

Unmoored: Narrative Design Document

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2020



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Brief

The theme of this project had to be based on a feeling (embarrassment, suspicion, luck or trust). Our design objective was to create a strong emotionally immersive experience with a powerful narrative that is tied to both the world and the gameplay.

Introduction to the Story

The game explores the dark and enigmatic story of Alexandra McCarter—a freelance journalist in the early 1900s—and her atmospheric journey through a tropical island filled with both mystery and suspicion.

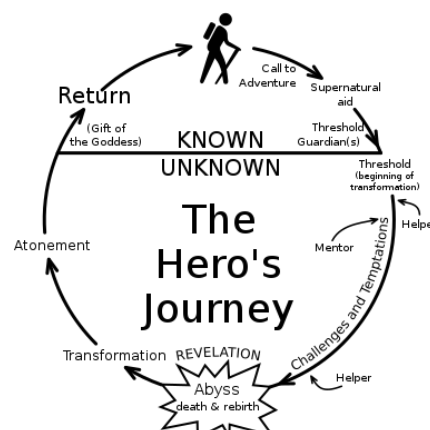
A world-renowned archaeologist, Dr. Stanley Moore, has gone missing during his most recent expedition to a tropical island in the Bermuda Triangle. Although a few years have now passed, the incident has managed to stay relevant in media through rumors and various assumptions.

Alexandra, or Alex as she calls herself, has for a long time been struggling to make ends meet and sees an opportunity to get ahead in her career. Alex decides to travel to the island to unravel the mystery, but things do not go as planned. She finds herself involved in troubling events that leave her stranded on the island with nothing but her notebook in hand.

On the island, Alex solves puzzles to discover mysterious clues and secrets. Soon, Alex also finds herself making decisions that will dramatically alter her future, her survival is at stake. Help Alexandra explore the island's dark and unfortunate history before she too is forever vanished.

Narrative Pillars (Key elements)

- **Suspicion** - One of our requirements were to bring forward certain feelings through the narrative. We chose to make a serious story and felt that the feeling of suspicion would give us the most freedom in making the type of narrative-driven game that we, as a team, wanted to create.
- **Story-driven Adventure using Hero's Journey** - We, as a team, made the decision to create a single-player experience and decided to make the narrative a big part of the gameplay. We thought that the idea of an adventure would fit in nicely with that decision as we believe it would make the game feel more interesting to the players.
- **Exploration-based Experience** - Many of our team members were set on creating environments, and so we decided to use this strength by including exploration in not only the gameplay, but also the narrative. We also believed that having this pillar would positively support the requirements in our brief.



Narrative World Building

Origin

Tropical, deserted paradise-island within the Bermuda triangle. Remains of previous inhabitants are spread throughout the island in the form of buildings and old structures. Although the date and time is unknown, the buildings seem to have been built in the early 1900s. We believe that the idea of an unexplored island leaves a lot of room for exploration and suspicion.



Genre

Thriller / Drama

Since we decided to make suspicion a big part of our story, we believe thriller and drama can help us keep the audience on the edge and create more intense and serious emotional events.

Tone

Dark tone

Since we decided on a serious story filled with suspicion and exploration, we found that a dark tone would be the most fitting.

Tropes

Insecurity System

To enhance the emotions, suspicion, and drama; we decided to use an Insecurity System as a trope for our story. This means that if any facility has a security system, it will always be less secure and much "cooler" looking than its real-world counterpart. We believe that this gives us many options in creating puzzle mechanics and mysteries in the gameplay.

Conflict

The protagonist is stuck on the island and there is a mistrust between the protagonist and the antagonist that grows through-out the story.

Scope

The status and future of the protagonist and the side-character.

History

Some smaller military operations once took place on the island. The details of what really happened on the island are unknown, but the events resulted in the operators abandoning their settlement and with the antagonist, James, making it his new home. Since then, anyone who has come near the island has mysteriously disappeared.

When the island was later rediscovered by regular citizens, they believed the island to be a newly discovered and uninhabited island. Side-character, Dr. Stanley Moore, decided to make it his mission to explore the island when something went wrong. Dr. Moore and his team suddenly went missing for, according to the public, unknown and mysterious reasons.

Possible Futures

The protagonist discovers the truth of what happened Stanley Moore and either:

- a) Escapes the island with James and becomes a successful from her discovery.
- b) Abandons her mission by escaping alone without fully investigating the situation.
- c) Stays on the island where she eventually dies, never completing her mission.

Stakeholders

Both the protagonist and the antagonist are stakeholders in this story.



Character Development

Protagonist (Alexandra McCarter)



What are they like?

Alexandra McCarter or Alex, as she calls herself, is a female journalist who has traveled to the island to investigate the mysterious disappearance of Dr. Stanley Moore, and his expedition. Much about Alex is unknown, yet she still comes across as a strong, confident, and independent person. She is also a lone wolf and much of her weakness comes from that. She has a tough time trusting people and asking for help.

Because of her weakness, Alex has struggled to become successful in her career. Alex sees this new mission as a desperate attempt at becoming successful and properly recognized as a journalist.

What they want

Alex's inner desire is to overcome her inner conflicts and regaining trust in people. Her external want is to solve the mystery of the island and become a successful journalist.

What they do to get what they want

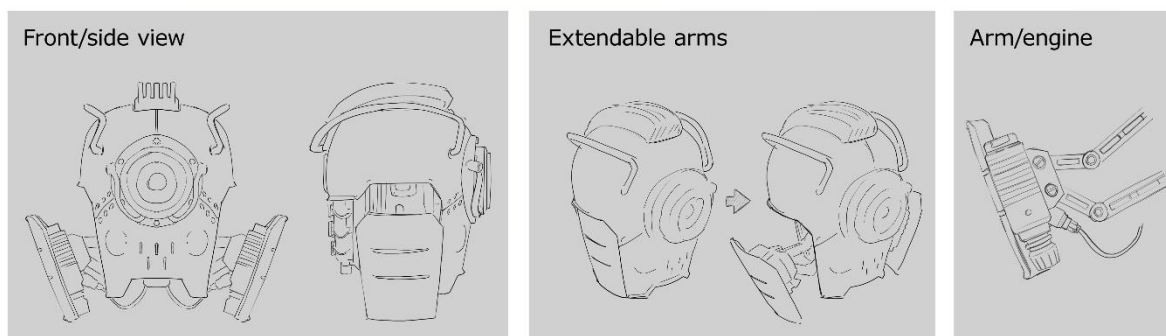
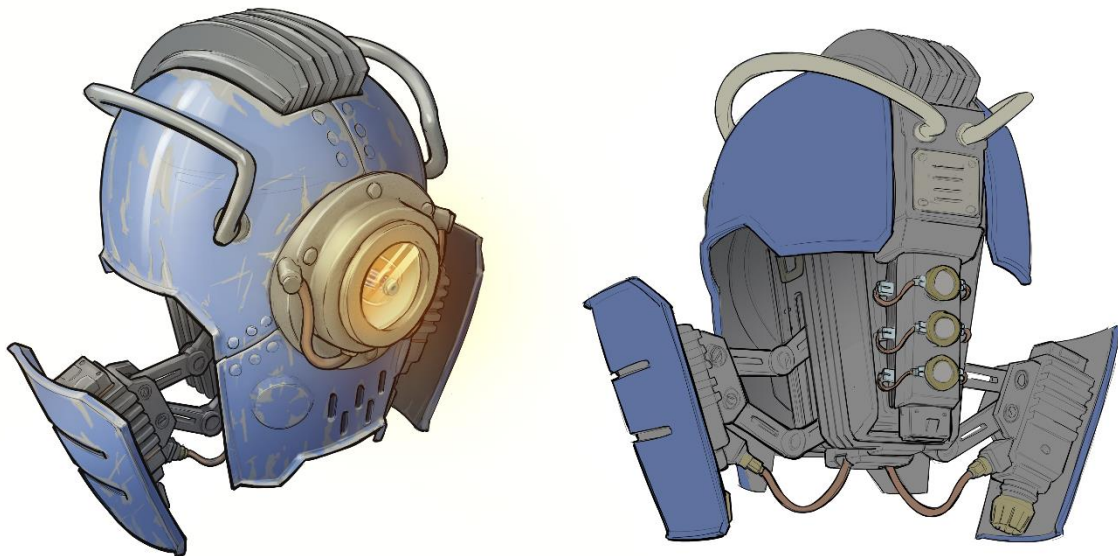
Alex explores the island in search of clues, resources. She also solves puzzles to help her progress to new areas.

Why we have made these decisions

Alex is very mysterious and ambiguous to give the players room to express themselves through her, yet she is also strong enough to fulfill those expressions. We also believe that her weakness will increase the feeling of suspicion.

Antagonist (Project: FG19-P3 "James")

THE ROBOT



What are they like?

Project: FG19-P3, also known as James, is an old and lonely AI robot. The military created James as a secret weapon, but the experiment failed, and they decided to send the robot to the island where he was driven mad by the isolation and lack of proper resources.

What they want

James's inner desire is to stop his internal suffering. His external desire is to seek company, and James cares little about if they are living or dead.

What they do to get what they want

He manipulates, gaslights and violently forces people to stay on the island. Before Dr. Moore locked James inside the workshop, James would also collect trash and other items that wash up on the beach as he believes they carry sentimental value.

Why we have made these decisions

The idea was to create an antagonist that was on the line between good and bad, a character that would increase the suspicion and yet fill the role of an antagonist in the story. We decided on making James a robot quite early in the process as we believe that most people have a natural distrust towards robots.

Side-Character (Dr. Stanley Moore)



What are they like?

Dr. Stanley Moore is a deceased man who was once an esteemed archaeologist. He had set out to explore the newly discovered island within the Bermuda triangle. In a storm, his ship unfortunately crashed, and Stan woke up on the island without his expedition team.

What they want

Dr. Moore is an explorer and wants to learn. He seeks out the history and secrets of the island but as time goes on, he starts to miss his earlier life ever more.

What they do to get want they want

He sets up a camp and decides to settle down. He also leaves hidden journal pages and clues around the island in case his team or anyone else would find them.

Why we have made these decisions

Because of his unfortunate disappearance and death, little about Dr. Moore is known. We made this choice to increase the suspicion in the story and to give us options in creating clues for the player.

Dr. Moore is also similar to Alex. This is so that the player can get better clues and a guideline on what exactly might happen to Alex on the island if she makes the same mistakes.

The narrative often refers to Stanley Moore as Dr. Moore. This is an intentional reference to Dr. Jones, the fictional archaeologist also known as Indiana Jones. We believe that this also increases the seeming status of the character, so that the player can more clearly perceive Dr. Moore as an important person.

How these people conflict

Alex intends to draft a story on the disappearance of Dr. Stan Moore. Dr. Moore was never aware of Alex's existence. James and Dr. Moore initially got along well, but a mistrust quickly grew as Dr. Moore discovered more about the robot. James sees much of Dr. Moore in Alex and is therefore curious but incredibly careful.

Plot

1. **Call to Adventure:** Alex arrives on the beach and needs to find the key to the workshop to reach the main parts of the island.
2. **First Threshold:** Alex finds the first note from Dr. Moore. It warns Alex about the robot, James.
3. **Meeting the Mentor:** Alex solves the first puzzle which leads her inside the workshop where she finds the robot James. Inside she finds more warnings from Dr. Moore, and a note that reveals the existence of a sturdy raft on the island which Dr. Moore was in progress of building.
4. **Challenges and Temptations:** Alex finds James in different areas of the island and talks to Alex in ways which increase her mistrust against him. Alex finds clues and notes about Dr. Moore's disappearance as well as the island's secrets.
5. **Revelation:** Alex discovers James's true intentions inside Stanley Moore's hut and discovers the fate of Dr. Moore. She also finds the key to the door which unlocks the area that can take her to the raft.
6. **Transformation:** Alex makes her way towards the workshop and she now sees the island with new eyes, it is clearly no longer safe.
7. **Atonement:** Alex is about to board the boat but as she is about to leave, James confronts her. He is upfront and confesses to Alex about the truth and his intentions.
8. **Return:** The game ends. Alex has learned everything she could about what happened on the island and must make the decision to either leave or stay on the island.