Lost Hours Game Design Document (2025 WIP)

Developer: McKinley Massacre Studios

Game Engine: Unity (6.2)

Game Webpage: http://mckinleymassacre.com/losthours

Lost Hours Official Discord: https://discord.gg/uHPSDXk3Az

Itch.io: https://mckinleymassacre.itch.io/lost-hours

GDD Last Updated: October 2025

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Updates from June 2024 GDD:

>New Screenshots

>Removed misc unnecessary content

>Updated journal info with new Codex info

>Misc updates

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Introduction
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Lost Hours is a 3rd person survival horror RPG game based on iconic survival horror games such as *Silent Hill* and *Resident Evil*, but with much of its own personality.

This game is being created in the Unity engine using the asset Game Creator 2, a suite of development tools created by Catsoft Works, along with the use of many other assets to achieve my goals for this game. In the process I've learned quite a bit of coding, and have also made many of my own custom extensions and modifications to both Game Creator 2 and other assets.

This project has come a long way since its original conception, and has evolved many times. This is an outline of the most recent plans (date listed under title) for development, and the directions I intend to take, or have begun building already. It is constantly being edited, added to, and having pieces scrapped, so until this document is officially "completed", expect many development changes and alterations, as well as only partial completion of this GDD as I work out more specific mechanics, and especially story.

Important Note: This GDD is **SPOILER-FREE.** It only contains basic information, even in terms of story, so feel free to read without fear of having anything ruined for you upon playing the actual game.

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Genre

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While its main genre is survival horror, *Lost Hours* also includes many RPG elements, some branching storylines (including different endings), tasks (sidequests), exploration encouragement, and a survival-based (fight, flight, or sneak) combat system, as well as visual novel styled cutscenes and cinematics.

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Story

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At the start of the story, we learn that Allison has received an ominous and worrisome email from her best friend, Shane, who still lives in her old home town of Redwater, a small little tourist town up in the mountains. He lives and helps work part-time within the Lakeview Psychiatric Institute, where he has lived almost his entire life, having a strange history and mental maladies himself. Now, it seems the other patients, including him, are becoming agitated or uncomfortable. Nervous. Over what, he's not sure, but he would like to see Allison this weekend and get out of there for a while. Worried, Allison leaves for Redwater immediately, despite the evening hour.

Gameplay starts just after Allison's car stalls on the way to the motel she stays at during her visits to Redwater. After reaching it on foot, and eventually reaching the town of Redwater, she and Shane soon discover that the town they thought they knew has been changed into some sort of dark, foggy ghost town. Creatures impossible to reality now stalk the streets, and as Allison and Shane investigate further, a terrifying truth dawns on them: these creatures seem to stem from the very minds of the remaining inhabitants of the town, and the town itself slowly seems to be shifting into some sort of shared nightmare.

With little to go on but the cryptic riddles of an escaped LIP patient and the words of a demon-eyed man of unknown origin, Allison and Shane are forced to explore the town in search of answers with the help of newfound allies discovered along the way. As they progress, more will be revealed about the truth behind many of the ominous myths of Redwater, the characters now trapped there, and perhaps even of reality itself.

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Visuals

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Graphics Style

To tie *Lost Hours* in with my other works, I decided to go with a graphic novel/comic style which is present in all graphics, from the environment, to the character and creature models and even some of the UI.

The 3D models in the game will be specifically painted with "line art"-like details, as well as having a specialized shader applied to them to show the outline from different angles. This can be thought of as akin to a game like *Borderlands* or Telltale games such as *The Walking Dead*.

The secondary and tertiary graphics aesthetics will be grungy paperwork and generally cool colours, save for old paper texture; this will be present in most graphical elements and is supposed to add to the "dark and cold" mood of the game, as well as being grungy due to the presence of the "otherworld", which often looks long abandoned.

Alpha Screenshots

In the above screenshots (and the alpha version of the game in general), I am using Ready Player Me models for testing purposes. Fully custom models will be created in the future. Props and environments were made using UModeler X Plus, with some of the smaller interactable vegetation created with Broccoli Tree Creator, and the trees from the asset pack Pure Nature 2: Redwood.

Cinematics & Cutscenes

I consider "cutscenes" and "cinematics" two separate things, and while both tell the story, they are very different in design., both visually, and under-the-hood. I made this distinction based on old video game designs.

Cutscenes are simple gameplay breaks, and are displayed in a visual novel style, as an overlay of the screen with (usually) portraits of the player character(s) on the left side, and the spoken to character(s) portrait(s) on the right. Speech appears in a box at the bottom, with a label as to who is talk above it (either on the left or right side). In older video games, these are usually simple sequences of paused gameplay that shows character talking in game-rendered view, as opposed to cinematics (see below).

Cinematics are major gameplay disruptions that show a movie-like video sequence. In older video games, including *Silent Hill*, these were usually rendered separately from the game itself (hence why they often showed better or different graphics than the actual gameplay). In *Lost Hours*, these scenes will be done as lightly animated, graphic novel style panel-by-panel sequences, sometimes containing player interaction elements such as quick-time events (QTEs) or choices. I will likely have a "Press E to Continue" prompt of some sort, to allow players to read at their own pace, and while most animations will be "looping", I may have a button to repeat certain animations, but I haven't entirely decided on how necessary this might be as of yet.

Camera and Player View

The game is in 3rd person, similar to the classic *Silent Hill* games, with a single camera located above the character. Unlike the *Silent Hill* games (and most other traditional survival horror games) the camera can be rotated freely on a single axis around the character, allowing for the player to look around the environment while focusing on the main player.

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Gameplay: Overview

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Survival Horror with RPG Mechanics

I've always had a love for old survival horror games, but also a huge attraction to RPGs. There have been many crossovers of such genres since I was a child, but I couldn't help thinking about how a game like *Resident Evil* or *Silent Hill* would play had they any sort of RPG mechanic (something *The Evil Within* did, but I wanted something a little more like the classic *Silent Hill* games).

In *Lost Hours*, the RPG mechanics are mostly in the characters and enemies, but will also exist on weapons, allowing for you to upgrade your favorite weapons using aether (an item rarely found, so use it sparingly). Upgrading a weapon works in a similar way as upgrading (or leveling up) a character, and the weapon, like your character, will get stronger.

Leveling up your character will be the same as other RPGs, but with a slight twist. Yes, defeating enemies will give you EXP, but that is not the only thing that will raise your EXP bar. Finding hidden items, succeeding in certain events, and finishing Tasks and Objectives will likewise raise your EXP, so combat isn't ultimately necessary. You'll want to balance the resources you may use in battle with how much EXP you may get, and whether or not that aether drop chance is worth it.

Each character as they level up will allow for you to specialize their stats and unlock special skills, some of which are character specific. To explore anything and everything, you'll likely want to take care of a number of characters, but you'll need to keep them healthy (and be careful where you take them, as characters *do* have weaknesses, both physically and mentally). New skills will sometimes help in combat, or have an effect on the world or an interaction they can use within the world, so you'll have a lot of options and things to work toward while exploring.

The Gameplay Loop

The gameplay loop for *Lost Hours* is, in its most basic form, the same as that of traditional survival horror games such as *Silent Hill* or *Resident Evil*. You will find an explorable area, and certain rooms within it will be open for further exploration; however, some will be locked. Some of these areas will contain puzzles or riddles you

will need to solve to obtain items needed to move forward. You will need to find such items to unlock ways into further locked areas, eventually leading you to your end goal of the level (boss fight, special item, etc).

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Gameplay: Exploration
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Exploration Overview

Exploration is the most important aspect of the game, and is a major part of the gameplay loop. Heavy care should be put into the design behind the exploration, and in turn, level design.

Exploration will consist of traversing areas while often utilizing tools and objects to interact with the environment, opening new areas, bypassing dangerous enemies, or finding hidden items or clues. There will be many interactable objects, and many tools to use to interact with said objects (sometimes tools will not be needed to interact, but may help or open other options). Many of these tools are also usable as weapons (see Weapons section).

Semi-Open World

While the beginning of *Lost Hours* is mostly introductory and thus linear, once reaching the town proper, a larger area opens up for the player to explore. While many places may be plot-locked or task-locked, there will be many areas and objects to interact with, and exploring may trigger specific Tasks to appear (such as finding notes that may start a Task, etc) or allow you to find and recruit certain characters, and, of course, investigate their specific backstories (which will in turn unlock new areas).

Limited Inventory

Unlike *Silent Hill*, *Lost Hours* will be more akin to *Resident Evil* in the sense that there will be a limited inventory mechanic. Each item takes up a single slot, and each character begins with 12 slots. This number can be expanded in different ways. Non-key items may be dropped to make space for other more useful items. There will also be a chest at the Silverwind Cafe & Diner (see respective section below) to store items for later use.

Fast Travel

Since the town of Redwater is large, fast travel was a necessity for design. Being a tourist town, I decided that bus stops with tourist information would be a good idea for such things, not the characters are actually taking an otherwordly bus, but just an object related to travel (and allows you to select a location on a map of Redwater pretty realistically).

Since you are not actually taking a bus, the characters are actually traveling; the difference is the player doesn't need to do it themselves, and can skip the traveling process to speed up movement around the town. This isn't a free pass, though. At the end of fast travel, you will be given a "report" of events, if any, that happened during travel. On occasion, nothing big may have happened, and it will indeed be a free pass, but this is a rare occurrence. Depending on the current story, following characters, character stats, and/or other variables, events

will occur, and said events will furthermore be impacted by characters stats or other things, such as their personalities. You may lose Health or Sanity, come across items, or receive status effects, among other events. Some will force you to choose outcomes, and that may also affect travel, for example, forcing the characters to stop mid-travel for whatever reason).

You should weigh the often random risks of fast travel with simply traveling manually, where you often have more control over what happens, or have the chance to find further collectables or interactables. But even that can come with its risk. Choose wisely.

Items

Items are, obviously, of massive importance to Lost Hours, especially considering the gameplay loop focus on "key items". They are also often the subject of many Tasks (character requests) from the Cafe.

Items fall into one of the below categories:

- **Supplies**
    - Supplies are field-usable items with positive effects, such as healing. Some items can be even be used on the environment, or on other characters for bonus effects such as added friendship. Some supplies can be taken back to the Cafe to upgrade or fix it.
- **Ammo**
    - Ammo is any ammunition or fuel for firearms, such as bullets, propane, or gasoline. Note: Nails for the nail gun are considered supplies, not ammo, as they are generally used more often for other things.
- **Key Items**
    - The most important items in the game, used to solve environmental puzzles. They can be dropped, but will be marked on the map where they have been dropped so you don't lose track of them.
- **Equippable**
    - Usually weapons, but a few other items are equippable as well, such as flares.
- **Collectables**
    - Unique items that aren't added to your inventory, but your journal(s) instead. They are story or character related and usually reference some sort of lore, or can effect gameplay later on (an example being that you can show characters some items and ask them about it).

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Gameplay: Combat

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Combat Overview

Combat is a heavily disputed topic in the horror genre nowadays, and while I agree it CAN make games less scary, I do not believe it is the end-all aspect of true "horror" like many argue (i.e. "if a game has combat it becomes no longer scary"). If done right, combat does not necessarily affect the "horror value" of a game, if the game design

around it is well executed. *Fatal Frame* is a great example of this, as the ghosts are defeatable, and yet the game is terrifying. Why? Because of the game design itself surrounding not just the combat but the rest of the game as well (sometimes just having to look at those enemies to kill them is hard).

My final decision for *Lost Hours* is that it **will** have combat, and I will not be changing this (unfortunately I've gotten into arguments over this with some), as it is a main, but not always required, aspect of the game. However, there will be boss fights and such.

Weapons

Silent Hill had a lot of interesting survival horror weapons, but once you found one that was better, it made all old weapons obsolete. So what if even the weaker items actually had a use? Say, for example, the first and most basic you get to defend yourself from monsters is the Steel Pipe. Not the greatest weapon, especially when compared to something you may find later like a Fire Axe. But perhaps the Steel Pipe has more use to it than simple combat? In *Lost Hours*, it does. It comes with a Leverage ability and a Reach ability, both of which can be used to interact with objects in the environment. (See "Interact with the World" in the Exploration and Environment section for more information).

Weapons are considered either 1-handed or 2-handed, and fall under different damage categories, which can sometimes be changed depending on how you use them (for example, the kitchen knife is generally a slashing weapon and deals Sharp damage; however, you may also stab with it, which deals Pierce damage). Enemies may have weaknesses and resistances to certain damage types, and damage types also often govern status effects. They are also affected by character skills and proficiency.

Furthermore, weapons can also be utilized not just for combat but exploration, as well. Generally all weapons have at least one field usage, of varying values (for example, a Claw Hammer will have a significantly lower Break value than a Sledgehammer). This value is sometimes affected by character stats such as Strength or Dexterity.

Weapon Durability

Weapons all have durability meters, and the more you use them, the more damage they will take. When their durability is depleted, they will deal significantly less damage than they normally would, and often will be unable to be used for their field abilities, such as Slicing. To repair them, you will need to return to the Cafe after having the Workshop area set up, and apply the necessary items to repair the weapon (different weapons will require different items to repair). Some commonly needed supplies for the workshop are: Scrap, Glue, Duct Tape. Other items may be needed, such as a gun maintenance kit for firearms.

Weapon Usages
- **Break**
    - The ability to shatter glass or break certain objects, allowing for access to new areas, break up items into pieces, or allow access to otherwise inaccessible items.
- **Slice**
    - Similar to the Break ability, Slice will sometimes allow access to new areas, or allow for interaction

with objects in the world, such as creating rags from blankets and curtains, etc.

- **Leverage**
  - The ability to move stuck or large objects. Can also be used to open special jammed doors.
- **Add/Remove Nails or Screws**
  - A multi-use ability to either add (if in Inventory) or remove nails or screws from objects. Can be used to increase defenses at the Diner, or interact with objects such as boarded up windows and doors (nails), and electrical boxes or vents (screws).
- **Reach**
  - A Reach weapon can be used to grab otherwise inaccessible objects, such as pull-down ladders or far away items.

Damage Types

- **Slash**
  - Sharp weapons often deal Bleed status effects, and are usually governed by the Dexterity stat.
- **Blunt**
  - Blunt weapons usually deal Stun or can put the enemy in a Downed state.
- **Pierce**
  - Pierce weapon effects have the ability to possibly add a Vulnerable status to an enemy.
- **Fire**
  - Any weapon that deals fire damage has a chance to Burn the enemy, causing ongoing damage and sometimes resulting in a Vulnerable status.
- **Electrical**
  - Weapons that electrocute enemies have a chance for multiple status effects, such as Vulnerable, Stun, or even Downed conditions.

Opportunity Weapons

Opportunity Weapons are a fun little strategic option if you don't want to waste the durability of your inventory weapons, or have a better option with one of the available opportunity weapons (happens sometimes). Opportunity weapons exist in a lot of games, and are exactly how they sound; opportunistic weapons that exist in the environment. Items such as chairs, bricks, rocks, etc. While some may require certain stat thresholds to interact with (such as chairs or larger objects), most of these items can be utilized either as weapons or even distractions. For example, you can smash an enemy over the head with a brick, but you could also toss the brick over somewhere else, and the enemy may alert and follow the sound, allowing you to sneak past it. Opportunity weapons are not added to your inventory, and are dropped when unequipped.

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Gameplay: Stats

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Stats Overview

As with all RPGs, stats are a major part of *Lost Hours'* design. They often designate how, and sometimes even what, you can interact with, and will also affect story such as dialogue sequences, cinematics, or choices, among many other gameplay elements.

All stats have the ability to be "tested" (see "Stat Checks" below) and may also affect unlockable skills (you may need a certain stat at a certain number to unlock a specific skill).

It is up to you whether you would like to shore up character's weaknesses, or nurture their strengths, or perhaps do a bit of both. Remember that your choices may affect that character's story or the plot as a whole.

Stat Checks

Stat checks, sometimes called challenges or tests in other games, happen when the game will compare your stat to a needed value to pass some specific challenge. For example, if you attempt to shoulder open a jammed door, you will need to pass a Strength check. If the door requires a Strength stat of 20, and you have a Strength stat of 17, you may attempt the check with an 85% chance of succeeding.

Stat List

- **Level**
  - A cumulative value reflecting how much the character has achieved in the game. Raise your level by gaining EXP (experience points). EXP can be gained in many different ways, from raising your other stats, defeating enemies, finding collectables, or completing Tasks and Objectives.
- **Health**
  - The life value of the character. When this reaches 0, they will "die" (see "Death & Game Over" section).
- **Sanity**
  - The mental stability of the character. When this reaches 0, they will enter a Terror state (see "Status Effects" below).
- **Stamina**
  - The physical energy of the character. Depletes when running or attacking, among some other actions, and replenishes automatically when resting or walking.
- **Strength**
  - The character's physical strength. Generally affects the damage output of most Blunt weapons.
- **Perception**
  - The character's ability to perceive the world around them. Governs the effectiveness of the Investigate skill, and sometimes leads to specific dialogue options or even alterations.
- **Dexterity**
  - The character's ability to handle and manipulate objects. This often affects the damage of sharp weapons, or the accuracy of firearms.
- **Stealth**
  - The character's ability to pass by unseen by enemies.

- **Agility**
  - The characters nimbleness, often affecting footwork or other traversal tasks such as climbing, jumping, balancing, etc.
- **Fortitude**
  - The physical resistance of the character. Raises resistance to physical status effects.
- **Willpower**
  - The mental resistance of the character. Raises resistance to mental status effects.

Note: *I may add links to Health, Sanity, and Stamina to Fortitude, Willpower, and Agility, respectively, instead of just the Skyrim-esque +10 points on level up.*

Afflictions (Status Effects)

- **Bleed**
  - Bleed will slowly drain a character's Health over time, and can be fatal if not stopped. Bleed "stacks" are the amount of damage the character takes every so often.
- **Injured (Leg, Arm, Body)**
  - Depending on the noted injury, this may affect the characters stats (i.e. a leg injury will reduce Agility).
- **Dying**
  - Automatically assigned when a character reaches 0 Health. Any time a character takes damage while having the Dying status, they have a chance for death (see "Death & Game Over" section).
- **Panic**
  - Automatically assigned when a character reaches 25% Sanity. Panic lowers Willpower by [amount]. Characters with the Panic status may also act differently than normal.
- **Terror**
  - Automatically assigned when a character reaches 0 Sanity. Works similarly to Dying, but if a character takes any Sanity damage while Terrorized, they have a chance to die (sometimes they will suffer heart attacks, other times...something else).
- **Daze**
  - The character or enemy is stunned for a set number of seconds, depending on the Daze stack and cannot act.
- **Downed**
  - Similar to the Daze status, but the affected entity has fallen to the ground, allowing for specific follow-up attacks.
- **Vulnerable**
  - Occurs when an enemy's weakness has been exposed. Every attack during this period will result in a critical hit.
- **Chill**
  - The character becomes slowed, and their stamina drains while the Chill status is active. They also take periodic damage a few times.

- **Burn**
  - An entity with the Burn status takes damage based on its stack, similar to Bleeding. While actively on fire, it may also set fire to other objects or traps.
- **Infected**
  - A character who is Infected will have their Health depleted gradually over a set period of time. Infection will go away on its own, so keep the character safe until it does so, or cure them using Antibiotics.

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Gameplay: Skills

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Skills Overview

Skills in *Lost Hours* are viewable via each characters Skill Tree. Some skills are generic, and all or a few characters may have some of the same skills. However, some skills are unique to the character. Skills are unlocked by spending Skill Points, which are generally earned by leveling up, but can also be earned in other ways.

Unlock Requirements

Besides needing Skill Points to unlock new skills, certain skills may also have other prerequisites, such as a stat needing to be at least a certain value, another skill first being unlocked (indicated by a branch), or even story or relationship requirements. Some of these requirements may be secret. There may be clues as to how to unlock them as you play.

Hidden Skills

Some Skills may appear as a ???, indicating they are hidden skills. As you play, you may receive clues as to how to unlock them. These hidden skills usually have to do with the characters story, or relationships.

Skill Types

Skills are divided into two major categories: Active and Passive.
- **Active Skills**
  - These Skills be manually activated by the player, and can usually be assigned to a Skill Menu for quick use. The Investigate Skill (the first unlockable skill) is considered "active".
- **Passive Skills**
  - Passive skills, sometimes called "abilities", do not need to be activated; they are either always active, or activate automatically under specific circumstances. These can range from simple stat boosts when using certain weapons, to effects such as "Adrenaline Rush", which gives you free stamina for a few seconds after certain events.

Furthermore, Skills of both Passive and Active types are divided into sub-categories: Character, Combat, and Exploration.*

- **Character**
  - Things like temporary or permanent stat-boosts or effects that don't fall into the below categories are organized here.
- **Combat**
  - Skills relating to weapons, or new attacks or abilities.
- **Exploration**
  - Skills relating to exploration, such as Investigate, or abilities that may give you a boost when interacting with some objects.

*This is subject to change based on how I want to visually design the Skill Trees.

Upgrading Skills

Often times, Skills have multiple upgrades. This is indicated by an "x/X" on the icon, where x is the current level of the skill, and X is the max level for the skill. Upgrading increases effects of the skill, and can sometimes even add new effects. You will be able to preview such changes before upgrading.

Character Flaws and Disorders:

Flaws and Disorders are basically "negative skills" often exclusive to each character, and each character comes with at least 2. A horror story isn't complete without characters holding deep flaws, secrets, or other darknesses, and I wanted these to play a major role in the gameplay for *Lost Hours*. By playing through the game, there may be ways to help these characters with their Flaws or Disorders so that they may not suffer as much from them, if at all...Be sure to pursue side objectives and characters backstories to see what you can help with if you'd like that character to be a more reliable ally.

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Gameplay: The Silverwind Cafe & Diner

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The Silverwind Cafe & Diner is a major area in the game, as you will be returning to it often to check in with other characters, repair weapons, change your exploration team, and more. It is a safehouse, but be aware that it is not *always* safe. You must work to keep it that way (see "Dangers" below).

In the story, the characters end up using the Silverwind Cafe & Diner as a safehouse after discovering a number of people already holed up inside, including Naomi, who becomes an important character later on, and Abel, who decides to protect those inside from the outdoor creatures.

Characters

While in the Cafe, you may build a "team" of sorts, of up to 3 (was originally 4 but I'm rethinking mechanics now :P) characters. Remember that each character has their own weakness, strengths, and skills, as well as stats and inventories. Some characters may be better suited for certain situations than others. Some characters may not even be willing to participate in some things or enter certain locations (which may also be a clue as to them and their story).

The Mysterious Journal

After meeting Dr. Navarro for the first time, he will give you parts of a tattered and partially burned journal he found at his desk. The characters will take this journal back and leave it at the counter of the Cafe for later inspection whenever needed. By finding pages of this journal during exploration, you may unlock extra "levels" (prologue sequences that musts be played in order), and lots of "prequel" lore. **This will likely be the main plotline,** but I have not entirely decided yet.

Workbench

The right corner of the Cafe's counter becomes dedicated to being what is basically a workbench to create, combine and repair items and weapons. It must be supplied with certain items to do so, such as scrap and glue.

Tasks

Other characters may have specific requests for you, such as finding them certain items or doing certain things. When this happens, an icon will appear over their head, indicating that they have a Task they would like you to fulfill. Doing so will give you EXP and perhaps other rewards.

Ending the "Day"

While there are not actual day and night cycles in the game, the characters can choose to "end the day" by selecting their beds, and the other characters will agree that they should rest. Doing so "resets" the world; items and enemies will respawn (not always in the same places, however) and some events may occur. If you are stuck, this is a possible solution if you have run out of consumable items, usable weapons, etc. It may also further certain storylines.

Dangers

The major inspiration here is *Silent Hill 4: The Room*, where your apartment is your "safehouse", but is not necessarily always safe, and you may return to certain dangers that you'll need to take care of if you don't want your life sapped when near the "hauntings".

If the characters inhabiting the Cafe become low on Sanity, certain creatures may spawn, or other terrifying events (aka "hauntings") may occur that will damage characters or drain Sanity further until tended to. Different events will need to be dealt with in different manners. You will often gain EXP for clearing the hauntings, but be aware you may suffer your own Health or Sanity loss from doing so.

Other creatures will occasionally attack the Cafe, damaging any defenses you may have put up. You will need to repair these, or risk a full break-in.

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Gameplay: Characters

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Characters are the driving force of *Lost Hours*, and the environment and enemies are literally shaped around them and their minds. They are also designed to be very dynamic, and I want them to seem like living, breathing

people, and be talked to, interacted with, and related to as such. Each characters have very specific backstories, personalities, and even stats that reflect aspects of themselves, as well as specific skills relating to their character and experiences.

The characters in the game can also form bonds with each other, unlocking anything from small sequences of dialogue, to new skills, to major story changes within either their own stories or the main plot.

Enemies in the game all relate back to a specific character; none of them are random in design. All creatures and monsters stem
from a fear or other malady of a characters mind.

Relationships

As characters interact with each other, their relationships will grow, unlocking things from new abilities, skills and behaviours, to adding things like new dialogue options with them, which in turn may unlock new chapters to their respective backstories, or other side quests/points of interest.

Behaviours

Characters have natural behaviours as well as instructional behaviours. Their natural behaviours, as presumed, is the behaviour they have as standard. These behaviours can be modified by giving them different instructions, but some of these actions may need to be unlocked via friendship or other requirements before they can be used (for example, you're not probably not necessarily going to get a character you just met to protect you in the face of a monster that terrifies them).

Characters also have a very human tendency to break instruction and do something else. These actions may chang based on your relationship with the character.

Character Death

Note: this is not an official mechanic just yet, but rather an idea.

When a character dies, it is not necessarily permanent. You are in a very strange otherworld, after all. Instead of dying, they are simply transferred to a "deeper level" of the otherworld. You may talk to Etchemin or the Caretaker to attempt to retrieve them from these deeper levels and bring them back. Be aware, however, that the longer they stay there, the more detrimental the effects. The level they are stuck in will also be inhabited by their monsters and formed around their minds. Each character will have a differently designed death level.

Game Over

It is possible to get a Game Over notice, forcing you to restart from your last save. If you are playing an important story sequence and a character dies, you will get a Game Over. Likewise, if all playable characters die, you will also get a Game Over.

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Characters

NOTE: Since I'm done with artwork for everyone yet, I've added some WIPs and my character references/how I imagine them (in general).

Characters are the main drivers of the story for Lost Hours, and each of the characters have complex histories and personalities that will affect how they will interact with you and their surroundings. They will also have explorable side stories of varying degrees, some completely separate, while others may affect the overarching story later on.

As mentioned earlier in this document, befriendable characters also have their own skill trees (and flaws), some with generic skills, and others specific to the character.

Below is some quick, non-spoiler information for *some* characters featured in the game (not all). I've provided a couple early Skills and Flaws relating to each character, but obviously this is not a complete list, for the sake of spoilers. Some names really will be "???" in the beginning, before you discover exactly what is going on with that character.

Allison Winstead

Role: Protagonist (Primary)

Age: 22

Occupation: Librarian Assistant

Personality: Allison is generally a calm, level-headed, and realistic young woman who loves to read and currently works at her towns library. Despite being kind, she is also stern when necessary and able to keep people in line by taking charge. She tends to be stubborn. Allison has never judged Shane for his issues, and protects him and his mental health adamantly.

Early Story: Allison grew up in Redwater but moved to Nightfall Bay with her family at the age of 19. She still visits Shane in Redwater often, hence the start of the game's story. She has a scar on her right forearm that came from playing in the forest with Shane as children and falling on a sharp tree branch. She always tends to wear long sleeves and hides this scar often, not wanting to talk about it despite it having been a simple accident.

Skill(s):

-**Reassurance (Passive)**: When Allison is around, Sanity restoration for other characters is 10% greater.

-**Flash Photo (Active)**: After Allison obtains the Polaroid Camera, she can use it to stun some enemies or cause diversions.

Flaw(s):

-**Clutz**: -10% to total Dexterity, as well as the success of certain interactions.

-**Automatophobia**: Fear of uncanny things, such as statues or mannequins. Sanity drains gradually when around these objects. Allison also takes 10% more damage from Wroughthorses.

Model and Design References

Model Reference Sheet:
Allison
{Outfit #1: Without Jacket}

Design Notes

-Primary main character; model of high importance

-22 year old female; 5' 5"

-Visual inspirations: Heather Mason (*Silent Hill 3*), Ramona Flowers (*Scott Pilgrim Vs. The World*)

-Naturally auburn hair w/ freckles; dark hazel eyes

-White jacket (see outfit #2) contrasts the darkness of the game and represents Allison's purity and good heart

-Colour palette is otherwise generally warm, in contrast yet again to the main environment(s) of the game

-Her contrasting color design represents her ambition to fight the circumstances, as well as her often stubborn personality

-Only slightly feminine choice of boots: Allison is a tomboy and generally dislikes "girly" clothing and shoes

-Red shirt is symbolic of her being Silas' love interest

-Large scar on right forearm

LOST HOURS
mckinleymassacre.itch.io/lost-hours

(c) McKinley Massacre Studios

Outfit #2 Coming Soon!

Visual References:

Shane Bachman

Role: Protagonist (Secondary)

Age: 22

Occupation: None (Sometimes helps out at LPI)

Personality:

Early Story: Allison's 22 year old best friend from childhood. Contrary to others immediate assumptions, he and Allison have never had a romantic relationship, acting more as siblings. Shane unfortunately has suffered with severe mental issues since childhood, being diagnosed with schizophrenia, severe anxiety and depression, and multiple phobias from a very young age. No one is quite sure where he came from; he was found orphaned in the streets of Redwater at the age of 5, and with no family to care for him, was instead adopted by the local psychiatric facility due to his apparent mental trauma. The Lakeview Psychiatric Institute quickly became his home, and the employees his family, with Catherine, his primary caregiver, becoming a mother figure for him.

Skill(s):

-**Astute (Passive)**: Gains bonus data for defeating enemies (proficiency) and solving puzzles (EXP).

-**Sketch (Active)**: Use on a defeated enemies body to study it, gaining bonus EXP for Shane and his friends (EXP

based on creature and level). Usable once per day.

Flaw(s):

-***Spectrophobia***: An intense fear of mirrors. Loses Sanity gradually when near them.

-***Subdued Schizophrenia***: When Sanity is suffering, starts to see and hear things that might not really exist.

Catherine Kepler

Role: Background Character

Age: 47

Occupation: Nurse

Personality: Gentle and kind, Catherine is a sweet woman who cares for all of her patients, but especially Shane, seeing him almost as a son she never got to have. She is protective, and like Allison, can also been stern when necessary, but it's always out of caring and never out of anger or aggression. She is generally level-headed and happy, but the current situation has her worried and on edge.

Early Story: Catherine is a nurse from the Lakeview Psychiatric Institute, assigned to Shane as his primary caregiver due to his mental health. She is also very close with Allison and is somewhat of a secondary mother figure to her as well as Shane. She helps Allison pay for her visits with Shane, and oversees the two happily. She has been Shane's caregiver since he came to LPI, hence their close relationship.

Skill(s): None

Flaw(s): None

Easton Ellis

Role: Background Character

Age: 42
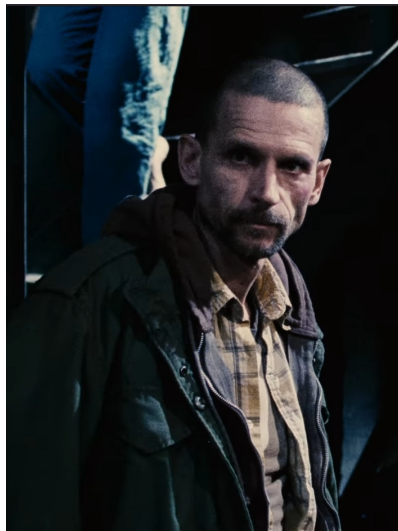
Occupation: Motel Owner

Personality:

Early Story: The gruff and distasteful motel owner and only employee. Despite his grumpy demeanor, he cuts Allison and Catherine a break on staying at the motel, giving them unbeatable prices for their stays. Allison wants to believe its out of the goodness of whatever is left in his heart, but deep down, she has an odd feeling about him and his motives.

Skill(s): None

Flaw(s): None

Artwork Coming Soon!

Visual References:

Eugene

Role: Minor Side Character (Very minor)

Age: 39

Occupation: Gas Station Employee/Mechanic

Personality: A simple, whiny man who works at the gas station across the street from the motel. Apparently, he is well known for tall tales and outright lies.

Early Story: Eugene is the one who claims there's been a murder at the gas station across from the motel. He called 911 and Abel was sent out, who has dealt with Eugene before, and often.

Skill(s): None

Flaw(s): None

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Artwork Coming Soon!

No References (yet)

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Dakota Hudson

Role: Major Side Character

Age: 19

Occupation: Courtesy Clerk

Personality: A jittery, tired looking young man who seems to be perpetually anxious about something. Other than his awkwardness, he seems nice, and is often willing to help in many situations. He also seems to be at least vaguely familiar with and has a crush on Naomi.

Early Story: Allison recognizes Dakota as a possible regular at the motel as well, as he's been there every time she has stayed, though has never actually talked to him. He looks like he doesn't get enough sleep, and Allison is curious as to his story, though doesn't pry. At the end of the first part of the game, he will ask if he can travel with Allison and Shane, and the player can either accept or deny his request.

Skill(s):

-*Pilfer (Passive)*: Dakota may find random items while exploring and add them to his inventory if its not full.

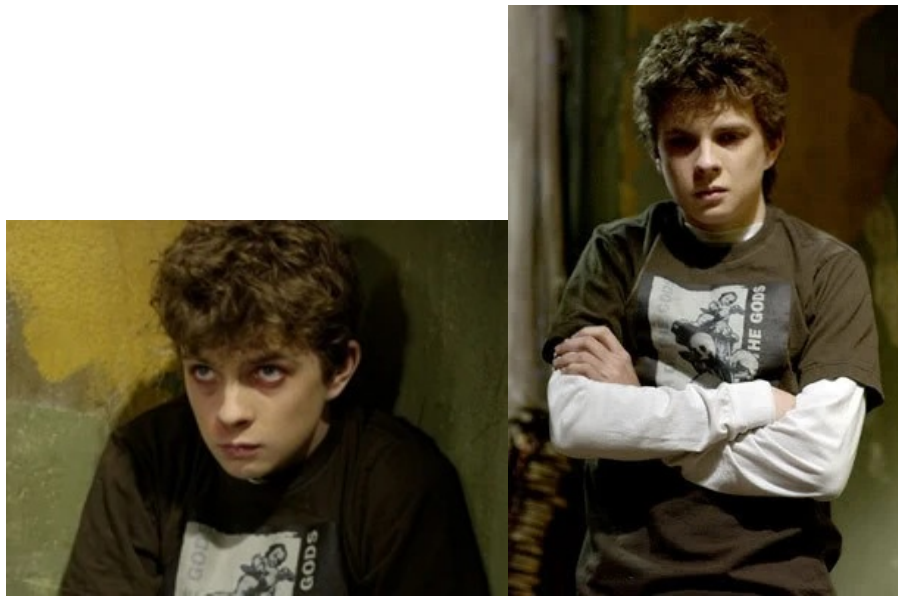-*Out of Sight (Active)*: Becomes very hard for enemies to perceive for a short period of time.

Flaw(s):

-*Run Down*: Dakota is extremely tired. He restores Stamina at a slower rate than other characters, and doesn't restore as much Sanity as he should from all sources.

-*???*: When Sanity is at half or lower, Dakota has a higher chance of failing skill tests, and does less to help others in his party.

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Artwork Coming Soon!

Visual References:

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Abel Laramie

Role: Major Side Character

Age: 42

Occupation: Police Officer

Personality: While initially quite intimidating, Abel is actually a kind and very gentle man, but also takes no nonsense from anyone. He is realistic and quick to dismiss outrageous claims, especially due to his history with Eugene's 911 calls. He is also skeptical of much of the lore and myths behind Redwater, though has apparently begun to rethink this as of recently. There is evidence that he, at least used to be, a man of faith.

Early Story: Abel is the police officer sent out to investigate the claim of murder at the gas station, though being that the call is from Eugene, he stops first at the motel to further discuss the topic with both Eugene and Easton, not believing anything the man says.

Skill(s):

-**Arms Training (Passive)**: Abel is familiar with many different firearms and deals 5% more damage using them. His accuracy is also slightly raised while using them.

-**Dead Shot (Active)**: Automatically Critically hits an enemy (or stacks if the hit would have been critical already). Has a cooldown.

Flaw(s):

-**Reckless Caring**: Abel ignores low Health warnings on himself and will act regardless. Also ignores enemies and traps/hazards in favour of saving other members of his party.

-**???:** When left idle or traveling alone, Abel takes more Sanity damage, and periodically takes random Sanity damage.

Artwork Coming Soon!

Visual References:

Etchemin Rivers

Role: Major Side Character

Age: 32

Occupation: Self Employed (Owns and runs an antique/curio shop)

Personality: A very quiet and sentimental man of Native American descent. Perhaps due to his lineage, he seems attuned to myths and lore, especially those of Redwater. He often speaks rather cryptically, and doesn't initially come off as particularly friendly, though he seems interested in helping the others regardless.

Early Story: After being rescued, Etchemin agrees to help the other characters and heads into town after giving them some flares for defense against a specific creature. He also gives Allison the old Polaroid camera in his shop. He seems to know more about what may be going on than he initially lets on.

Skill(s):

-*Hunter (Passive)*: Deals 5% more damage to Wendigos.

-*Lore Seeker (Active)*: Marks Collectibles on the map within a certain radius. Usable once per day.

Flaw(s):

-*Hunted*: Cannot hide from Wendigos.

-*???*: Etchemin will not travel around or on the lake or rivers.

Artwork Coming Soon!

Visual References:

Naomi Shaw

Role: Major Side Character

Age: 29

Occupation: Waitress

Personality: Though quiet and reserved, Naomi is an otherwise friendly and calming presence within the diner. She seems familiar with Dakota, and tends to give him slightly more attention than the others, while being shy about it, though she is still exceptionally caring about the wellbeing of everyone. She sometimes has random outbursts of emotion, and doesn't like to be touched or gotten too close to physically. She also seems to have an aversion toward some subjects, and removes herself often from the others, seeming to seek being alone.

Early Story: Naomi is met in the Silverwind Cafe & Diner after entering Redwater, and seems to have been helping Abel and a few other survivors out who have holed up there for safety. She eventually becomes the primary caretaker of Aiden and Eli. She is initially a cause of suspicion among the others, as the Shaw family women are well known to have bad, even dangerous, history, as discussed with Etchemin. However, it becomes apparent that Naomi, while obviously hiding something (or some *things*), is likely not a danger; on the contrary, she does her best to help and care for the others, especially the kids.

Skill(s):

-**??? (Passive)**: Gets a Strength boost when low on Health, but slowly loses Sanity.
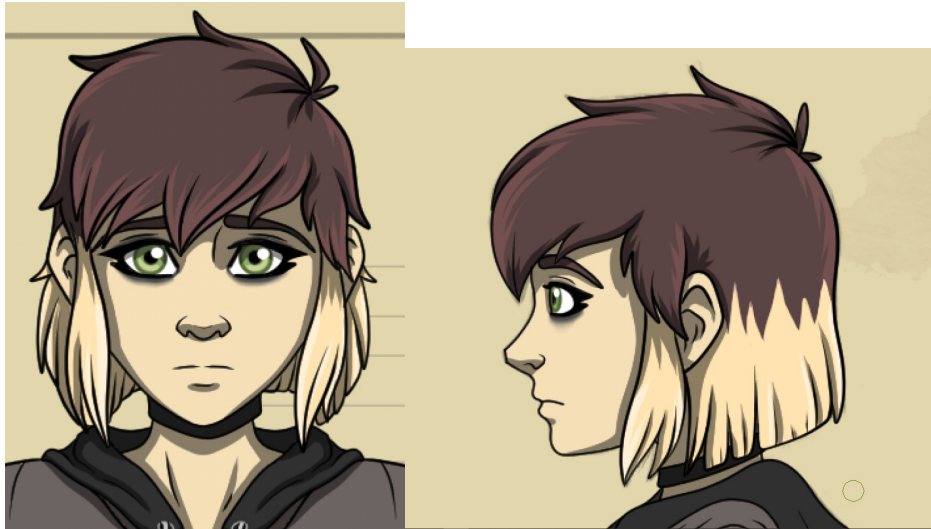
-**Self Help (Active)**: Fully restores her own Sanity, at the cost of temporarily lowered Max Sanity. Usable once per day.

Flaw(s):

-**Social Aversion:** Naomi is uncomfortable being around others for too long, and her Sanity may take a hit if you press her on certain subjects, interact with her often, or travel with her consistently without allowing her a break (this can be altered by Friendship level or story progression). Leaving her idle and alone also works.

-**???:** Requires food at random points during exploration. If none is provided, Naomi loses either some Sanity or some Health.

Reference sheet WIP:

Visual References:

I used Picrew to help come with a design for Naomi and went from there

Aiden and Eli:

Roles: Major Side Characters

Ages: 7 and 13

Occupations: -

Personalities: Aiden is an almost exclusively non-verbal, severely autistic child with a haunted mind. Very few things make him happy beyond his brother, puzzles, and his stuffed ankylosaurus plush, "Anky". He requires a lot of care and attention, which he gets from Naomi if rescued from the school (see below). Eli is an arrogant, rude and aggressive older brother who is fiercely protective of Aiden, and snaps at everyone in the Diner. As the story progresses, however, he begins to respect and often even listen to Naomi, though their relationship starts out as severe distrust and suspicion, as Aiden seems to cling to Naomi despite never having met her before. Eli relents, however, upon seeing Naomi's wonderful care toward Aiden.

Early Story: Upon finding Eli near the elementary school, he will beg you to help find his brother, who ran away somewhere into the school and is being hunted by a strange, unique monster. A full level will ensue, and when you reach the end, you will manage to befriend Aiden, reunite him with Eli, and bring both boys back to the Diner.

Skill(s): None

Flaw(s): None

Artwork Coming Soon!

Visual References (Aiden, Left, Eli, Right):

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