not many studies questioning whether this trend will continue or if it is simply a temporary phase which could affected by issues such as market saturation, repetition of design ideas, and audience fatigue are rarely explored in depth.

In this study, the consideration of whether can mascot horror remain a sustainable model for indie developers, or having risks becoming oversaturated over time.

2.4 Conceptual Framework



3.0 GDD

3.1 System Requirements

The game was developed on different devices, specifically on the laptop. The main laptop that used to test the game is MSI Sword 16 HX B13V, which the specifications are as shown below:

- **Processor** 13th Gen Intel Core i7-13700HX (2.10 GHz)
- **RAM** 16.0 GB
- **Graphics card** NVIDIA GeForce RTX 4060 Laptop GPU (8 GB)
- **Storage** 954 GB (Estimate 1TB)
- **System type** 64-bit operating system, x64-based processor

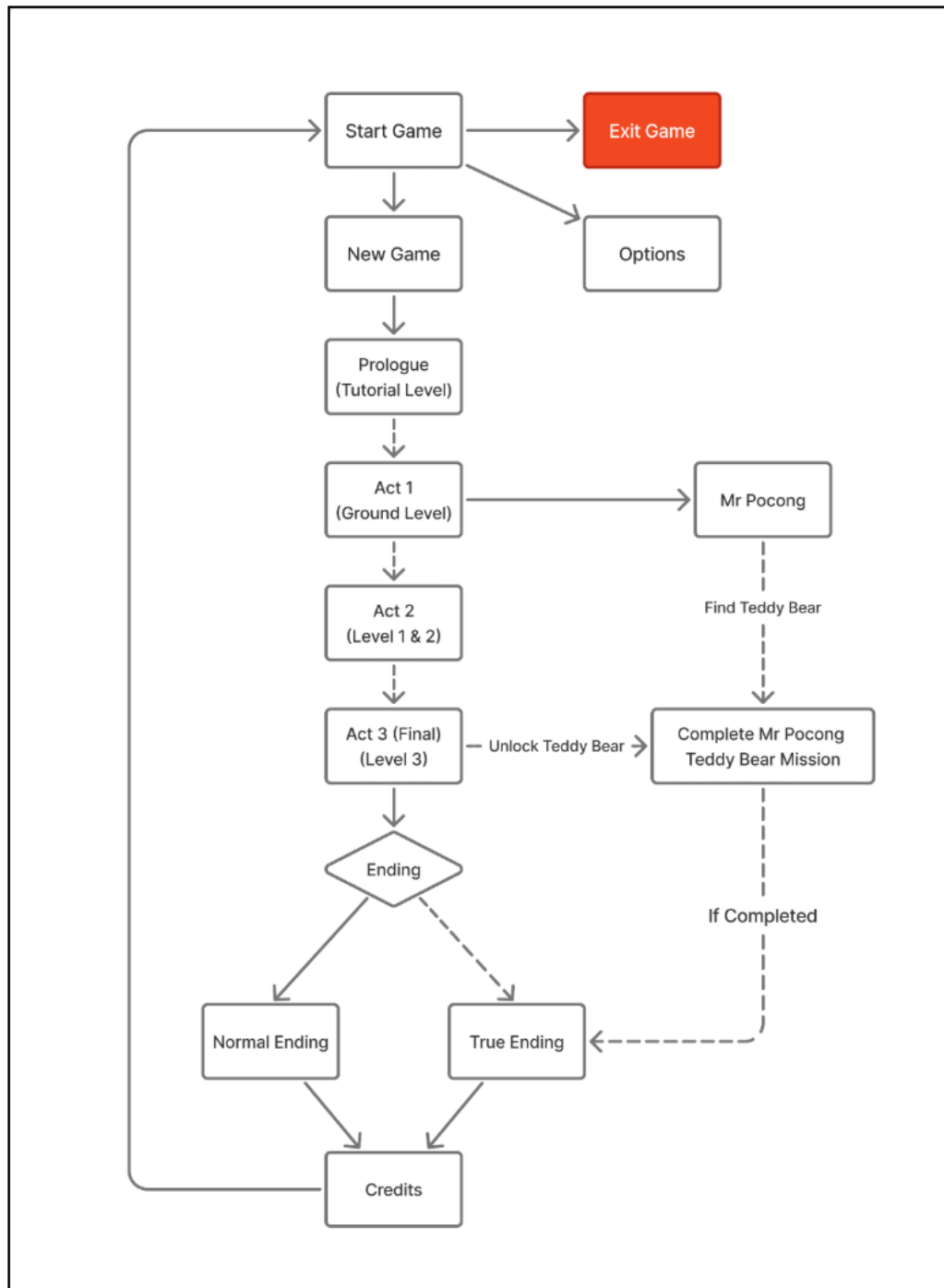
The game was able to run smoothly on this device. In addition, the game also has been optimized where the scene is separated into two major parts:

- **Persistent Scene:** All characters and game managers (Sound Manager, Level Manager, Input Manager, etc.) stored in this scene and always overlap on every game scene.
- **Game Scene:** Only load when players enter into the scene, Persistent scene always overlap on top of it.

Hence, the game was expected able to run on this minimum system requirements as shown below:

- **CPU:** Intel Core i5 Processor and above
- **Graphics Card:** NVIDIA GeForce GTX 1650 graphic cards and above with DirectX 11.0 and above.
- **OS:** Window 10 & Window 11
- Free Disk Space Needed: 2GB
- **RAM:** 4GB and above
- **Control:** Xbox Gamepad or any third-party gamepad that supports X-Input.

3.2 Design Structure of the Game



3.3 About this game

Rempit in the Night is a single-player narrative-driven survival horror adventure game that features comedy elements and horror themes. The game was set in a fictional world which was a sacred hill of Bukit Tinggi in the 2000s. You play as Ahmad, together with your two friends ride your motorbikes climbing up the Bukit Tinggi. As you were riding fast on the road,

you encountered a mysterious monster that caused a tragedy, while when your friend tried to save you, they had been captured by another monster. As Ahmad, you are stranded in a forest, and your friends are all gone. Tension and fear drive you to be insane, yet it becomes a weapon for you to uncover secrets and find ways to escape, while also rescuing your friend from the monsters. Are you brave enough to survive and save your friends from the horrors of Bukit Tinggi?

3.4 Gameplay

In *Rempit in the Night*, the player first plays as Ahmad who is lost in the forest of Bukit Tinggi after an accident and must now find his friends and figure out a way to survive and escape.

Throughout the search for Ahmad's friends, the player will have to navigate a dimly lit environment while also becoming insane where Ahmad will change his perspective into Insane View. The player is also able to hide from enemies to avoid them from attacking them.

Exploration is key, as players search the environment for items and clues that can assist in progressing through the game and while also finding the other two characters. Once they find the other two characters, the gameplay will be extended to character switching, where they can control the other two characters, Ming and Haran, with their unique gameplay and mechanics to help the players further the game progression.

The deeper the player goes the more tense the atmosphere becomes, the player will have to be more cautious with every action that they make since making the wrong move might cost them their lives.

Key gameplay and related mechanics

- **Player vision:** Ahmad has two different visions, the Normal View and the Insane View. These visions are one of the parts of the gameplay where it can distort players' vision to see the game environment.

- **Exploration:** Players can explore around to find items in different rooms such as pills to regenerate the Insanity, keys and other items that they will need to use to progress through the game.
- **Inventory:** Players have an inventory system to put the items they have collected and can be used for progression or character development.
- **Hiding:** Throughout the game, players will be able to hide in areas such as rooms or cabinets to avoid enemies from detecting them.
- **Insane Meter:** Players are required to monitor their Insanity constantly and replenish it when it's low by consuming the pills since having the Insane Meter reach to zero will result in the character in the game to die.
- **Puzzles:** Some rooms and entrances require players to solve the puzzles to unlock them in order to progress the game.
- **Side- Scrolling:** The game is a side-scroller where players explore various locations in a 3D environment while the characters are in 2D.

Controls

The game was exclusively using the gamepad as the control for the game. The gamepad layout used by the game is X-Input in which any gamepad that has the same layout and input system like Xbox Gamepad were able to play this game.

- Left Joystick - Movement
- **Select** - Open and close the Pause menu
- **A** - Interact/Hide/Continue the dialogue
- **X** - Item pick up/Use Item in Inventory
- **Y** - Open Inventory

- **B** - Close Inventory
- **D-pad** - Navigate Inventory / Dialogue Options
- **LT** - Sprint
- **RT** - Throw Matches (Ming)/ Charge Atk (Haran)
- **LB & RB** - Tap repeatedly to pass through enemies.

3.5 Game Story

3.5.1 Prologue

The game is set in the 2000s of Malaysia, there are 3 friends planning and meeting up in a restaurant preparing to ride their bike at full speed on Bukit Tinggi with a “superman” pose where Malaysians call them “Mat Rempit”. As 3 friends “Rempit” make their way along the road on Bukit Tinggi, Ahmad, one of the 3 friends, is taking the lead of “Rempit”, riding in front of his two friends, Ming and Haran.

Ahmad suddenly sees a Pocong wandering in the middle of the road, he was shocked and lost control of his bike. He eventually crashed into the fence of the roadside and fell down a cliff to a forest together with his motorbike. Ming and Haran who follow behind Ahmad were shocked and tried to save Ahmad. As they were waiting for the police to come, a monster, Santu Sakai, approached from behind and captured them.

After a while, Ahmad below the cliff was awakened and he was injured. He found he had a bottle of weird pills in his pocket and decided to eat it as he thought the pills were a painkiller. Then, he felt suddenly cured from injured. Without wasting time, he immediately tried to call his friends but none of them picked up his phone.

Then, he saw an abandoned school not far away from him, and he decided to head there. At this moment, he hides in bushes when he hears footsteps. He

sees 2 of his “rempit” friends, Ming and Haran being brought by Santu Sakai and entered into the school. Without thinking a lot, he decided to enter the school and tried to find and rescue his friends.

3.5.2 Act I

When first entering the school, Ahmad will start his exploration in Ground Floor. Ahmad started to explore the school, he found there was a staircase blocked by plants, while another was fully blocked by a bunch of broken desks and chairs. Ahmad knows that he only can get up to the upstairs from the staircase which is blocked by plants.

He went to the canteen to find the knives but it turned out there was nothing there in the kitchen of the canteen. Hence, he decided to find other rooms if there was any item that was sharp enough to cut off the plants.

When he came out from the canteen, he heard a creepy laughing sound from his right side, as he looked to that side, he saw a Pocong appeared.

The Pocong was looking around and its eyes met with Ahmad eyes, which made the Pocong feel angry and started to approach Ahmad. Ahmad was shocked and immediately hid inside a cabinet. The Pocong wandered around the cabinet and did not find Ahmad, who then left the cabinet.

After a while Ahmad did not hear the sound of the Pocong, he decided to come out and continue his exploration. He found a key inside the security room and was thinking where the doors could be unlocked. As he continued to go see the door at the end, a fat Pocong suddenly appeared behind him. Pocong introduces himself, Mr Pocong, and asks if Ahmad can help him to find the teddy bear in the school.

At this point, players can either choose to help or ignore the request asked by Mr Pocong. After making the decision, Mr Pocong will disappear.

Ahmad continued his exploration and found a knife in the toilet after using the key he found just now, he then used the knife to cut the plants and finally went upstairs to continue to find Ming and Haran.

3.5.3 Act 2

Ahmad first explored the first floor and finally found Ming in Room 101. Although Ahmad tried to convince Ming to get out of the room, Ming decided not to due to being afraid of the ghost and monsters around. Ahmad then told Ming to stay inside and continue to find Haran at the second floor.

While Ahmad explored the second floor, he met Mr Pocong again in Room 202. After a few conversations with him, Mr Pocong gave protection to Ahmad and so Ahamd continued his exploration. For a long time searching both floors in the school, Ahmad still hasn't found Haran, the only staircase he can go to the third floor was locked with a gate. When Ahmad tries to figure out how to get into the rooms that he was unable to go into, he saw a vent and thought it was a good idea to climb into the vent to reach the other locked rooms. He then found a ladder in a room and used it to reach the vent.

However, Ahmad was unable to climb inside due to his body size. But he remembered Ming's small body size meant he was able to climb into the vent. Thus, he returns back to find Ming and ask Ming to help. Ming then went with Ahmad to the vent and climbed into the vent. Ahmad heard the sound from the farthest left of the room and found Ming was inside. As they came out of the room, they heard something.

The floor at the opposite side suddenly appears with a lot of black oil, a humanoid figure appears from that puddle of black oil, it is Orang Minyak. Ahmad and Ming were shocked, then Ahmad told Ming to hide somewhere while he tried to bring Orang Minyak to somewhere else. Ahmad thinks to bring the monster to the female toilet on the ground floor, and then he hides inside...

On the other perspective, Ming was hiding in a room. He found a match box and thought it could be a great idea to burn Orang Minyak using the matches.

He decided to help Ahmad to encounter the monster. While exploring, he found a key in a room, which then he used this key to open the backyard door of the ground floor and get inside the ground floor. Once he gets inside, the Orang Minyak are already at the same place and start to approach Ming. Ming, in panic, quickly throws the burned matches onto the Orang Minyak and successfully burns it to death. He then found another key from the Orang Minyak corpse.

Ming then finally found Ahmad inside the toilet and gave the key to Ahmad, Ahmad then brought Ming together and finally unlocked the locked gate of the third floor's staircase and continued to explore the last floor in this school.

3.5.4 Act 3

Ahmad and Ming finally reached the third floor and continued to explore the place, as the right side was blocked with desks and chairs, they decided to explore the left side. As they walked towards the left side of the third floor, Santu Sakai suddenly came out from Room 301. Ahmad, Ming and Santu Sakai, look at each other...

At that moment, Santu Sakai yelled at them and charged towards them. Ahmad and Ming quickly hid inside the cabinet next to them and successfully dodged the Santu Sakai attack. At this point, Santu Sakai had already gone to nowhere, Ahmad and Ming continued to explore the right side as they heard Santu Sakai destroy something. The blocked path was gone, Ahmad and Ming saw there was a room at the end and decided to go inside.

They found Haran inside the room. When Haran saw Ahmad and Ming, he immediately talked with them about what had happened previously, from when he woke up inside a room with Ming, until got locked by Santu Sakai inside the room when he tried to attack it. Since Haran was finally free, he decided to help Ahmad and Ming continue exploring the last few rooms on the third floor.

Haran found a room covered with black oil with a strongbox covered with sticky black oil in the middle. He then uses the knife given by Ahmad to cut off the sticky oil. However, he found out the strongbox was locked, the key he found in the room he was locked inside just now unable to use. Hence, he continued to find the actual key to unlock the strongbox.

Finally, after encounters with Santu Sakai and many searches of different rooms. He finally gets the actual key to unlock the strongbox. He got a bottle of black oil from the strongbox and thinks it's a great idea to use it to kill Santu Sakai. Without any thought, he immediately went back to the room to meet with Ahmad and Ming. Haran ask if Ming can use the matches together with the black oil to deal with Santu Sakai. At first, Ming was very resistant as he did not want to encounter any monsters anymore, but after being encouraged by Ahmad and Haran, he decided to give it a try.

It was all about to end; they found Santu Sakai when they came out from the room. Haran charged towards the Santu Sakai and grabbed it tightly to avoid it escaping again. Ming immediately threw the matches with black oil onto the Santu Sakai. For a few tries, the plan worked. Santu Sakai's fur started to burn and at the end its whole body was burned in fire. After a moment, Santu Sakai died. Three of them, Ahmad, Ming and Haran were happy that they finally killed Santu Sakai.

While they planned to get out from this abandoned school, Ahmad found a teddy bear inside the room that Santu Sakai just stayed in. He remembered the request from Mr Pocong...

3.5.5 Ending

There are two endings which will affect the endings depending on the player's choice either to return the teddy bear they found to Mr Pocong or directly get out from the building.

Normal Ending - REMPIT TAK MATI

Ahmad did not care about the teddy bear currently; all he was thinking is to immediately escape from this abandoned school with Ming and Haran. Without any moment, they finally arrived at the entrance and escaped from the school.

For such a long walk, they finally get out of the forest and get to a good spot that has a good signal to call the police to rescue them. Their tension finally eased, and they let out a shout at sunrise: “**REMPIT TAK MATI!**”

True Ending - REMPIT FOREVER

Ahmad decided to bring the teddy bear to Mr Pocong. Mr Pocong received the teddy bear and started to cry, then continued to tell Ahmad his backstory. Mr Pocong reminded Ahmad to wake up from the dream, but Ahmad did not understand what he meant, then in front of Ahmad's eye, Mr Pocong turned into light starting a new journey to find his wife and his daughter...

After that, Ahmad found Ming and Haran and continued to get out of the building. As they reached the entrance, Ming and Haran stopped to move, and even told Ahmad to wake up, but still Ahmad ignored what they said and together escaped from the school.

A long walk, they still have not get out of the forest. Finally, Ming and Haran stopped their steps and started to head back. They told Ahmad to wake up again and appreciate being Ahmad's best friends. Ahmad did not know what was going on and only kept chasing Ming and Haran. A light suddenly appeared in front of Ahmad, and he opened his eyes...

Ahmad found out he was on a bed all the time as well as he was inside the hospital. But the more shocking news he heard was that Ming and Haran were already dead after the accident at the beginning. All of these were just a dream, an illusion for Ahmad.

Ahmad continued to lay on the bed, thinking about the past memories shared together with Ming and Haran. He finally let it go and appreciated what they had done for him.

*“One day, we will meet again and **REMPIT FOREVER...**”* Ahmad said.

3.6 Story Structure

Rempit in the Night follows the 3 Act Structure, with some mix of Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey in the story. The story uses a combination of Temptation, Crossing First Threshold and Supernatural Aid. Since the game only uses some of the Hero's Journey, the rest will be listed down on the table.

The most used narrative delivery method is the use of cutscenes and dialogues, which are interactive and require the player to interact by pressing a certain key in order to continue the dialogues of the characters in the story. Some of the cutscenes are non-interactive which purposely to make the player understand the game settings and showing the strong friendships of the Protagonist and his friends in the story, which at the same time makes the characters in the game look alive. There is no head back once the player chooses the path of the story, which is why it is very important that players need to think carefully before deciding the paths of the story.

Besides, the game designer's objective is to create an immersive gameplay for the player to experience the mood in a horror game, where the ambience music and the sound effects are applied into the game environment to create a horror feeling for the player.

All of this narrative methods applied into the games are necessary to create an immersive story-driven horror game with comedy elements that provides the player with an immersive gameplay experience.

3.7 Home Country Elements

The game has 4 home country elements which are Genting Highlands that inspired Bukit Tinggi, Malaysia mythology creatures, the Mat Rempit culture, and the Malaysian Rojak languages culture.

Bukit Tinggi was inspired by Genting Highland as the foundation world settings for the game. This place was chosen as this place was well known with many horror stories and some mythologies. As the game setting was a horror game, Genting Highlands has been one of the most famous spots when it comes to encountering paranormal phenomena. A lot of said there are suicidal cases by jumping out of the hotel, becoming haunted. Customers had experienced ghosts wandering in the hotel. At this point, applying to the Bukit Tinggi, the game starts with a cutscene from a highway near Bukit Tinggi, where the 3 friends had eventually encountered a Pocong while “rempit” along the way of Bukit Tinggi.

Next, the three of the Malaysia mythology creatures, Pocong, Orang Minyak and Santu Sakai, are based on stories from the past. Pocong was originally from Indonesia, but people also encountered it in Malaysia. In Muslim culture, the passed ones will be shrouded in a white cloth in several parts to keep the white cloth stay in place. Many believe if the knots are not removed for 40 days, its soul can't leave the body and become the Pocong ghost. Orang Minyak is a supernatural creature summoned by a bomoh, it's mainly summoned to cause troubles. Its dark shiny skin makes it undetectable during night times, allowing it to sneak around when the day turns dark. As for Santu Sakai, it is a half human, half monster with large fangs hunting for meat in the forests. In 1967, a hunter encountered Santu Sakai during his hunting in a forest in Kuala Lumpur. The hunter describes it as a very large demon coming from hell.

Mat Rempit culture is famous for its “superman” stunt pose when riding the bike. Bikers usually ride their bike at high speed at night or on highways as during low traffic on the roads. Rempit is also symbolised as recklessness, showing fascination among the public.

Finally, Malaysian Rojak Language is a culture that has been living in Malaysians for decades due to different cultures and languages. The culture is a mixture of mainly 4 languages, Malay, Chinese, English and Tamil. The mixture of languages is mainly due to communication, as time passes, formal languages are slowly transformed into a mixture of different languages, making it a culture in Malaysia, and citizens are able to communicate with the “rojak” language. These elements had applied onto the characters’ dialogues, while the game primarily used English as the main language to show the story, some dialogues will use other three languages with the translation to fulfill the criteria of Malaysian Rojak Language.

3.8 Characters

3.8.1 Playable Character

Ahmad – designed by Teh Yong Keat



Character's Sketch



In-game Character's Sprites

Gender: Male

Race: Malay

Age: 19 years old

Traits

- Kind to anyone and brave to do anything for his friends, which makes him liked by people in Rempit culture.
- A very honest person that causes him to be outspoken and sometimes not everyone likes it.
- Like to make fun of Ming and Haran, but actually loyal to their friendships.

Notable friends

- Ming (Ahmad's Chinese friend)
- Haran (Ahmad's Indian friend)

Summary Character Background

Ahmad was a Malay boy born in a middle-class family who was involved in Rempit culture due to the friends he met, Ming and Haran, when back in high school. He has a grandma that is very close with him and always listens to his grandma. He was a friendly person and loves to talk to everyone around him. He's easy to make friends with, but some people do not really like him as he sometimes could hurt other people by telling them the truth they don't want to hear. Other than that, he was brave to explore unknown surroundings along with his friends. Although he's been having problems with his parents for a long time after he joined this circle, he still chose to stay in this circle that made him happy.

Ming - designed by Sky Soo Sin Kai



Character's Sketch



In-game Character's Sprites

Gender: Male

Race: Chinese

Age: 19 years old

Traits:

- Ming is a timid person that preferred to run away from difficulties rather than face them.
- Ming is a sensitive person and gets emotional when things go wrong.

Notable Friends

- Haran (Ming's Indian Friend)
- Ahmad (Ming's Malay Friend)

Summary Character Background

Ming is a Chinese boy born in a small village in Ampang, Selangor, Ming was left alone with his mother after his father's car accident at age 5. He became timid and preferred to run away from difficulties. At 16, he obtained a motorcycle license and used it for transportation. One night, he collided with an Indian motorcyclist, Haran, and both were hospitalized. Ming felt ashamed of causing Haran's injuries. While hospitalized, both of them started to have some conversations and became friends while knowing they were in the same school. Many days of hospitalization, Haran encouraged Ming to join Rempit culture to train his fears. Initially resisted, Ming eventually accepted Haran's invitation and was given a new motorcycle with customization. When he Rempit with Haran, he felt excitement for riding the motorcycle, which made him no longer feel timid. This experience changed Ming's perspective on life and the importance of overcoming fears.

Haran - designed by Ng Poh Yang and Sky Soo Sin Kai



In-game Character's Sprites

Gender: Male

Race: Indian

Age: 19 years old

Traits

- Haran is a person full of encouragement; he can cheer up if anyone around him gets upset.
- He is also an easy-going person, he doesn't take things too seriously, he doesn't want others to worry about anything whatever happens.

Notable Friends

- Ming (Haran's Chinese Friend)
- Ahmad (Haran's Malay Friend)

Summary Character Background

Haran was born in a rich family in Ampang. He makes a lot of friends thanks to his behaviour. Haran is an easy-going person, also a person full of encouragement. He was involved in Rempit due to his other friends hanging out with him and seeing Rempit culture for the first time. He was feeling full of excitement after looking at Rempit. He wants to get into Rempit because he is a person seeking for extreme and excitement, he was sick of staying alone at home playing games, nothing can catch his attention other than Rempit. He then bought his own motorbike and participated in Rempit nights. He never quit Rempit since the first day he joined it.

3.8.2 Non-Playable Character

Mr Pocong (NPC) - designed by Sky Soo Sin Kai



Gender: Male

Age: 50

Traits:

- Mr Pocong is a very kind and helpful being, he did not like to violence and soft, but when his friends or person he loved was in danger, he could do whatever just to help them or protect them.

Summary Character Background

Kianu Leaf, known to many as Mr. Pocong, was a dedicated white-collar worker with a loving family—a beautiful wife and a cherished daughter. Their lives were filled with joy until one fateful day when his wife was murdered one day on her way home, and the murderer fled the scene. But then the murderer had been captured yet he knew his wife would never come back anymore. His daughter kept asking him where her mother went, and he only gave her a teddy bear as a lie to comfort his daughter from the death of her mother. He thought

his life would continue together with his daughter peacefully, however the God seemed to make a joke to him, his daughter was diagnosed with cancer. At the end of day before his daughter passed away, she gave back the teddy bear since Mr. Pocong gave it to her once she was young, promising him if he missed her and his wife, hug the teddy bear to feel them.

After the death of his daughter, Mr. Pocong went insane and was sent to a hospital together with the teddy bear. The doctors there tried to help him but he could not stop hurting the other, yet they decided to take away the teddy bear from him. Until the last day of Mr. Pocong, he still wanted to get back the teddy bear from the doctors. His intense obsession prevented him from leaving the mortal world after his death, which then made him become a Pocong, waiting for someone to find his teddy bear and bring it back to him...

3.8.3 Enemies Design

GAME ENEMY

Pocong - designed by Sky Soo Sin Kai



Abilities:

- The Pocong was covered by white clothes tied with ropes on their bodies.
- The Pocong will randomly appear in Female Toilet and will approach players.
- The more the players hide in the same hiding spot, the higher chances that Pocong will spawn in front of the players.

Summary Enemy Description

Pocong was originally from Indonesia, but people also encountered it in Malaysia. In Muslim culture, the passed ones will be shrouded in a white cloth in several parts to keep the white cloth stay in place. Many believe if the knots are not removed for 40 days, its soul can't leave the body and become the Pocong ghost.

GAME ENEMY and FINAL BOSS (ORANG MINYAK)

Orang Minyak - designed by Sky Soo Sin Kai



Abilities:

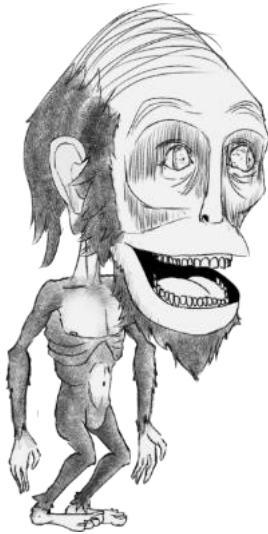
- The Orang Minyak is entirely made out of oil making him immune to any physical attacks.
- The Orang Minyak can throw up oil from his body which will causing debuff to players

Summary Enemy Description

The Orang Minyak is a well-known Malaysian myth, characterized by his dark and oily appearance. He was once an ordinary man who wanted to win back his love but was instead cursed to become an aggressive figure completely covered in oil. Now, he lurks in the shadows of the night, searching for human victims to break his curse. Over the years, the curse has deformed him further, causing oil to cover his entire body and gradually turning his entire form into oil. Although aggressive by nature, deep down, the Orang Minyak is a broken man—angry and unhappy about his fate, and willing to do whatever it takes to break his curse.

GAME ENEMY and FINAL BOSS (SANTU SAKAI)

Santu Sakai – designed by Sky Soo Sin Kai



Abilities:

- Santu Sakai will rush to player and smash them to ground
- Santu Sakai is able to knock back the characters except Haran.

Summary Enemy Description

Santu Sakai, a legendary monster that was hidden in the woods of KL, found itself wandering far from home. With its superhuman strength and agility, it catches any human that has their position caught by this monster from hell. Santu Sakai with its innate super hearing is able to detect sound up to 300m away, but because of the overwhelming number of footstep sounds, it decides to ignore any sound associated with it. In a recent incident where this monster tried to chase something in the distance. The thing that the monster found is just some wandering Pocong, it found Pocong near an abandoned school. Recently, humans have strangely fallen near this school. Santu Sakai notices

the abundance of humans and decides to make the third floor of the school as its home.

3.9 Game Assets

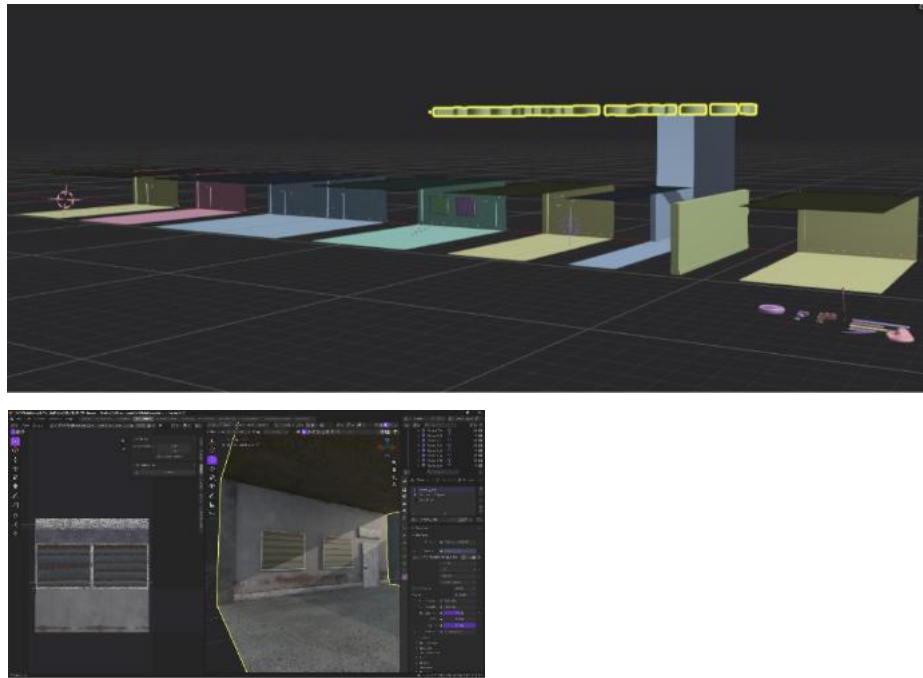
3.9.1 3D Assets

Modelling

Most 3D assets are modelled using open-source 3D modelling software, Blender, and texturing using Adobe Substance Painter.

When modelling the 3D model, we need to ensure the poly of most models is low but also maintain the silhouette of the model to make the games run more efficiently. To also optimize the game and the process of level building, we also modelled modular assets that can save performance when running the game. The modular assets share the same material and use only one texture.

Before the creation of the modular assets, the 3D modeller needs to have strategic planning before creating the asset. The 3D modeller needs to draw concept art based on the level design to have proper planning to make the assets more dynamic. Since the most repetitive asset will be the hallway/corridor in the game, the modular assets can start making from here. The corridor has 2 main variants, which are short (1) and a longer version (2), and by following this up, there are more variants, which are a normal and a horizontal inverted version. By using these created modules, the scene can have a lot of variant scenes in the game. The texturing phase of the 3d Modular assets utilize a technique called “TrimSheet”, which is using a single texture file to texture as much surface as the designer can.

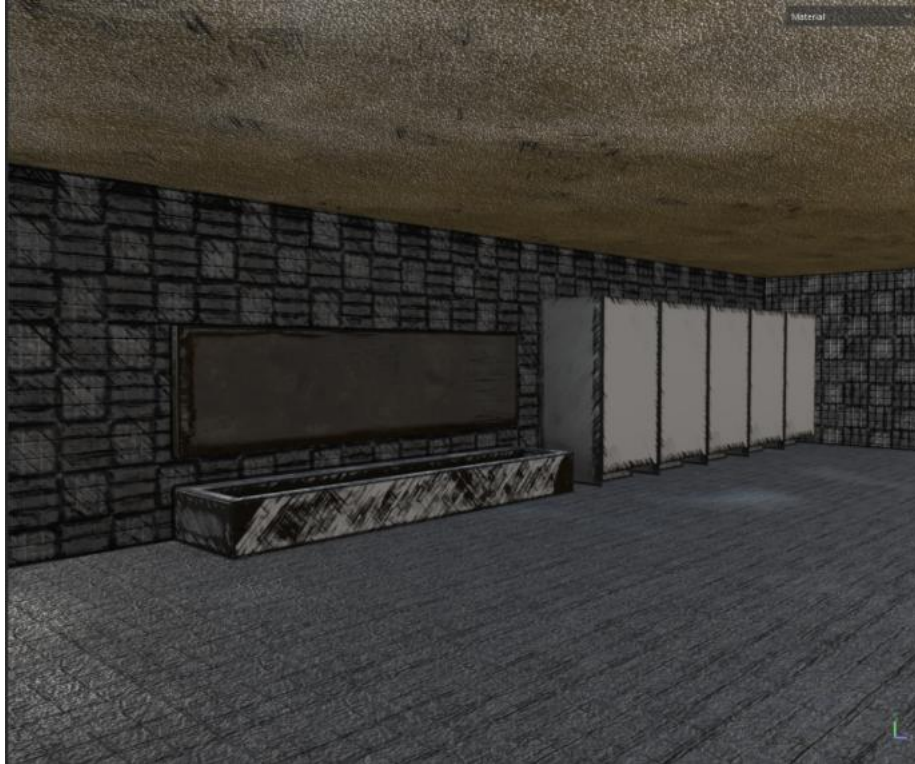


Texturing

Due to the art direction of the game, the texture also needs to be stylish to accomplish the concept art of the game. To achieve the comic-look visually, there are a few steps that need to be implemented. Firstly, find textures from the internet that are suitable for the object, for example, the ground texture for the concrete floors needs to be a concrete material.

Commonly, the texture from the asset website is included with different types of material maps, such as AO map, Normal Map, Diffuse Map, Roughness Map, and Height Map, but this kind of map is used in a more realistic rendering, so we need to do some processing after importing it into texturing software. After importing the texture into the game, the base colour of the object needs to be processed inside Adobe Photoshop. Inside Photoshop, the base colour is processed by making it greyscale, after that increasing the contrast until the structure of the texture looks convincing enough like a sketch. The other texture map will just remain the same to make the texture look stylistic, but also have some characteristics of real life, to have a balance of the comic-look and real life. Besides Photoshop, Adobe Substance also takes an important role during the texturing phase. In-game 3d Props which

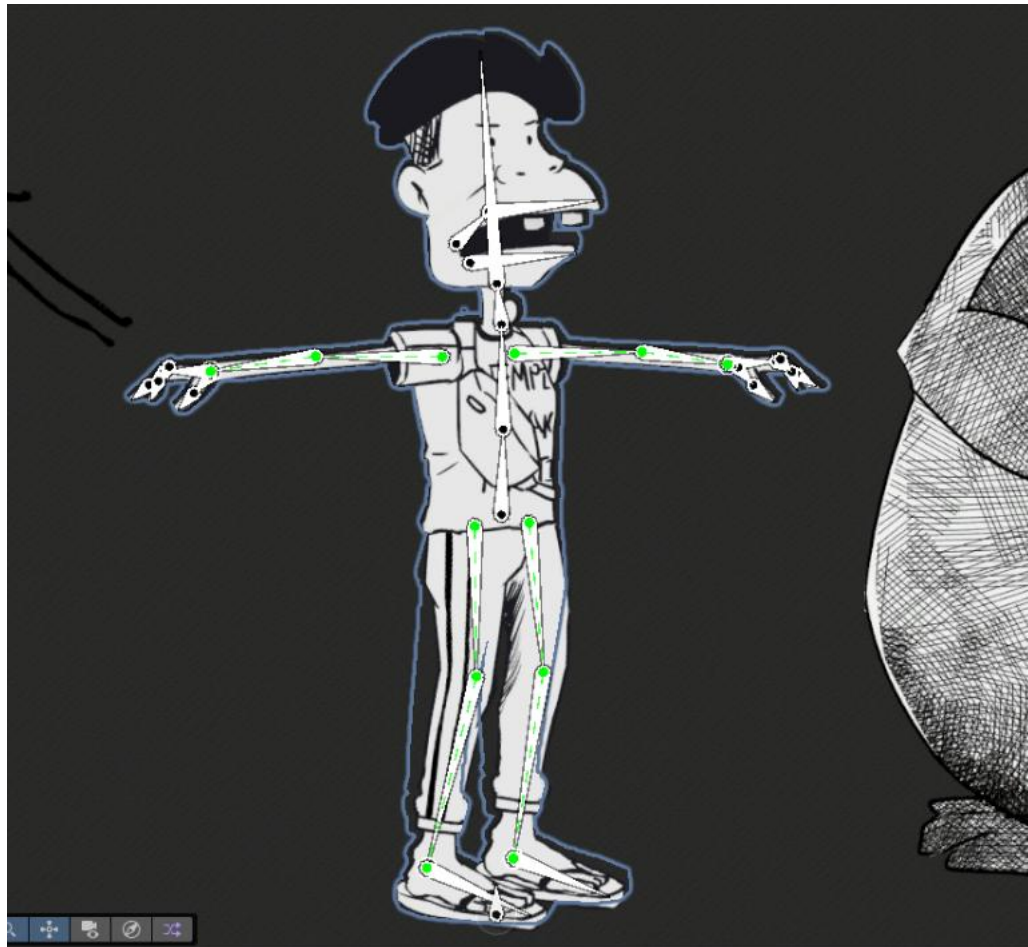
need to have a material for themselves will be processed via the comic filter provided by Adobe Substance. By applying these steps, the texture of the game can look like a hand-drawn comic texture.



3.9.2 2D Assets

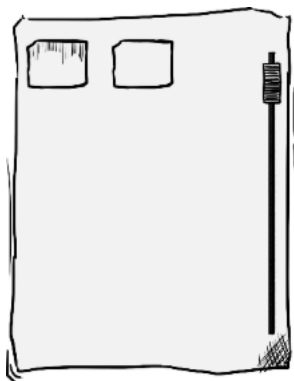
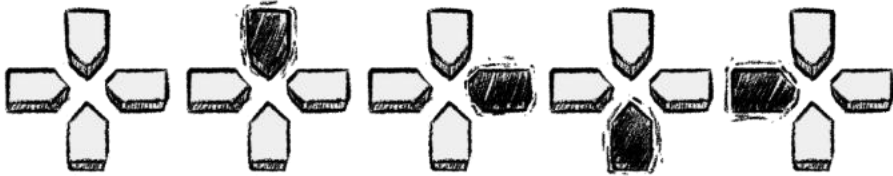
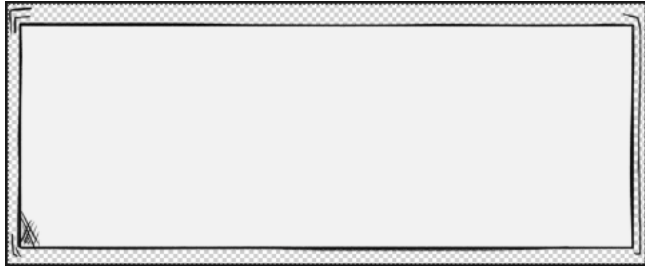
Character Sprites

To make the in-game character more alive, we use the 2D rigging system provided by Unity. The Rigging system can provide us an easier way to make animation for the character because we can save time to animate the character frame-by-frame. By importing a character's photoshop file (.psd) into unity, unity will automatically detect it as a game sprite. The character's rig includes a simple fk control to make the process of animating easier.



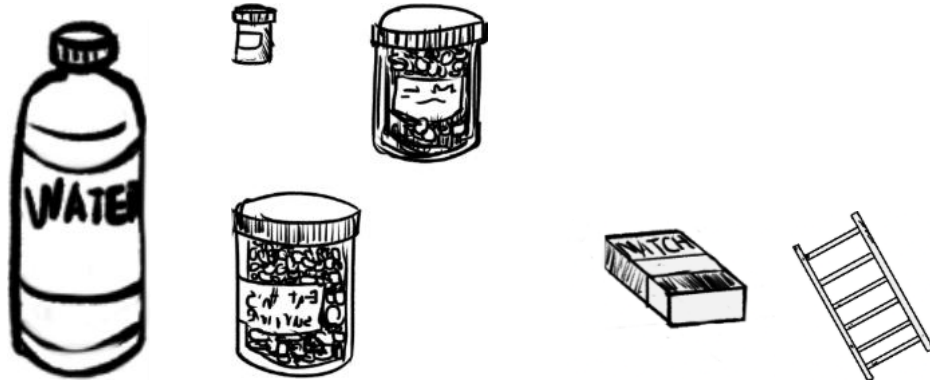
UI Design

The UI design of the game is designed to be as simple as possible to improve the visibility of the user interface, which also improved the immersive player at the same time. The UI design also needs to match the art direction of the game, so the UI is also designed using comic elements.



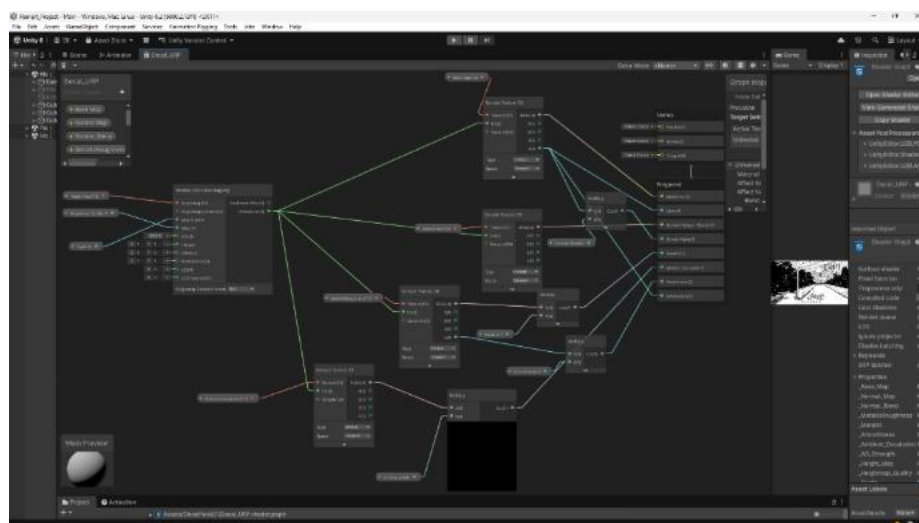
Items Design

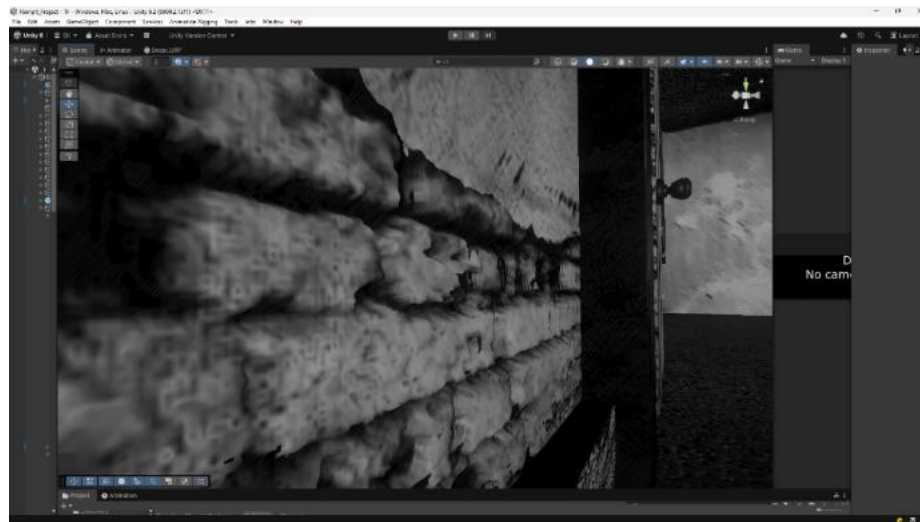
Same as item design, the style of the item also needs to match the art style of the entire game.



Decals

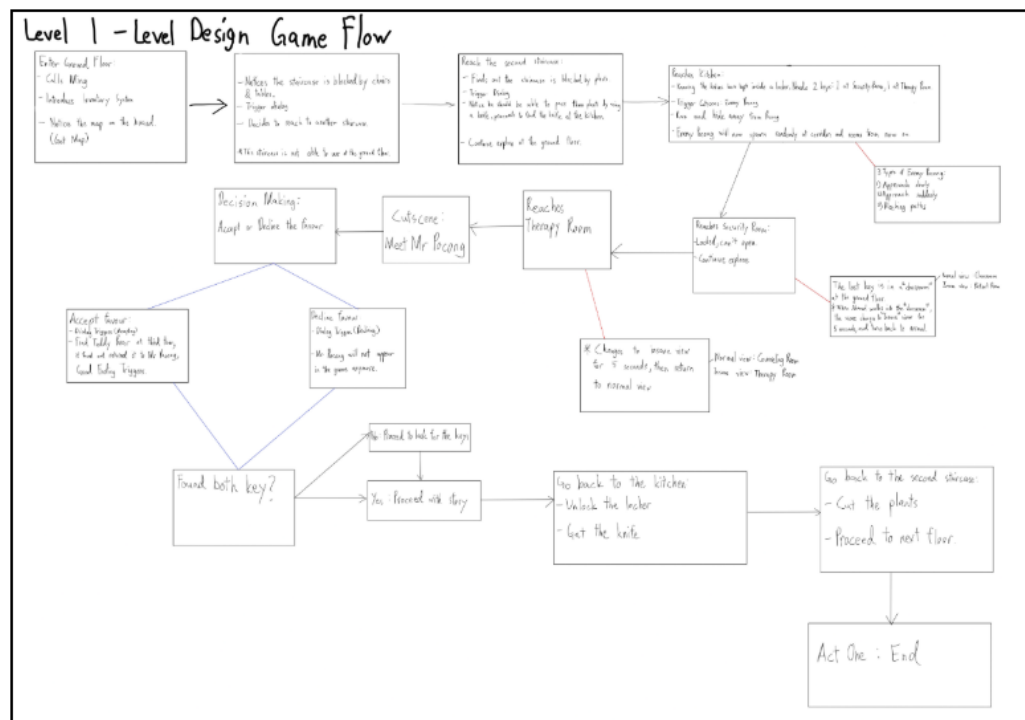
Adding Decals is one of the ways to remove the repetitiveness of the game environment because unlike a normal mesh with texture, it can be added as a new layer to the subject and add more variation. During the creation of decal, to improve the realism and save developing time, the 3D Artist had made a POM shader that can have a fake 3D geometry. The shader had provided more depth and details into the decal and made the game environment more alive.



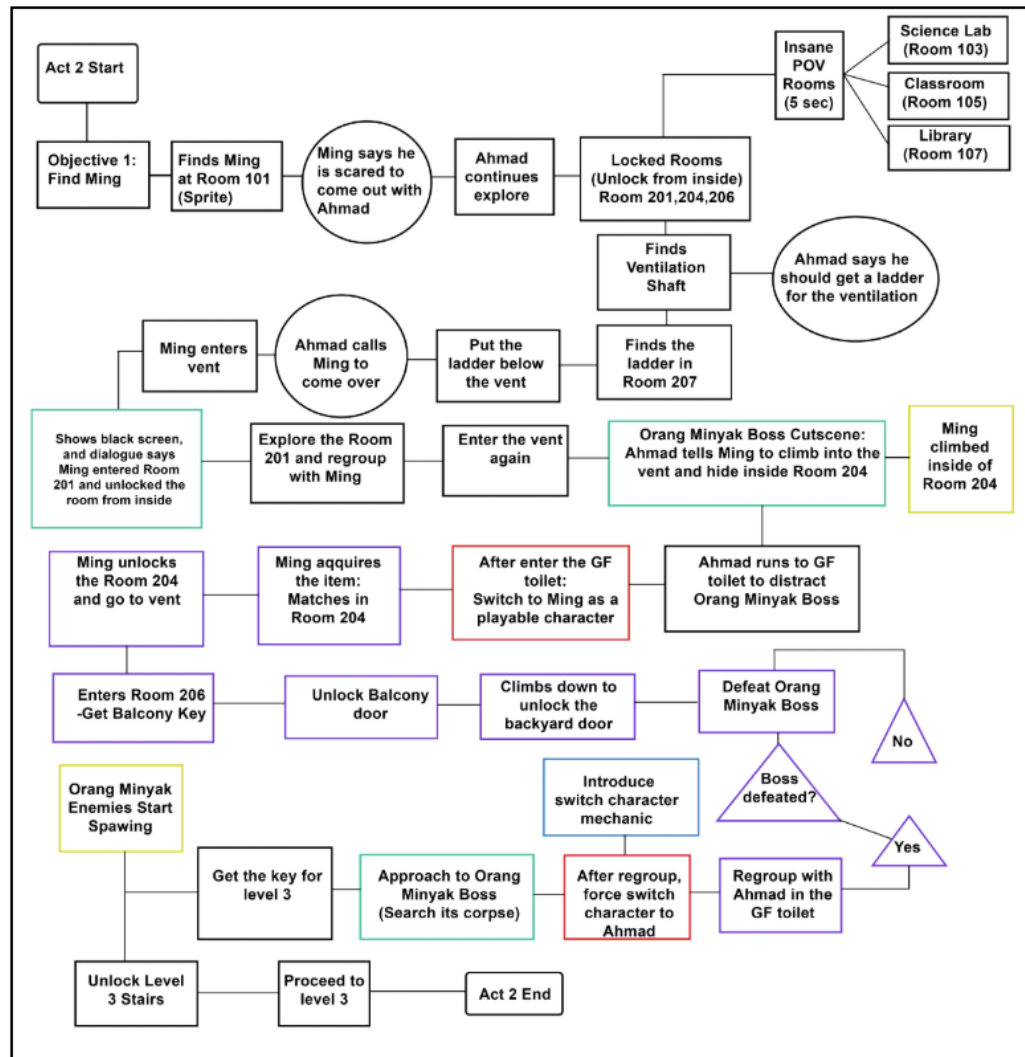


3.10 Level Design Flowchart

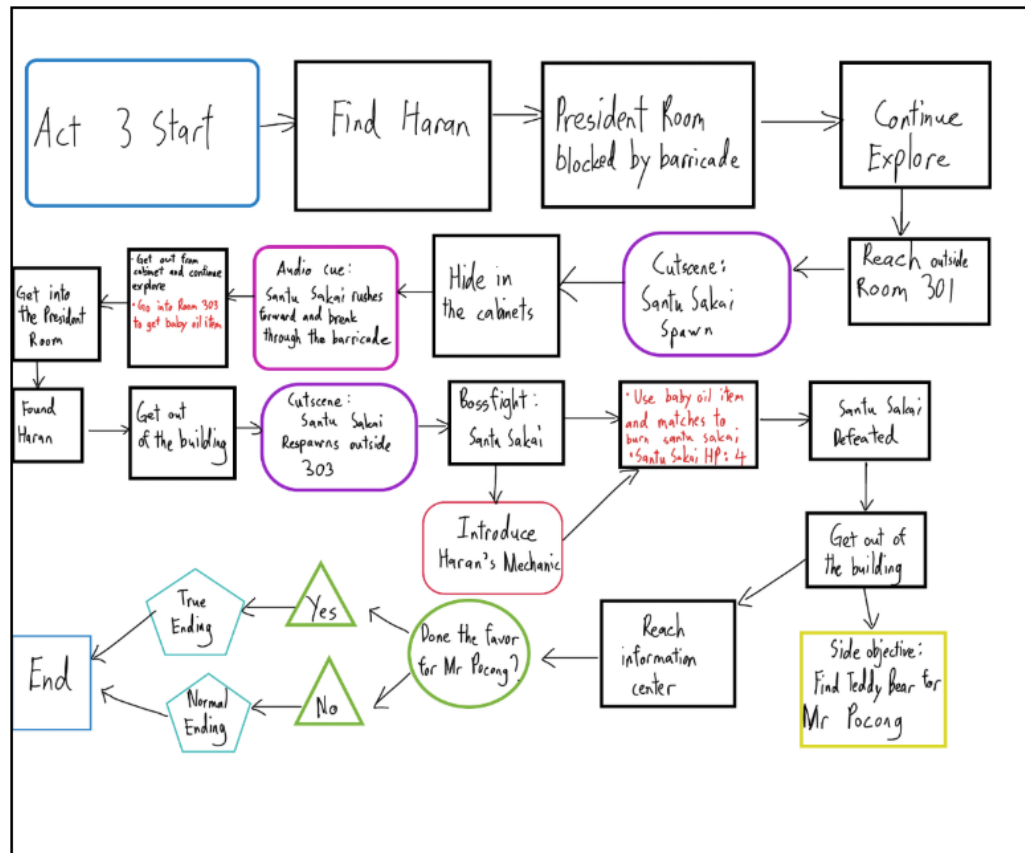
3.10.1 Act 1 Flowchart



3.10.2 Act 2 Flowchart



3.10.3 Act3 Flowchart



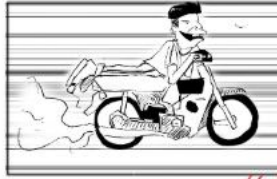
3.11 Cutscene Storyboards

This is the storyboard for the opening cutscene which explains the beginning of the story.

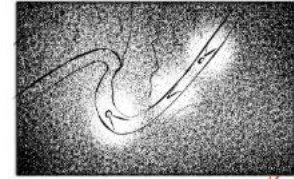
Storyboard template



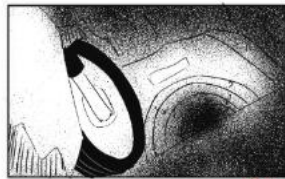
OVER SHOULDER SHOT OF AHMAD MEET UP WITH HIS FRIEND
MORE FOCUS ON CHARACTER AND THE BACKGROUND WILL BE BLUR



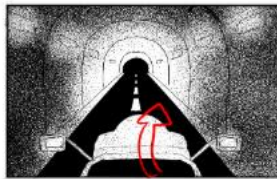
MEDIUM SHOT
STATIC OF AHMAD RIDING THE MOTOR WITH SPEED UP



WIDE LONG SHOT
AHMAD AND HIS FRIEND ARE RACING IN THE NARROW MOUNTAIN



LOW ANGLE VIEW
AHMAD IS DRIVING INTO THE DARK TUNNEL

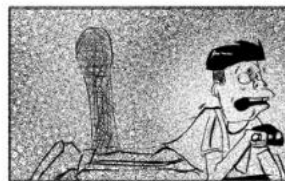


POV
AHMAD RIDING THROUGH THE TUNNEL



POV. WHEN AHMAD RIDE THROUGH THE TUNNEL, HE SEE A PERSON WRAPPED WITH WHITE CLOTH IN MIDDLE OF THE ROAD

Storyboard template



Tracking shot
Admad passing the figure.



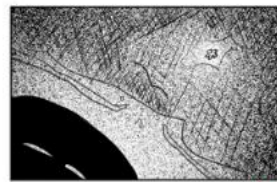
Close up
a person wrapped in a cloth appear in Ahmad view and he got shocked by it



Black screen
'bang' sound effect of Ahmad crashing the side of the road



Medium shot
Ming and Haran notice Ahmad falling through down the side of the slope of the road

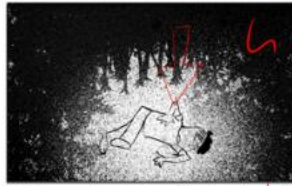


Extreme wide shot
Scene of Ahmad fell off and landed in a forest.

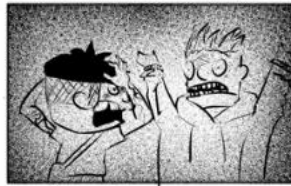


Extreme wide shot
They stop their bike at the side and yelled to Ahmad but no response from him.

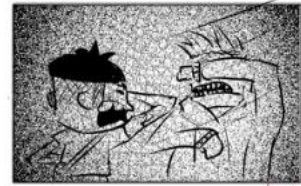
Storyboard template



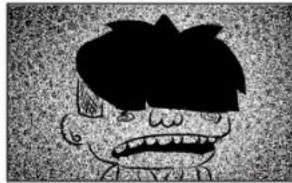
High angle shot , tilt shot /cut
Scene of Ahmad top view while
He lying on the ground



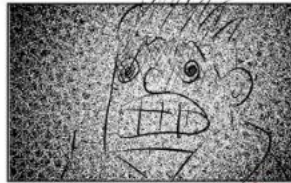
medium shot
Scene of Ming and Haran noticing
the fog starts getting denser
around them



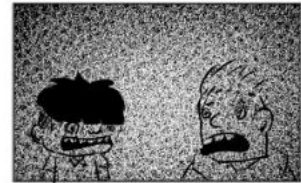
medium shot /cut
there was a strong wind
blowing towards them



Extreme close up /cut
Ming smell something slowly
lost consciousness

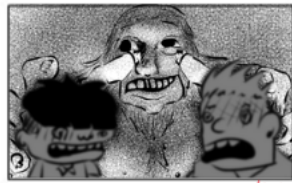


Extreme close up /cut
Haran smell something slowly
lost consciousness



close up
The fog slowly covered them

Storyboard template



Rack focus /cut
scene of Orang Minyak and the
Santu Sakai from behind to
approach them



Title of the game appear
in the screen



3.12 Mechanics and Systems

3.12.1 Movement



Figure 3.12.1 Character Movement for moving right

The game uses mainly the gamepad as its control scheme. The character moves using the left joystick. When the character moves, the camera follows the player character and sets the player position at the bottom left quadrant corner of the viewpoint.

The reason that the character is set at the opposite position of the direction of movement is to make it so that the player has the maximum amount of forward view while limiting the overall percentage of the view that can be seen. This means that the environment and the character can be made bigger without compromising the amount of view that the player can get.

This type of viewpoint works because it creates anticipation for the player. It also works well with this type of game genre where anticipation creates tension and immersion.

Besides that, whenever a player character model foot touches the ground, a sound will be produced. This is achieved by attaching the sound effects into the animation loop itself, so it will never be out of sync.



Figure 3.12.2 Character Movement for moving left

3.12.2 Pickup



Figure 3.12.3 Pickup item UI

While the player is walking around the game environment, there are items that can be picked up for use. In Figure 3.12.3, the example shows the item key that can be picked up. When the player goes near an item, there is an UI indicator that will pop up. This type of UI is non-diegetic UI.

The reason that it is using non-diegetic UI is that it offers the maximum amount of attention induced upon the player. The player will notice the thing that is clearly different from the background and will likely be interested in it.

Not only that, the UI itself is using the semiotic theory of signs. For this UI, Icons and text are used. Icons are chosen because it directly refers to the object that it is referencing. In this example, the actual button icon design is used to make the player know it directly. The buttons Icons are using the X-box standard control layout since it is the most popular button layout design for pc gamepads.

After the player picks up the item, the item will disappear entirely and a high pitch sound is used. This sound is picked because it functions similarly to the coin sound in the classic Super Mario. The function for this type of sound effect is to alert the player what they have inputted into the game.

3.12.3 Items

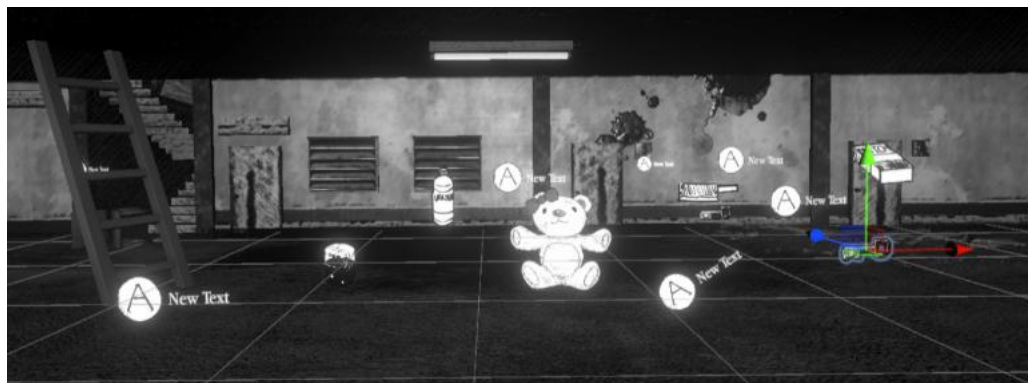


Figure 3.12.4 Items example

There are several items in this game, all the items offer different functionality. The items are placed strategically to act as a progression tool. Players will need to eventually pick up most of the items to be able to clear the game level.

For example, the ladder item is needed for one of the characters to be able to access the vent. There is no puzzle associated with this ladder item. The item just acts as a storytelling tool.

The reason that most of the tool doesn't have puzzle mechanics is that it accommodates to our game genre of being a horror game that is most focused on the narratives and not the gameplay. Therefore, if there are a lot of complex puzzles and difficulty, this will decrease the player's immersion into the game's storytelling.

3.12.4 Inventory



Figure 3.12.5 Inventory

To be able to use the item, the player has to open their inventory. This instruction is given to the player at the tutorial level. The button used to open the inventory is the Y-button and the B-button is used to close it. There are three elements in this inventory menu, the sanity system, the item slots and the vertical scrollbar.

For the sanity system in this menu, the player can see that it is the eye like a ui with the letters beside it. This system is where the player can know the health point of the player character, whenever the player is taken damage the number on the left will decrease. If it reaches the threshold for the insanity value, the player character will go into the insane view mode. Here, the environment is swapped and all the other characters disappear. Besides that, the eye UI will go into an insane view animation where the eyes open and blinks around rapidly.

For the item slots, this is the individual slots seen in Figure 3.12.5. Initially without picking up any item, the item slot remains empty but when picking up any item the slot will instantiate itself onto the scene and fill in the empty space in the middle.

Lastly the scrollbar on the right shows the player that this inventory can be expanded. To see more of the inventory, the player has to rotate the right joystick vertically to do so.

Besides the actual elements of the inventory system, the player characters are also ducked down to match the game since the player character model has its bag at its chest. So logically the character needs to reach down to open their bag, and this is shown as such in the game using character animation.

3.12.5 Hiding



Figure 3.12.6 Hiding

Throughout the game environment, there are places where the player can choose to hide. The things that the player can hide in are the cabinet object. Whenever the player hides all the characters in the screen also disappear. It follows the same Ui design as the pick-up mechanics as this is an instruction type UI.

3.12.6 Enemies

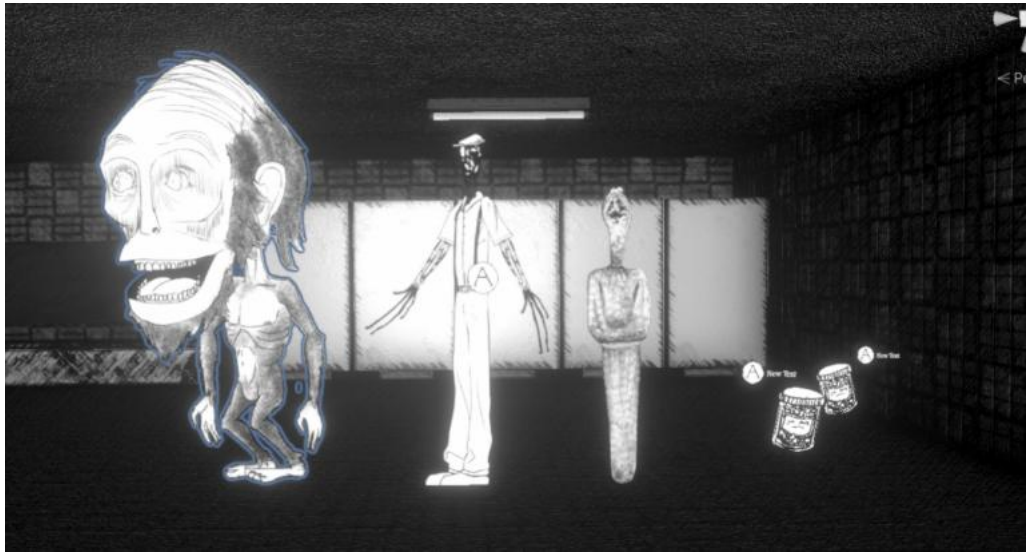


Figure 3.12.7 Enemies

There are three types of enemies in this game, Pocong, Orang Minyak and Santu Sakai. All the enemies have different mechanics to them, and they appear in different sections of the game.

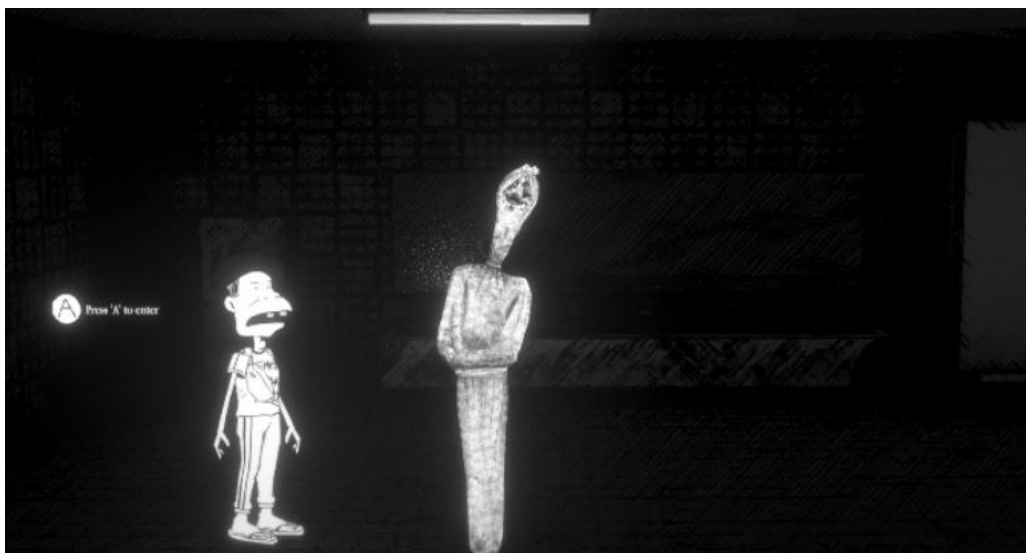


Figure 3.12.8 Pocong Attacks

For pocong, the enemy is not actually attacking, just scaring the main character. Whenever the main character Ahmad goes near the pocong, their sanity will decrease. The pocong appears only in the female toilet. This enemy

type is the easier type of enemy for this game. To clear it, the player just has to outrun it or hide inside the cabinet to let it pass.

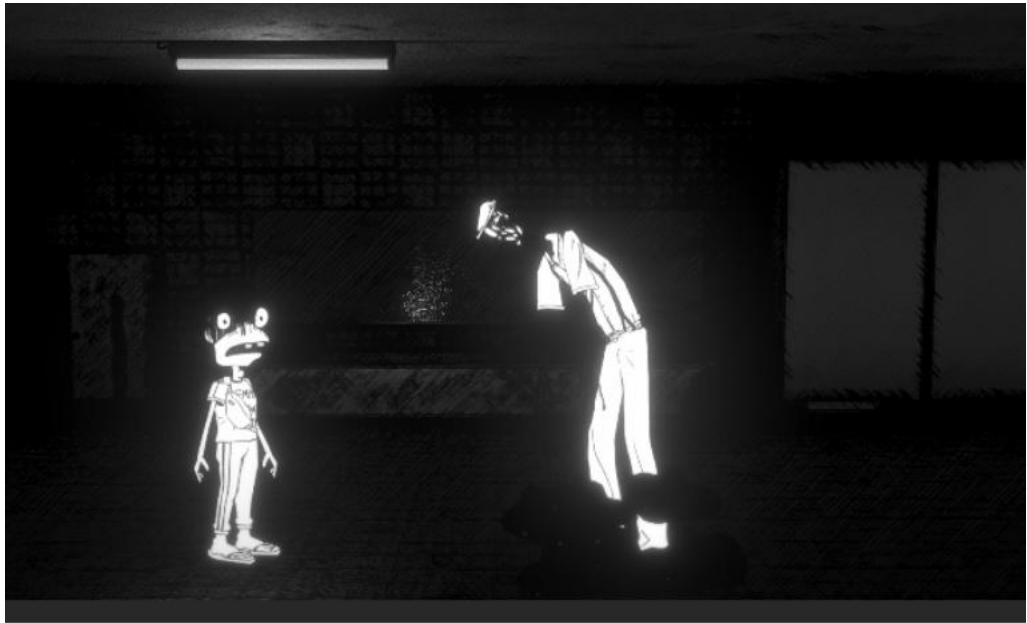


Figure 3.12.9 Orang Minyak Attacks

The second type of enemy the player will encounter is the Orang Minyak enemy. This enemy will appear in the second act of the story. Orang Minyak attacks by shooting oil substances at the player. Whenever the player is hit by this oil, the player is slowed by 50 percent on its movement. To clear this slow effect the player has to either use water or wait for a certain amount of time for it to clear naturally. To clear Orang Minyak, the player has to use ming, which is another character in this game and use its character ability to kill it. Another thing about this enemy is that its movement causes vibration to the player's gamepad.

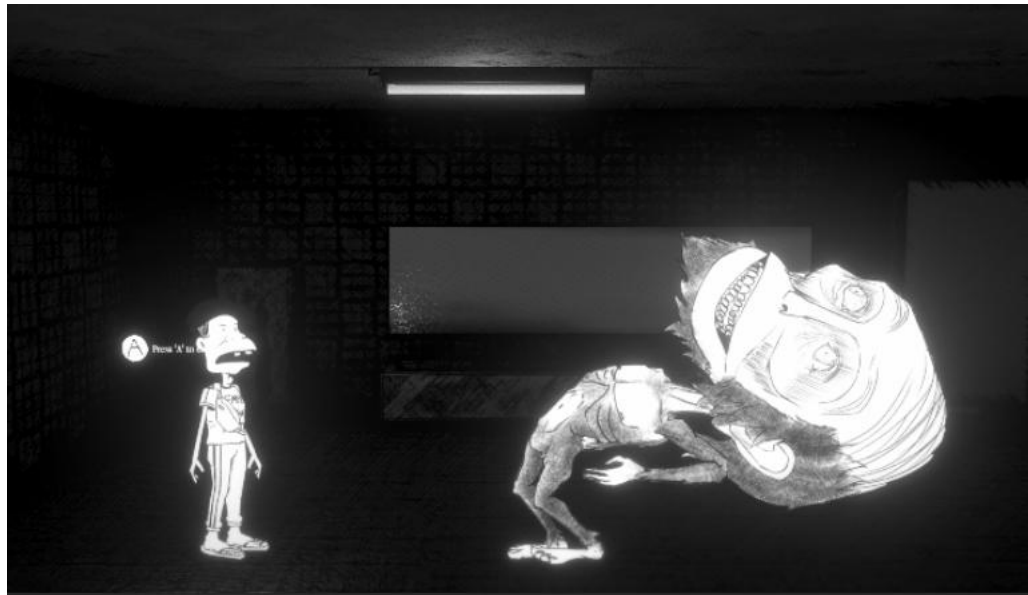


Figure 3.12.10 Santu Sakai Charging

The last type of enemy the player will encounter is the Santu Sakai enemy. This enemy will appear in the third act of the story. Santu Sakai first charges at the player character to start their attacks. Their attacks have two modes, charging and releasing. For charging, Santu Sakai will wind up their heads and wait for a few seconds. The second mode is then initiated once the charging is finished, here it smashes the ground doing an Area of Effect attack as shown in Figure 3.12.11. The player character is then knocked back. To clear it the player has to use the third character Haran to go past it since it is not affected by the knockback and has an ability to assist this. The goal here is to get the oil item. This item lets Ming kill it with its skills.



Figure 3.12.11 Santu Sakai Attacks

3.12.7 Characters

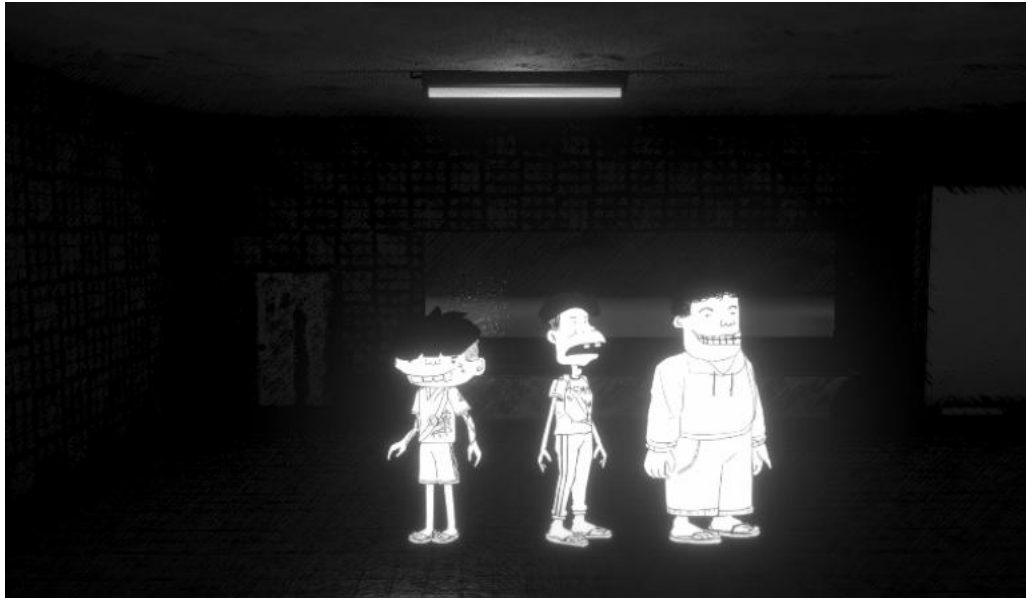


Figure 3.12.12 Characters

There are three types of characters in this game, Ahmad, Ming and Haran. All the characters have different mechanics to them, and they appear in different sections of the game.

Ahmad



Figure 3.12.13 Ahmad character

Ahmad is the main character of this game; it is the character that the player starts with at the beginning of the game and is used the most in this game. Ahmad has a sanity system as its unique feature. Whenever the sanity reaches below the threshold, Ahmad will enter an insane view, here there are items that Ahmad can pick up and use.



Figure 3.12.14 Insane View

Ming



Figure 3.12.15 Ming Character

Ming is the second character of this game, the character has one special ability which is that it can throw matches towards the direction it is facing. To throw matches the player needs to pick up the match boxes item. This item is used to kill Orang Minyak and Santu Sakai.



Figure 3.12.16 Ming Throws Matches

Haran

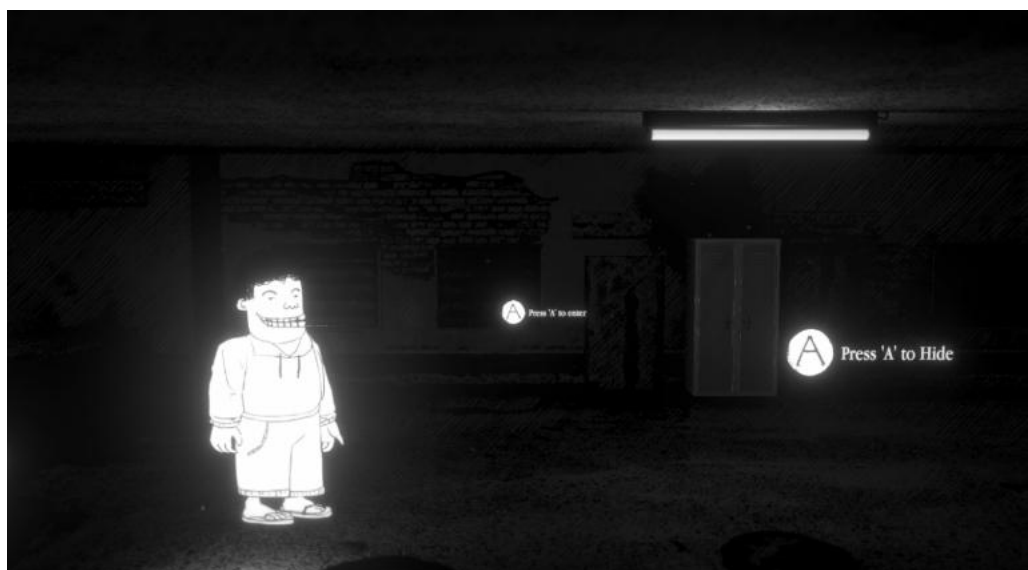


Figure 3.12.17 Haran Character

Haran is the third character of this game, the character has one special ability which is that it can rush towards the direction it is facing. When rushing this character can block all types of enemies preventing them from getting closer towards the other character.



Figure 3.12.18 Haran rushing

3.12.8 Puzzles

There are only two types of puzzles in this game, it is the lock picking puzzles and the cutting plants puzzles. Key items are used to clear the lockpicking puzzles while knife items are used to clear the plants cutting puzzles.

For lockpicking puzzles, the player needs to rotate their joystick to clear it. To assist and also improve the player experiences, whenever the player gets closer towards the goal the vibration will become stronger.

For plant cutting puzzles, the player needs to hold down the right trigger to start cutting. Whenever the player starts cutting something, the controller vibrates. This continues until the trigger is released.

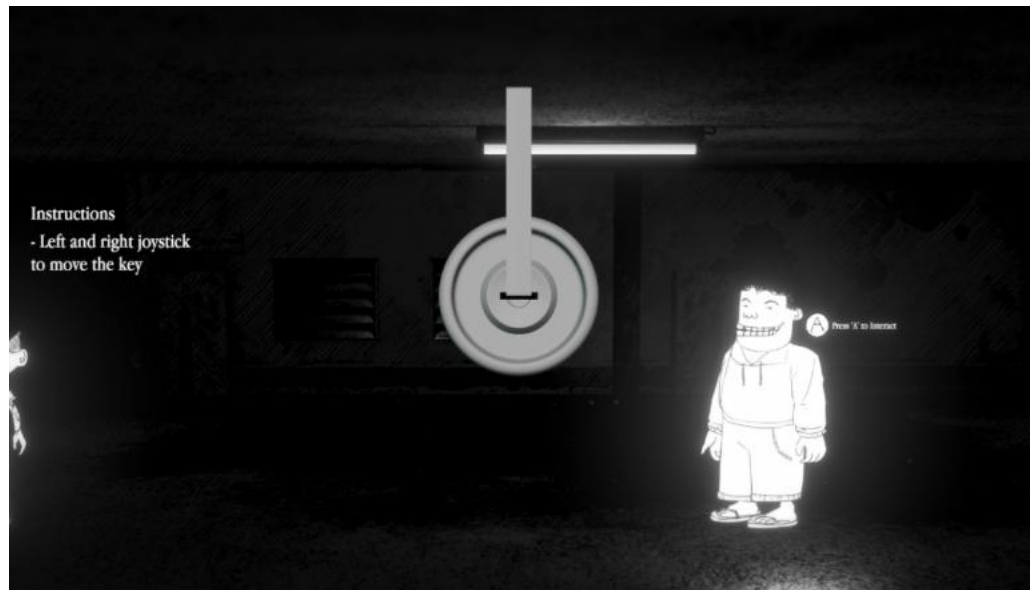


Figure 3.12.19 Lockpicking puzzles

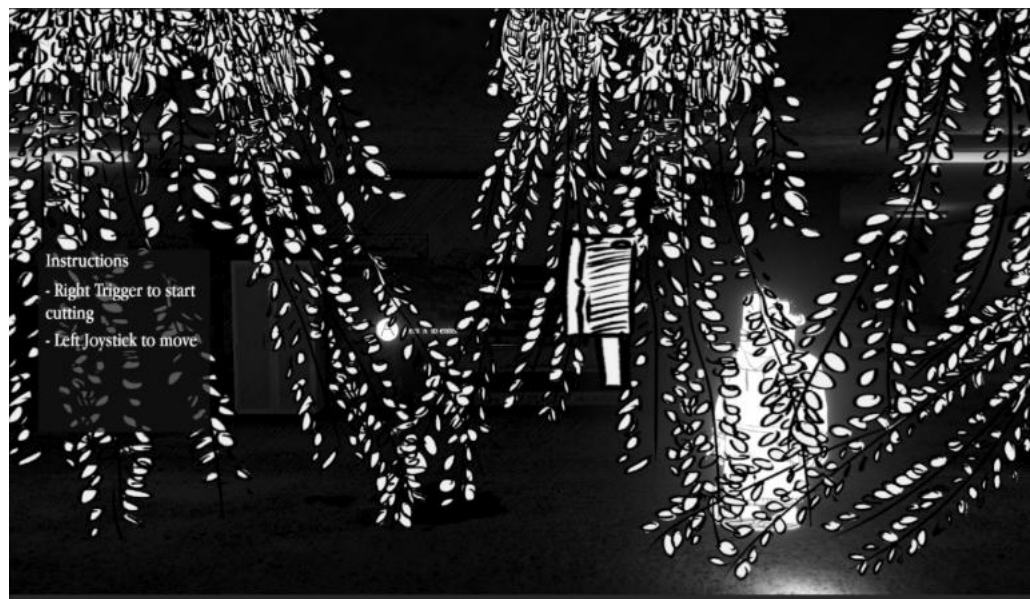


Figure 3.12.20 Plant Cutting Puzzles

3.12.9 Enter rooms

Since our game uses a different way to load the scene, the enter rooms mechanic is added to this section. The game is separated into two types of scenes, the persistent scene and the room scene. For the persistent scene, the object inside is not destroyed and it stays until the ending cutscene. For the

room scene, this scene changes constantly. Since the game has an insane view, for each of the levels there are two environments that need to be switched when the character goes into insane mode. Therefore, to have a better performance the environment scene and the player scene is separated.

Whenever the player enters a room a Crossfade transition is used. This is to hide the loading sequence and the player position initialization at the start. Without this, the player would just awkwardly float at the starting position wherever they enter a room.



Figure 3.12.21 Rooms

3.12.10 Haptics

The game uses the features of a gamepad in their mechanics. The main haptics is the vibration feature. In the game there are three types of vibrations, short pulse, hard pulse and variable pulse. The short and hard pulse are used in the enemy movement while the variable pulse is used in the puzzle mechanics.

3.12.11 Dialogue System

The dialogue system in this game uses a third-party plugin, Fungus CE v0.6, which is specialized for creating dialogue and cutscenes. While the dialogue lines using the plugin, some extensions and modifications were made for this plugin in order to match with the gameplay and the theme.

The dual-dialogue boxes use animator and animation to create visuals of comic-style dialogue boxes where every time players continue the dialogue, the dialogue box will pop-up from the left or right based on which characters were talking. When the current character is talking, another character dialogue box will be transmitted behind the current dialogue box and become translucent. In addition, the dialogue box itself will adjust its sizes based on the text numbers inside the box, making the visuals more dynamic.



Figure 3.12.22 Dual Dialogue Box

In addition, the dialogue can be triggered in three ways: Enter Collider, Interact, and Auto-Run. For the Enter Collider, when players enter the collider of the dialogue, it will immediately trigger the dialogue. For the Interact, the dialogue only shows once players interact with the object such as doors in the scene. And lastly, for the Auto-Run, this dialogue required a condition where players need to collect or complete certain things in order to play the dialogue. For example, when players kill Santu Sakai, the dialogue will immediately play as it had met the condition where Santu Sakai was dead. These approaches enable the game to have dynamic dialogue flows, which are able to make the game story not to be too linear where dialogues will only play based on players own action.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design to investigate the factors that contribute to the popularity of the Mascot Horror genre among indie developers. A qualitative approach is selected as the research focuses on abstract and artistic elements such as game design, narrative structures, and marketing strategies rather than relying on numerical data. By using a qualitative research design, we can better understand how different factors affect the popularity more deeply and in more detail.

This method is chosen in the overall research strategy. By studying selected Mascot Horror games and analyzing them in detail, these case studies are examined through a comparative perspective to identify the overlapping patterns, similarities, and differences within the chosen games in this genre. Besides that, the study can move beyond individual examples and develop a more structured understanding of the common factors that contribute to the popularity of Mascot Horror by analyzing multiple cases.

This research design can align with the main objectives of the study by constructing a structured analysis from game design elements, marketing and economic factors, and narrative techniques. These aspects can be examined together to provide a multi-dimensional understanding of the Mascot Horror genre.

The research scope is going to be concentrated on indie horror games created from 2020 until 2025. In most cases, the target audience of this particular genre will be focused on Generation Y and Alpha as they comprise the largest percentage of the targeted audience.

The methodology proposed for the study is bound to provide a highly structured approach to the study of the factors contributing to the popularity of the Mascot Horror genre and it allows delving into a deeper analysis of the genre itself.

4.2 Data Collection Methods

This study collects data through qualitative methods using secondary sources. Instead of gathering primary data from participants, this research will more focuses on analyzing existing materials related to selected Mascot Horror games.

The primary data sources include gameplay content, visual and audio design elements, and narrative structures from selected games. These elements will be examined to understand how they designed to contribute the different experience for the player and how they become one of the identity for these game. In addition, publicly available materials such as official trailers, promotional content, developer-related media and social media account by developer will be are analyzed to identify marketing strategies used within the genre.

Additionally, we obtained information from user-generated media like gameplays, streams, and forum posts. Audience interaction and community interaction are among some examples in the phenomenon of participatory culture. The rationale behind choosing such data sources is that they can give us both direct and indirect insights into the success of the genre. Whereas gameplays and gameplay mechanics can be seen as the creation of games, marketing information and community information can tell us about the promotion and reception of games.

The scope of the collected data is confined to indie Mascot Horror games published from 2020 to 2025 to make sure the analysis is conducted within the timeframe when the genre underwent substantial development. Using a number of sources for the collection of data guarantees that the analysis will be consistent with the aims of the research.

4.3 Sampling Techniques

The purposive sampling technique has been utilized to select data sources that are relevant to the research instead of choosing participants, such as surveys or interviews. In this case, more focus is put on selecting specific Mascot Horror games and related media content that can best represent the genre. This method has been chosen because not all games are suitable for this study, so it is important to select cases that can clearly show the characteristics that I want to analyze.

To meet the requirement to be chosen in this study, the games need to have several traits that can represent the mascot horror genre. Firstly, the game must be popular or have a strong influence within the Mascot Horror genre. For example, the player base of the games needs to always have active discussion between the fans, this is due to analyzing more famous games may have a more obvious common trait, which makes this genre become successful. Besides that, the game must clearly show the main features of Mascot Horror, such as mascot-style character design, horror elements, and narrative-driven gameplay. This is important because although some games may be labelled as horror, they do not fully represent this sub-genre. For example, the Amnesia series, although it is a horror game, has a mascot, but it is more focused on psychological horror, like Silent Hill 2, which features monster design with more towards bloody and gore design.

Besides that, another factor is the accessibility of data. The selected games must have enough publicly available content, such as gameplay videos, trailers,

and online discussions, which can be accessed easily via a publicly well-known website to make sure of the. This is due to the reason why if there is insufficient data and information, the difficulty of studying the specific game in more depth will be more difficult, which may also cause inaccuracy in the study. And at the same time, I only study indie games to make sure the study is consistent with the scope, since the development process and marketing strategy are different compared to AAA titles.

Overall, this sampling technique helps me focus on more relevant and meaningful data which are suitable for the study. This research can be analyzed by game design tropes, marketing factors, and narrative elements that contribute to the popularity of Mascot Horror with more accuracy using these techniques.

4.4 Data Analysis Methods

Since this research is using qualitative analysis, it is more about interpreting meaning instead of numbers. In this case, we can use thematic analysis and focus on these topics: Game Design, Narrative, Visual Elements, and the Community from the mascot horror games.

Firstly, to understand this genre more deeply, selected games are played directly or gameplay footage from a well-known source. There are other ways that are used to gather data from the community, such as observing the top comments from the videos, reading through the discussion from different forums, and finding common opinions from the players. And these actions are repeated several times with different games and sources to get better results.

After engaging with the data, the next step involves data coding by labelling important features from the data such as Character Design, Nostalgic Elements, the way narrative is presented in the game, and the Community's

Characteristics. At this point, the process is still quiet as the aim of this step is to identify as many relevant features as possible without limiting the analysis too early, which can ensure that the important patterns will not be missed.

After the analysis of the small traits, they can be categorized into 4 main themes, which are Psychological Engagement, Character Design Strategies, Narrative Techniques, and Marketing. Using this approach can make the data more organized in a more structured way and make the connection between the objective of this research clearer.

When the categories had been sorted out, the next step was to start interpreting these data by using the theoretical frameworks discussed earlier. During this process, we are focusing on the factor of why this is effective in causing the popularity of mascot horror.

Lastly, cross-case comparison is being used during the analysis by comparing differences and similarities of several games that meet the requirements are being. Even though some games are successful in terms of marketing, they did not receive a good fame among players due to several reasons, such as the lack of creativity, dull gameplay, bad optimization, copycat and so on. The factors that make this genre popular among indie developers can be understanding by analyze the difference between the observed subjects.

4.5 Ethical Consideration

This research's ethical issue are different since it did not involve any human participants directly, it's more about data use, fairness and responsibility. During the research, videos, online discussion, personal experience is the only

sourced being used to be analyzed. This shows that this research is low risk, and it still needs ethics.

The use of public data is also one of the ethical issue, the common source of public data be used in this research is from YouTube gameplay videos, some of the part which are unnecessary for the viewer and youtuber will be cut out which could impact the collected data, although it can be covered up by playing directly by me, but the opinion from the gameplay video audience will be impact if they didn't play the game at all. Not only this should be in consideration, the data collected are publicly accessible, and there is no private or confidential data will be used during the research. This is more stand from the observer perspective instead of interacting with people.

Even though the data such as username and comments are public accessible sources, but we still need to respect the privacy and anonymity of people who did not consent in participating in this research. The research should also avoid directly mentioning a specific individual. Instead, general terms such as "players" are used for community's general opinion. This approach may limit the depth of the analysis since specific user's context is removed, but this is a necessary trade-off to maintain ethical responsibility.

The data collected from players and users should also not be twisted due to the online discussion is often diverse within different platforms. In this research, each community's opinion needs to be reviewed fairly to ensure the result is fair. For example, if the comments are mixed, the result shouldn't be "everyone agrees". To avoid this issue might happen, the study attempts to observe multiple sources and different contexts of discussion before identifying the common pattern of mascot horror. Therefore, the findings are a general interpretation of the subject rather than a complete reflection of opinion from all the players.

Lastly, the research needs to avoid any unfair criticism of different games. The conclusion needs to be fair and did not mix with personal bias. The main goal of this research is to do analysis and not attack a specific subject to make sure the research remains constructive and academically appropriate.

5.0 Result & Analysis

This table, Table 5.1 shows the main characteristic of chosen game title to studies, which can be categorize into 4 different key difference, which is their character design, narrative style, the horror technique and how big is the engagement of community.

Game Series	Character Design	Game Mechanics	Narrative Style	Horror Technique	Community Engagement
FNAF	Animatronic Mascot	Quick Time Event and Puzzle	Hidden lore	Jump scare, tension	High
Poppy Playtime	Toy-like mascot	Exploration, Puzzle	Episodic story, Hidden Lore	Chase, puzzle horror	Very high
Garten of Banban	Cartoon mascot	Exploration, Puzzle	Simple narrative	Exploration horror, Tension, Jump Scare	Low

Amanda the Adventurer	90's Cartoon	Puzzle	Hidden Lore	Puzzle, Physiological Horror	Mixed
-----------------------------	-----------------	--------	----------------	------------------------------------	-------

Table 5.1

Meanwhile, table 5.2 Shows the findings of characteristic and how they represents different theme and related theory that's helps identify the key factors which causing the popularity of mascot horror among indie developers.

Observed Characteristic	Code	Theme	Related Theory
Mascot characters design with distorted facial expressions and unnatural appearance	Uncanny Character Design	Character Design	Uncanny Valley
Slow and unnature movement of character	Intentional/Unintentional Unnatural animation	Character Design	Uncanny Valley
Aggressive Behaviour of child-friendly figure	Expectation disruption	Psychological Engagement	Expectancy Violations Theory
Use of past children's entertainment as inspiration, such as Toys, Cartoons, Restaurant, Playground, Kindergaren	Nostalgic visual elements	Art Direction	Expectancy Violations Theory

Sudden loud audio and visual attacks during gameplay	Jump scare usage	Psychological Engagement	Paradox of Horror
Gameplay designed around tension and anticipation in a unhostile environment before danger appears	Fear anticipation	Psychological Engagement	Benign Masochism
Dark environments and uncomfortable background audio	Environmental tension	Psychological Engagement/Art Direction	Paradox of Horror
Hidden VHS tapes, notes, or secret recordings that scraps around the gameplay environment	Fragmented storytelling	Narrative Technique	Participatory Culture
Story details hidden outside the main gameplay	Lore-based narrative	Narrative Technique	Participatory Culture
Players discussing hidden meanings and creating theories online	Fan theory discussion	Community & Marketing	Participatory Culture
Gameplay videos and livestream reactions spreading online	Internet culture	Community & Marketing	Participatory Culture

Fan art and memes based on mascot characters	Fan-generated content	Community & Marketing	Participatory Culture
Simple gameplay mechanics which suitable for small development teams	Accessible production design	Indie Production Advantage	Indie Game Development Perspective
Slightly imperfect animation caused by limited resources or intentional design	Low-budget uncanny effect	Indie Production Advantage	Uncanny Valley
Episodic storytelling that force players to wait for future updates	Episodic release	Narrative Technique	Participatory Culture

Table 5.2

This data of popularity/community engagement of each selected game are collected and observed from 3 main platform, Steam, Reddit and Youtube

Platform	Type of Data Collected	Engagement Indicators	Overall Observation
Steam	Player reviews, discussion forums, user feedback	Review count, discussion activity, review sentiment	Long-term player reviews and community response
Reddit	Community discussions and fan interaction	Number of members, posting frequency, theory discussions	Fan participation and community culture
YouTube	Gameplay videos, livestreams, theory videos	View count, upload frequency, audience comments, theory sharing	Online visibility and viral marketing potential

Table 5.3

Table 5.1.3.1 shows data collected from Steam for different games

Game	Steam Review Count	Review's Sentiment	Positive Reviews Rate (%)	Price (RM)

FNAF Security Breach	36872	Very Positive	85	65
Poppy Playtime	137,634	Very Positive	87	Free
Garten of Banban	12602	Mixed	52	Free
Amanda the Adventurer	5809	Very Positive	90	24.5

Table 5.3.1

Table 5.3.2 shows data collected from Reddit for different games

Games	Subreddit name	Subscriber s	Average weekly visitors	Average posts per day
FNAF	r/fivenightsatfreddys	711,700	331k	100
Poppy Playtime	r/poppyplaytime	92,406	139k	50
Garten of Banban	r/gartenofbanban	10,309	5.3k	4
Amanda the Adventurer	r/amandatheadventur er	11,743	3.1k	2

Table 5.3.2

Table 5.3.3 shows how stats collected from youtube

Game Series	Type of Content Observed	Highest Video Views	Theory / Lore Content	Streamer & Reaction Presence
Five Nights at Freddy's	Gameplay, theories, reactions	33M+ views	Extremely high	Extremely high

Poppy Playtime	Gameplay, lore videos, reactions	Millions of views	High	High
Garten of Banban	Meme videos, gameplay, criticism	Moderate to high	Moderate	High meme presence
Amanda the Adventurer	VHS analysis, theories	Moderate	High	Moderate

Table 5.3.4 shows the inspiration that taken by different games.

Game Series	Inspiration Source	Inspiration Type	Inspiration Date	Visual Influence	Relevance to Mascot Horror
Five Nights at Freddy's	Chuck E. Cheese animatronics, ShowBiz Pizza	Children Restaurant	1980s–1990s	Animatronic mascots with rigid movement and fixed expressions	Familiar childhood setting transformed into fear, strong uncanny effect
Poppy Playtime	1980s -1990s toy industry	Toys	1980s - 1990s	Bright toy-like mascots with exaggerated features	Combines nostalgia with horror, strong visual branding and merchandise appeal

Garten of Banban	Kindergarten settings and children's cartoons	Kindergarten Mascot/Environment	2010s	Simple cartoon mascots with twisted expressions	Low-complexity design supports indie production, meme-driven popularity
Amanda the Adventurer	90s to 20s Cartoon	Animation/ Cartoon	Early 2000s	Friendly cartoon character presented in VHS format	Subversion of familiar educational content enhances expectancy violation

Table 5.3.5 Shows data collected of how different indie developer's strategies on monetize/marketing their games.

Game Series	Development Scale	Estimated Production Complexity	Release Strategy	Price (MYR)	Marketing Method	Monetization Potential	Economic Advantage for Indie Developers
Five Nights at Freddy's	Small indie studio	Low–Medium	Full release with sequels	65	YouTube-driven, streamer reactions, theory videos	Very High (merchandise, sequels, film adaptation)	Extremely low production cost with massive viral exposure and strong brand scalability
Poppy Playtime	Small indie studio	Medium	Episodic (chapters)	Free / Paid chapters	Viral marketing, mascot branding,	Very High (merchandise,	Strong visual branding combined with episodic monetization reduces risk

			r-based)		YouTube content	licensing, branding)	and increases long-term revenue
Garten of Banban	Small indie team	Low	Rapid episodic release	Low-priced chapters	Meme-driven, viral content, YouTube exposure	Moderate (character branding, sequels)	Very low production cost with fast release cycle allows quick profit despite mixed reception
Amanda the Adventurer	Small indie team	Low–Medium	Full release	24.5	Theory-driven, psychological horror, YouTube analysis	Moderate (potential for expansion, narrative-driven content)	Simple gameplay and strong narrative concept create engagement with relatively low development complexity

6.0 Discussion and Interpretation

From the data collected, we can now try to interpret the key factor that is causing the popularity among indie developers. At first, we can look into the design tropes of the game.

Firstly, we can try to identify the common traits of the mascot horror genre. One of the most obvious traits is that the art direction is heavily inspired by media before 2010. For example, *Five Nights at Freddy's* design is inspired by 80s – 90s animatronics in the children's restaurant Chuck E Cheese. Due to the technical limitations, the animatronics in that era had clunky, unnatural movement, which has become a core memory for people. *Poppy Playtime's* Art Direction is inspired by toy and toy factories in the 90s, which is also one of the key childhood memories, where we had a class trip to certain industries of Gen Z and Gen Y.

From these patterns, we can find out that mascot horror commonly takes inspiration from childhood elements of Gen Z and Y culture, which is related to their nostalgia. By placing horror elements into these childhood experiences, this can cause feelings of uncanny, unsettling, because what makes us happy when players are children now becomes something hostile, which is related to the Expectancy Violations Theory. Most of the developers of Mascot Horror also tend to design characters that can fall into Uncanny Valley by using design elements familiar to Gen Z and Gen Y in their childhood, and making them feel uncomfortable. For example, in *Amanda the Adventurer*, it had a similar visual to a childhood learning game with low budget, a poorly rendered cutscene, and clunky animation.

Nostalgia and Uncanny is the most common pattern we can see in mascot horror genre, because it can lower down a lot of production costs during the

development process. For instance, the developer does not need to develop a new art direction that requires high-level art skill, and can just copy the art style of a certain culture because art style is not protected by copyright. The nostalgia elements are also a great main selling point for the games because people commonly link good memories from nostalgia to the product.

(Daszkiewicz, 2024). For instance, in the FYP of our groups, we use Kampung Boy, one of the most famous comics among Malaysian and Junji Ito's Horror Comic art style as the main art direction in our game. By going through this direction, the visual can create a contrast that makes our audience feel nostalgic but also uncanny.

From the observation, we also found out the same pattern across each game where most of their genre/game mechanics is puzzle and exploration. Since the main game mechanics is exploration, so developer can hide a lot of hidden messages around the game world for player to find out, by this, the narrative of the game can be less focus of linking all together and show to player and more focus on what happen right now to the player. By doing this, the cost of narrative can be lower because the concern of breaking the flow of game is lower.

From the observation, another similar pattern can be found across the games observed, most of their main game mechanics are revolve around puzzle-solving and exploration. Because exploration serves as the core gameplay loop, developers are able to embed hidden messages and environmental storytelling throughout the game world for players to discover.

As a result, the structure of the narrative does not need to rely heavily on a fully connected or continuously delivered storyline and can be more on the player's immediate experiences and events occurring during the gameplay. This approach can highly reduce the need for extensive, tightly structured

worldbuilding as storytelling is distributed through exploration rather than directly expose to the player. Since there is less works to organize a story flow that might interrupt the pacing of game play, the cost and complexity of narrative development can be lower during the production.

By using this narrative structure approach, not only it reduces cost, it also can bring up more discussion among the player base because every player is having different experience during gameplay. Due to the hidden lore are mostly scattered, that means player need to spends more time to collect all the hidden lore to figure out the whole story and settings of the game. Some player which did not like the exploration will start finding lore explanation video on internet; people who enjoy the lore will share their opinion on the forum. There are also people who did not have the game who curious about the lore can find lore explanation on YouTube which can make more exposure for the games if the narrative is good.

By using this narrative structure approach, the benefits extend beyond reducing development cost. This form of narrative structure encourage higher rate of discussion among the player base as the experience of each player is vary. Hidden lore is also commonly one of the traits of mascot horror, and they are appearing as notes, recording and other form of media scattered around the game. The players are having the choice to spend more time exploring and collecting information in order to understand the story and setting fully or just ignore it and focus on the main story. The discussion and lore-sharing videos on social media can attract players who are less interested in exploration, while those who enjoy the narrative actively discuss and share their interpretations on forums and community platforms. There is also content creator who will create lore explanation video and theory estimation video which can watch on platforms such as YouTube and even individuals who have not played the game may become curious about the game, which can give more exposure to the games due to the social media algorithm.

When looking further into the data, this design choice is not only for the nostalgic aesthetic, but it can also bring economic advantages for the games, which means more profit and sales. Using nostalgia as the core design element can reduce production costs because a lower-budget visual is more relatable to the childhood of players. (Makai, 2018). The simple game mechanics can also reduce the effort of developers to keep programming new mechanics, and can be more focused on level design, making the game more fun. The narrative structure is also proven to reduce marketing costs because of high engagement between players, such as theory videos, lore explanation, forums, etc., which can also bring free exposure to the games. For example, an artist had created beautiful fan art based on one of the character from a mascot horror game can bring the artist's follower acknowledge this character and attract more potential player into this franchise. This kind of high-level engagement can be observed across different platforms.

From this observation, compared to other game genres that may require larger teams, complex mechanics, or high-end visuals, it is really obvious why mascot horror is one of the best choices for an indie developer. One of the reasons is that developers can achieve a high level of player engagement with low production resources, which is really efficient in terms of marketing. The combination of simple gameplay structure, reusable design patterns, and flexible narrative approach also allows developers to focus more on impactful elements rather than building a fully polished and resource-intensive experience. At the same time, the strong reliance on community-driven marketing, such as content created on social media, such as YouTube reactions, theory videos, and online discussions, has drastically reduced the need for traditional advertising strategies, which is really important for indie developers who don't have the financial capability to promote through traditional means. In a nutshell, mascot horror provides a more accessible entry point for indie developers as a start because developers can gain higher visibility and audience attention through design and concept with a lower budget.

However, although mascot horror sounds like a shortcut to success, it also has some limitations. Although the game is really popular among the gaming market, its success is not always consistent across the different titles. For example, some games had been going downhill because of a lack of innovation in the newer titles, and they failed to maintain the same amount of player base. This shows that the marketing strategy of mascot horror is effective, but it also already faces oversaturation, as similar design patterns have become boring for gamers. As more developers adopt this design approach, the uniqueness of mascot horror will start fading away and lose its shine. Therefore, the more important thing is the creativity of the developer and not the genre itself, and the key to a successful mascot horror game is how the developer balances between marketing and innovative gameplay.

7.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

From the overall findings of this research, we have come to the conclusion that the popularity of mascot horror is not just simply the horror elements alone, but it is a combination of different design choices, efficiency in economics, marketing structure that fits well in this modern internet era, and accessibility for indie developers. The observations during the analysis of this thesis showed that mascot horror had some common patterns, including nostalgia-inspired art direction, simple game mechanics, fragmented narrative design, and a high dependence on community engagements. These elements are not just individual parts that work separately, but a combination that can work together for a cost-effective game production pipeline.

A structured framework can be formed to show how mascot horror can work in the market. First of all, most of the nostalgic elements need to have, and they need to be familiar to the targeted audience to make the uncanny effects more efficient, especially from Gen Z and Gen Y's childhood

experience. By applying this step, the character can be more memorable and impactful, although it did not have a complex and detailed design. For the level and game mechanics design for the game, it should be more focused on puzzle and exploration, as these kinds of settings are easier to develop, but still can hook the gamer throughout the game.

Besides that, the narrative structure also plays an important role when developing mascot horror. Instead of telling the story directly, many mascot horror games use more hidden lore and environmental storytelling, encouraging players to discover the story themselves. This approach creates different experiences for each player. For example, some players may find all the hidden details, while others may rely on YouTube videos or forums to understand the story. This helps to extend the life of the game outside of gameplay itself because there is more discussion among the player base, which also supports the marketing of the games as it has more exposure to the general audience.

From the statistic above, mascot horror seems looks like a shortcut to become success, but it actually has massive flaws that will hurt the entire franchise. For example, some games are going viral on the internet when they are first released, but they fall off really quickly because the sequel is lack of innovation. For example, the character just feels like a reskin character from another franchise or have similar traits, such as Garten of Banban is commonly recognize as a rip-off of Poppy Playtime. The repetitive game flow had made the players feel bored, and the developer failed to maintain the long-term relationship between the player and the developer. Mascot horror is not a guaranteed successful model; it is a strategy that needs to be used carefully and strategically.

It is important for game designers that their innovation is more important than copying existing trends. To stand out from the oversaturated market, developer can try to find more variant or similar elements when developing the games. For instance, instead of focusing on global childhood nostalgia, they can try to integrate a more niche childhood experience from a different culture. For example, our group projects combined Malaysian culture and Japanese Culture to have a unique mash-up. Instead of a generic 3d Mascot horror genre, our games look more like a comic from the 90s. In addition, the game mechanics of mascot horror should not be limited to puzzle- and exploration-based gameplay; the developer should add more interactive mechanics that can stand out from the competitors. The narrative structure of mascot horror should also be more innovative. For instance, the developer can start doing ARG (Alternate Reality Game) that can be based on the game itself, which can also help the player become more immersed when digging into the story of the game, because ARG uses real life as a platform.

At the same time, developers need to consider the marketability of games when designing the games. For instance, designing a character that have all the traits likes by the audience, although it is a safe way to design a character, but it will fall into a generic design because of lacking the artist own unique idea. The character needs to have a flaws or things that are unique so the design will stand out. Artist also needs to avoid putting too much personal likeness during the design phase because it may lose the chance for approaching wider audience. Therefore, a good art direction needs to consider the balancing between artistic and marketing and understand each elements need to supports each other.

8.0 References

Ellwood, B. (2022, August 16). Study suggests the paradoxical enjoyment of horror media serves an evolutionary function. *PsyPost - Psychology News*.
<https://www.psypost.org/study-suggests-the-paradoxical-enjoyment-of-horror-media-serves-an-evolutionary-function/>

horror. (2026). <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/horror>

TV Tropes. (n.d.). *Mascot Horror*.

<https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/MascotHorror>

Clasen, M. (2017). *Why horror seduces: The allure of frightening entertainment*. Oxford University Press. ("We are attracted..." quote from book description retrieved from Barnes & Noble).

Rozin, P., Guillot, L., Fincher, K., Rozin, A., & Tsukayama, E. (2023, January 1). Glad to be sad, and other examples of benign masochism: Judgment and decision making. Cambridge Core.

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/judgment-and-decision-making/article/glad-to-be-sad-and-other-examples-of-benign-masochism/48C0EC2F04412F3CB6EBC18B5E539BE8>

Sorkhou, M. (n.d.). Expectancy violations theory. The Decision Lab.

<https://thedecisionlab.com/reference-guide/psychology/expectancy-violations-theory>

Ungvarsky, & Janine. (2025). *Participatory culture: Communication and mass media: Research starters: EBSCO research*. EBSCO.

<https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/communication-and-mass-media/participatory-culture>

Steel Wool Studios. (2021). *Five Nights at Freddy's: Security Breach* [Steam store page]. Steam.

https://store.steampowered.com/app/747660/Five_Nights_at_Freddys_Security_Breach/

Euphoric Brothers. (2023). *Garten of Banban* [Steam store page]. Steam.

https://store.steampowered.com/app/2232840/Garten_of_Banban/

MOB Games. (2021). *Poppy Playtime* [Steam store page]. Steam.

https://store.steampowered.com/app/1721470/Poppy_Playtime/

Joey Drew Studios. (2017). *Bendy and the Ink Machine* [Steam store page]. Steam.

https://store.steampowered.com/app/622650/Bendy_and_the_Ink_Machine/

MANGLEDmaw Games. (2023). *Amanda the Adventurer* [Steam store page]. Steam.

https://store.steampowered.com/app/2166060/Amanda_the_Adventurer/

[NicheProwler](#). (n.d.). *Subreddit stats | Community analytics & metrics*.

NicheProwler. <https://www.nicheprowler.com/tools/reddit/redditStat>

Five Nights at Freddy's Wiki. (n.d.). *Five Nights at Freddy's*. Fandom.

Retrieved May 17, 2026, from https://freddy-fazbears-pizza.fandom.com/wiki/Five_Nights_at_Freddy%27s

Five Nights at Freddy's Wiki. (n.d.). *Five Nights at Freddy's Wiki*. Fandom.

Retrieved May 17, 2026, from https://freddy-fazbears-pizza.fandom.com/wiki/Five_Nights_at_Freddy%27s_Wiki

Euphoric Brothers. (n.d.). *LinkedIn profile*. LinkedIn.

<https://ca.linkedin.com/company/euphoricbrothers>

MOB Entertainment. (n.d.). *LinkedIn profile*. LinkedIn.

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/mobentertainment>

MangledMaw Games. (n.d.). *LinkedIn profile*. LinkedIn.

<https://ca.linkedin.com/company/mangledmaw-games>

Poppy Playtime Wiki. (n.d.). *Poppy Playtime (game)*. Fandom. Retrieved May 17, 2026, from [https://poppy-playtime.fandom.com/wiki/Poppy_Playtime_\(game\)](https://poppy-playtime.fandom.com/wiki/Poppy_Playtime_(game))

SuperHorrorBro. (2023, April 25). *Amanda the Adventurer SECRET TAPES & ALL ENDINGS EXPLAINED* [Video]. YouTube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhPWB9U11lo>

Daszkiewicz, M. (2024). Nostalgic consumer trends and nostalgia marketing. *Ekonomia – Wrocław Economic Review*, 29(4), 69–82.
<https://doi.org/10.19195/2658-1310.29.4.6>

Makai, P. K. (2018). *Video games as objects and vehicles of nostalgia*. *Humanities*, 7(4), 123. <https://doi.org/10.3390/h7040123>

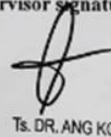
Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.). *Nostalgia*. In [Cambridge Dictionary](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/nostalgia). Retrieved May 20, 2026, from
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/nostalgia>
(dictionary.cambridge.org)

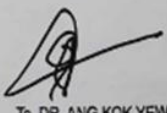
9.0 Appendices

Appendix A – FYP 1 Logbook

Appendix A

Project Paper Consultation Logbook	
Project Title	Rempit in the night
Student Name	Sky Soo Sin Kai
Student ID	2205103
Year/Semester	Y3S1
Supervisor	Ts Dr. Ang Kok Yew

WEEK 01	
Comments: - Gathering Idea and brainstorming - Decided to choose Rempit in the Night as main project FYP	Supervisor signature:  Ts. DR. ANG KOK YEW Deputy Dean Student Development & Industrial Training Faculty of Creative Industries Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date:
WEEK 02	
Comments: - Draw some concept art for the game - Character Design - Main Character Ahmad - Rigged with Idle Animation, Walking Animation - Pacong (Monster)	Supervisor signature:  Ts. DR. ANG KOK YEW Deputy Dean Student Development & Industrial Training Faculty of Creative Industries Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date:

WEEK 03	
Comments: Art Start Designing NPC - Mr Pucong - Rigged - Animated - Idle - Speaking	Supervisor signature:  Ts. DR. ANG KOK YEW Deputy Dean Student Development & Industrial Training Faculty of Creative Industries Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date:
WEEK 04	
Comments: - Start White Boxing the tutorial Level	Supervisor signature:  Ts. DR. ANG KOK YEW Deputy Dean Student Development & Industrial Training Faculty of Creative Industries Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date:
WEEK 05	
Comments: - Replace White Boxing with Assets - Tree - Grass - School Gate - Star - Bushes	Supervisor signature:  Ts. DR. ANG KOK YEW Deputy Dean Student Development & Industrial Training Faculty of Creative Industries Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date:

WEEK 06	
Comments: Done White boxing Level 1 (Kot 1), and done tex a trimsheet for the material asset.	Supervisor signature:  Ts. DR. ANG KOK YEW Deputy Dean Student Development & Industrial Training Faculty of Creative Industries Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date:
WEEK 07	
Comments: Refining White Level 1, Triplanar Shader, Volumetric Fog Shader, Optimization	Supervisor signature:  Ts. DR. ANG KOK YEW Deputy Dean Student Development & Industrial Training Faculty of Creative Industries Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date:

Appendix A – FYP 2 Logbook

Appendix A

Project Paper Consultation Logbook	
Project Title	Rempit in the Night
Student Name	Sky Soo Sin Kai
Student ID	2205103
Year/Semester	Year 3 Semester 2
Supervisor	Ts Dr Ang Kok Yew

WEEK 01

Comments: - Refining asset in level 1	Supervisor signature: 
Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date: 19/5/26

WEEK 02

Comments: - Start implement new screen space outline shader for the game to test out the effect to make the game scene looks more like comics	Supervisor signature: 
Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date: 19/5/26

WEEK 03

Comments:

- Start doing animation placeholder for a cutscene in tutorial level
- Start doing Walk Cycle for Orang Minyak

Supervisor signature:

Progress (please circle the feedback)

1 2 3 4 5
Poor Satisfactory Good

Date:

19/5/26

WEEK 04

Comments:

- Start doing animation asset for Meng and Haran, mainly is walk cycle
- Adding more animation of Ahmad to make the character looks more alive and dynamic
- Rerig the bone for Meng to make his mouth have more control over the animation
- Done Walk cycle for Orang Minyak Boss
- Start brainstorming the design of Santu Sakai

Supervisor signature:

Progress (please circle the feedback)

1 2 3 4 5
Poor Satisfactory Good

Date:

19/5/26

WEEK 05

Comments:

- Start doing whiteboxing for act 2, 1f and 2f

**Supervisor
signature:**

Progress (please circle the feedback)

1 2 3 4 5
Poor Satisfactory Good

Date:

19/5/26

WEEK 06

Comments:

- Keep doing animation for new mechanics, such as the bottle cleaning and throwing matches
- Confirm the final design of Santu Sakai with The
- Start drawing the sprites of Santu Sakai and rig it

**Supervisor
signature:**

Progress (please circle the feedback)

1 2 3 4 5
Poor Satisfactory Good

Date:

19/5/26

WEEK 07

Comments:

- Done rigging the sprites of Santu Sakai
- Haran Charging Animation Added
- Done doing the tutorial dragging cutscene

**Supervisor
signature:**

Progress (please circle the feedback)

1 2 3 4 5
Poor Satisfactory Good

Date:

19/5/26

WEEK 08		
Comments: - Start modelling required asset for act 2 , and replacing them with the whiteboxing at level 2 - Draw sprites of getting inked for different characters - Refining the lighting at existing level - Redo the existing texture of the scene and some assets	Supervisor signature: 	
Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date: 19/5/26	
WEEK 09		
Comments: - Keep refining the rest of the game world, such as retexturing etc - Added Projectile for Orang Minyak - Added light flickering to the light of scene - Added new model for 2F due to change of level design - Added Haran Attack Animation - Added Santu Sakai Attack animation - Refining Animation of Orang Minyak - Start adding fog particle to diffent scene to enhance the environment	Supervisor signature: 	
Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date: 19/5/26	
WEEK 10		
Comments: - Added dust particle to scenes - Refining texture of some interior scene - Refining existed animation of Ahmad - Added 3F to game project - More particle added for different scenario such as orang minyak and santu sakai's attack - Start doing cutscene for Orang Minyak spawning	Supervisor signature: 	
Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date: 19/5/26	
WEEK 11		

Comments: - Experimenting different shader to make the decal looks more stylize and realistic - Start doing In-game cutscene for act 3 - Start Doing Decal Material for diffent use case - Start doing cutscene of orang minyak defeated - Done most of the interior of 3F - Done Cutscene of Santu Sakai Spawn	Supervisor signature: 										
Progress (please circle the feedback) <table border="0"> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Poor</td> <td></td> <td>Satisfactory</td> <td></td> <td>Good</td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3	4	5	Poor		Satisfactory		Good	Date: 19/5/26
1	2	3	4	5							
Poor		Satisfactory		Good							
WEEK 12											
Comments: - Start Drawing the Ending Cutscene and Opening Cutscene - Done finishing the in-game cutscene for most level - Added sign number to the signboard of each level - Added another shader to have a dithering effect, which works well as a skething effect at darker part - Added opening cutscene of tutorial - Added Cutscene of Pocong at Level 1 - Added Santu Sakai's Death Cutscene	Supervisor signature: 										
Progress (please circle the feedback) <table border="0"> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Poor</td> <td></td> <td>Satisfactory</td> <td></td> <td>Good</td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3	4	5	Poor		Satisfactory		Good	Date: 19/5/26
1	2	3	4	5							
Poor		Satisfactory		Good							

WEEK 13

Comments:

- Started Drawing Opening Cutscene and Ending Cutscene

**Supervisor
signature:**

Progress (please circle the feedback)

1 2 3 4 5
Poor Satisfactory Good

Date:

19/5/26

WEEK 14

Comments:

- Start doing Teaser Trailer
- Promotional Material

**Supervisor
signature:**

Progress (please circle the feedback)

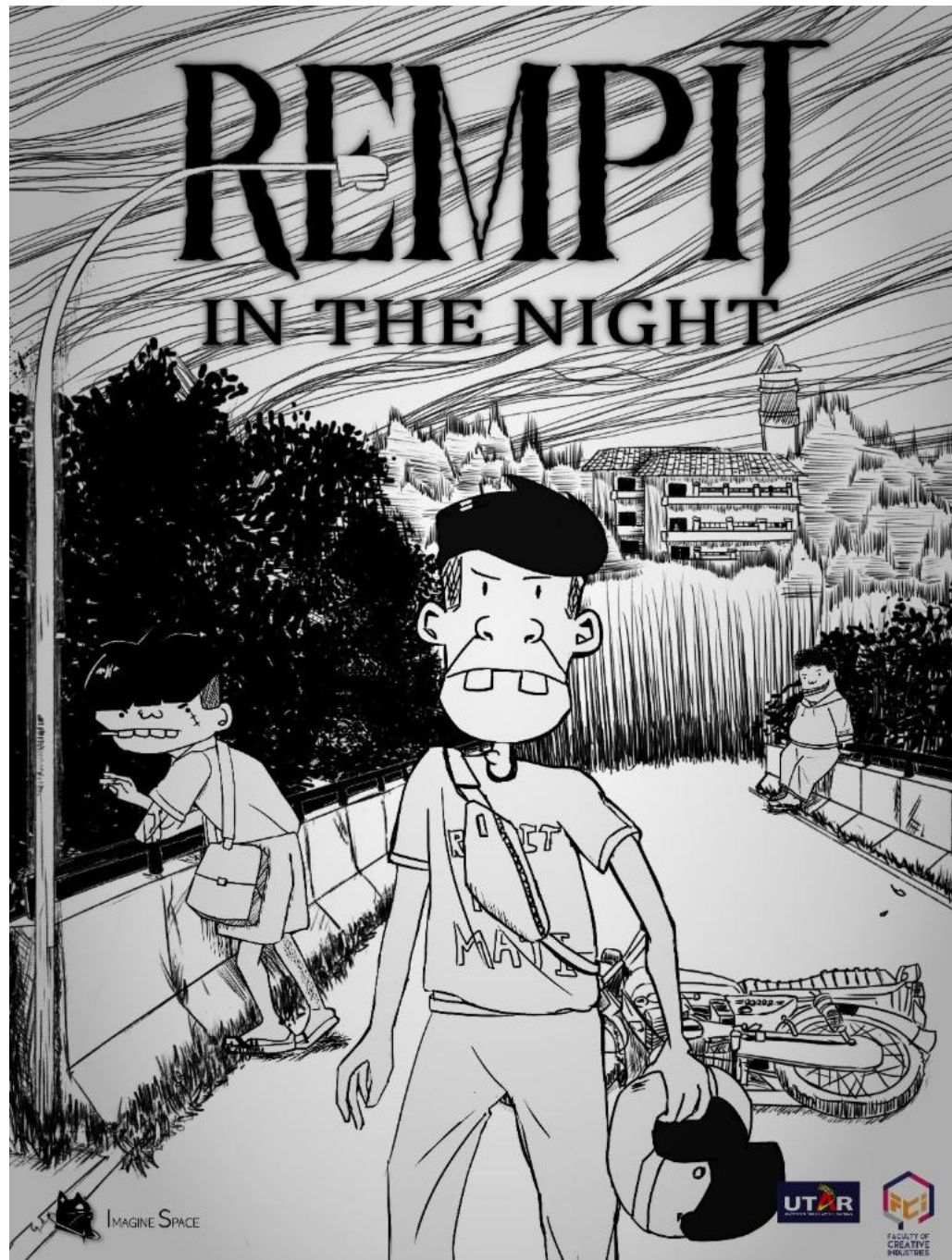
1 2 3 4 5
Poor Satisfactory Good

Date:

19/5/26

Appendix D – Promotional Materials

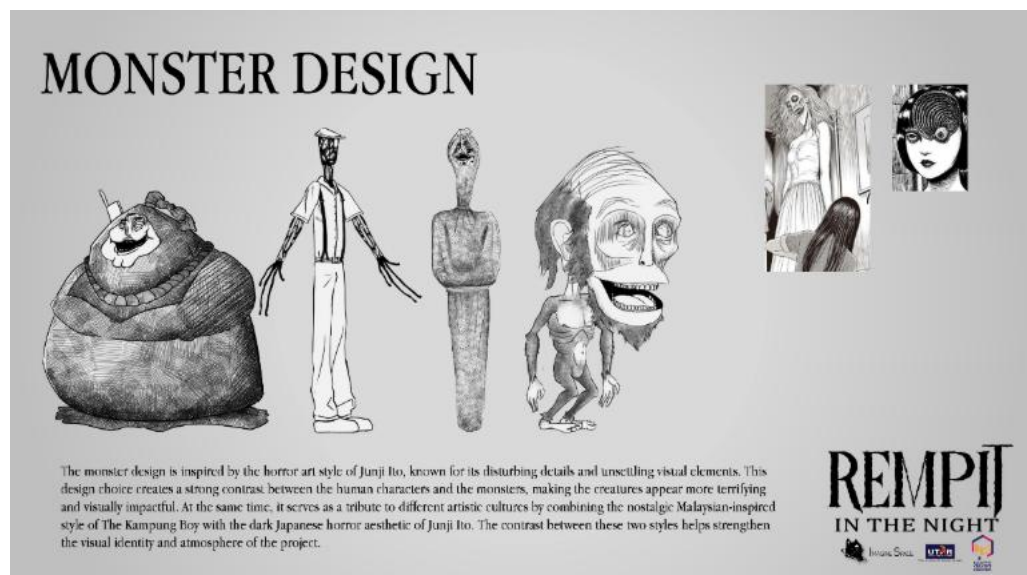
Game Poster



Design Board – Character Design



Design Board – Monster Design



Name Card Design



HELLO! I AM...

NG POH YANG
AUDIO & LEVEL DESIGNER



 +6012 - 500 9877

 ngpohyang2004@gmail.com

 <https://shorturl.at/enptK>





FACULTY OF
CREATIVE
INDUSTRIES

HELLO! I AM...

**SKY
SOO SIN KAI**
GAME ARTIST



 +6014 - 650 1360

 soosinkai@gmail.com

 <https://shorturl.at/bLHfy>





FACULTY OF
CREATIVE
INDUSTRIES



Appendix H - Final Project Title Form

Fill in the information below as detailed as you can after confirming project title.

Project Type:

- Product Based Project

Y Research Based Project

(tick the appropriate box)

Student ID	Student Name	Email & Contact no.
2204682	Clement Chiam Heng Chen	chiamhengchen@lutar.my / 010-9669688
2207564	Ng Poh Yang	ngpohyang2004@lutar.my / 012-5009877
2205103	Sky Soo Sin Kai	soosinkai@lutar.my / 014-6501360
2204325	Teh Yong Keat	tehyongkeat040711@lutar.my / 011-61501256

Supervisors:

Dr Simon Ang Kok Yew, Ms Christie Chow Mee Mooi, and Puan Nik Norazira Binti Abdul Aziz

Project Title:

Rempit in the Night

Project description:

Rempit in the Night is a **narrative-driven survival horror adventure** rooted in Malaysian folklore and culture. Set in the 2000s at Bukit Tinggi, the story is about three friends, Ahmad, Ming, and Haran, whose late-night motorbike ride turns into a nightmare after a mysterious encounter on the highway. Separated and trapped in an abandoned school, they must confront supernatural beings including the **Pocong**, **Orang Minyak**, and the fearsome **Santu Sakai**.

Players explore in an abandoned school environment, solve puzzles, and switch between characters that each of them has their unique abilities: Ahmad's Insane View, Ming's projectile combat, and Haran's charge and barrier skills. The game blends psychological horror and comedic undertones, with the art styles inspired by Junji Ito's unsettling environments and enemy design together with Lat's Kampung Boy character designs.

This project aims to deliver a distinctive horror-comedy experience that highlights Malaysia's rich folklore while offering immersive gameplay and narrative depth.

Student name	Individual Project Scope
Clement Chiam Heng Chen	• Role: Game Programmer

	• Objectives: Focus on developing the game mechanics and compiling the game. • Tasks & Deliverables: Create UI mechanics, puzzle mechanics, characters' mechanics and debugging the game. • Collaboration: Work with narrative designer on dialogues and cutscene events, game artist on visual consistency, and audio designer on sound integration.
Ng Poh Yang	• Role: Audio Designer and Level Designer • Objectives: Focus on designing levels for the game and create BGM and sound effects for the game. • Tasks & Deliverables: Create levels flow for three acts and environment design for them; work on creating BGM and sound effects for the game. • Collaboration: Work with narrative designer on dialogues and cutscene events within the level game flow.
Sky Soo Sin Kai	• Role: Game Artist • Objectives: Focus on creating levels' environments and character designs. • Tasks & Deliverables: Create levels with 3D modelling and create characters with animation via Unity. • Collaboration: Work with narrative designer on character design

	background and game programmer on visuals implementation and shaders development.
Teh Yong Keat	• Role: Narrative Designer, Story Writer and Team Leader • Objectives: Focus on developing the character dialogues and manage team workflow. • Tasks & Deliverables: Create character dialogues as well as the dialogue system in the game and guiding the team progression. • Collaboration: Work with game programmer on implementing dialogue system and trigger sequences, game artist on implementing dialogue UI assets and audio designer on sound integration.