CHEIMAPHOBIA

Game Design Document

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Revision Notes

TODO

- What do we have to do here?

OVERVIEW

Cheimaphobia is a survival horror game with a focus on tough gameplay with very little room for error.

The player is stranded in the mountains after a crash landing, they must reach the nearby city or repair their ship before they die of hypothermia. They player will gather supplies and head out into the freezing landscape to try and find the missing parts of the ship.

The game is based in a sci-fi world that has suffered from some kind of natural disaster that has left the world cold and barren. Around the landscape will be remnants from a larger civilisation now lost to the snow. And out in the snow are wolf-like creatures trying to hunt the player down. The player will need to carefully avoid or fight off these creatures as they gather up what they need to survive the cold.

Target Platform / Minimum Hardware:

The game will be made for low-mid range PCs with a view to eventually adapting the game for PS4.

Visual Style

The game will be routed in sci fi but will not be featured heavily. What Sci fi is around should be sleek and clean, lots of white but with a few other colours with which to pick them out from the environment. By making most of the sci fi elements white they will sink into the snow and become part of the background. This will also make it harder for the player to find these locations.

Other locations should look like ruins of modern-day architecture as well as take influence from historical stone architecture for other locations like the shrine and ruins.

Audio Style

The game should be relatively sparse on music, leaving the player to the harsh sounds of the wind and the snow and the sound of the footsteps and breathing. This will place the player in a lonely and isolated environment.

Music will be sparse, ambient piano compositions. This tempo of this music will increase when the player is in danger.

Sound effects will be routed in reality apart from use of the snow-sled and the firing of the firearms. The monsters should have a distorted growl noise that can be identified through all the other sounds.

The game will have a couple of short voice lines inside the research facility. These will be automatic messages and sound robotic and deteriorated.

Starting Out

Game start – Main Menu – Character Selection/Creation

Upon starting the game, it will play a short ident for the production company followed by a simple white and black menu screen.

The main menu will have 3 options. Play, Settings and Quit:

- Play will take the player directly into the game with no further hassle.
- Settings will allow the player to alter video and audio settings.
- Quit will exit the game to the desktop.

Game Start and Intro

When the game begins the player is thrown straight into the game with no tutorial and no prior indication of their objective. This sudden move will already place them in the shoes of their character.

In-Game HUD & Menus

The character spawns just outside the wreckage of their ship. They climb to their feet and then the following text will appear on screen:

"10:00"

UNTIL DEATH

This text will be all the motivation the player needs to continue the game. This timer will begin ticking down from the moment it appears on screen.

The Hud will contain only the basic information required. The countdown timer, a health-bar, and later when the items for which are collected, a compass ring, a target reticle and an ammo count.

Text may pop up on the middle of the screen at certain points. Namely when the player looks at an interactable object.

The pause menu should have the settings option and a quit option, a layout of the controls should be visible.

UI

Main Menu

The Main Menu will be very sparse, a set of simple buttons with a large plain "CHEIMAPHOBIA" title above it. The background will consist of a moving image of the snow falling, obscuring vision of the facility.

In-Game Options Menu

While paused the view of the game will be have a white filter placed over it and the same simple text used throughout will give the player three options.

Controls, Settings and Quit.

- Controls will show a diagram of the control layout.
- Settings will take the player to the same screen as the main menu settings option.
- Quit will quit the game to the main menu.

In-Game HUD

The HUD should be very sparse, only essential information should be shown. Most of the information given to the player will be diegetic.

In the top-left of the screen the timer will be constantly ticking down.

When the player draws a weapon a target reticle will appear in the middle of the screen, this will be a simple dot. An ammo count will also appear in the bottom right of the screen.

A health-bar will be seen in the bottom left.

When and if the player finds the compass, a compass ring will be added to the HUD to assist in navigation of the game world.

Very rarely text will appear on screen, informing the player how to use an item they have just picked up, or hovering over places where items can be used, or if the player tries to use something they don't have.

Game Over Screen

Upon the players death the screen will fade to black. Then simple text will describe the way in which the player died.

"You are so tired. You decide to lie down, just for a second. You never get up."

"You feel faint, your wounds keep bleeding, they paint the snow red around your body."

"You are overpowered by the beasts, they gather around you, their teeth tear into you, you

scream but there's nobody out there to save you."

"You can't take it anymore, you are so cold, you place your weapon in your mouth and pull the trigger."

These texts will only appear if the player meets the prerequisites for that death. (i.e. if the player has no ammo, they could not have shot themselves.)

After the message has been shown the player will be given the option to restart or to quit.

Level Selection

There is only one level in the game. This level is split into various smaller locations within the open world of the game:

CABIN:

A small abandoned Cabin in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by a few dying trees. Outside the cabin the player will be able to find the Snow-Sled.

CAVES:

The caves are an ECZ and are infested with monsters. This offers a quick journey if the player can find their way through the maze-like cave system and survive the monsters.

CITY:

When the player reaches the outskirts of the city, they have won the game.

The city is large, protruding from between two mountains. In the centre of it stands a massive smokestack used to keep the city warm.

The city will be visible from almost anywhere in the game world.

CRASH SITE:

This is the broken remains of a scifi airplane. The player will initial awaken outside the crash site at the very start of the game.

A generator inside the ship can be used to turn the crash site into a warmth zone.

4 missing parts of the ship can be seen in neon wireframe. These need to be collected by the player to be placed inside the wireframes and fix the ship. The player will win once they have done this.

From the crash site, three pillars of smoke can be seen, showing the player where they need to go to collect the missing parts.

The city can also be seen, showing the player their ultimate objective.

FROZEN LAKE:
This is a massive obstacle directly obstructing the players path to the city. The player will have to choose to cross it or go around it. Going around takes time but the lake is an ECZ.

RESEARCH FACILITY:
This abandoned facility was once used to investigate the monsters. The interior should reflect these studies through research notes, monster cages, etc.

There should also be evidence of the monsters escaping. Withered dead bodies should dotted around the building.

Inside the player will encounter numerous monsters. At the end of the facility the player will find a part for the ship. They will also see a dead scientist who locked himself in a cell with a shotgun. The player can press a button to open the cage and get the shotgun, but this will also release trapped monsters inside the facility.

They will attack the player giving them an opportunity to use their new weapon.

RUINED SHRINE:
One segment of the ship landed amongst a ruined sanctuary. The player will have to climb to the top of the ruins and fight off the monsters in order to collect the ship part.

SHIP WRECKAGE:
These will be dotted around the game world. Some of these will have ship parts. Which shipwrecks have ship parts is randomised.

TOWN:
This run-down town will be good for finding general supplies like clothes, fuel canisters and batteries.

The town will be large with two main streets running through it. The buildings will be very damaged and mostly submerged by snow.

This place has been long abandoned. Only simple ruins remain.

A piece of ship wreckage may be located here.

TUNNELS:
The tunnels can be opened with an engine part. They offer a quick journey through complete darkness.

Gamplay

The game begins outside the crashed ship. The player will then gather up the supplies around the ship and explore what remains of the wreck. Inside shows where the player can take items and fix the ship.

The player will most likely discover fuel by the ship with which to start a nearby generator and turn the ship into a warmth zone.

Outside three smokes clouds raise into the sky, indicating other parts of the ship and where the player can go to find other parts. In the distance the city will be visible, showing the player precisely where to go to survive.

The player will spend a lot of time exploring the environment and trying to locate items and supplies to help them survive. Combat also forms a large part of the game, helping to break up the other aspects of the gameplay.

By throwing the player completely into the deep end they will immediately identify with the character. Then when the timer is first shown the player will become invested in surviving the game. The simple setup and premise will allow players to immediately get into the game.

The player will be able to choose whether to go for safe approaches and avoid areas of extreme cold, or to take risks and pass through dangerous areas. The player will be able to exercise this through supply conservation and how much ammunition they use.

The player will be able to interact with a few of the man-made structures around the world. Namely the research station and the tunnels.

The player will fight to survive and when they are able to delay death and beat the odds, they will feel rewarded.

Mechanics

TIMER:

Beginning at 10:00 the timer gradually ticks down to the player's death by hypothermia. This timer speeds up in Extreme Cold Zones and slows down in Warmth Zones.

Extra time can be added to the timer through collection of layers of clothing.

Every minute and a half of lost time the player will slow down slightly. Simulating the effect of freezing temperatures on the human body.

At the end of the timer, the player dies and loses the game. At this time a death message should be shown.

EXTREME COLD ZONES:

Whilst within an Extreme Cold Zone (ECZ), the timer will tick down twice as fast. The player will be able to recognise an ECZ by a large increase in fog and density of snow. Upon entering the ECZ a ticking sound will be played as the timer speeds up, alerting the player to the faster speed of the timer. The player will also slow down upon entering the zone.
ECZ's will not slow down the speed of the Snow-Sled.

Upon leaving the zone another set of ticking will play as the timer slows to its original pace.

WARMTH ZONES:
Whilst within a Warmth zone the timer will slow to half speed. Upon entering the Warmth zone, the screen will start to have an orange tint to it. The player will also be able to move slightly faster. A ticking sound will play as the timer slows down. Upon leaving the zone another set of ticking will play as the timer returns to its original pace.

These zones can be created by the player if they use a fuel canister to start a generator.

AMMUNITION:
Ammunition can be found, with which the pistol can be reloaded.

BATTERIES:
The player can use these to replenish lost flashlight durability.

CLOTHES:
Extra layers of clothing can be found around the world. When collected these will add an additional minute to the timer.

COMPASS:
Collecting this will add a compass ring to the HUD, assisting with navigation.

ENGINE PARTS:
These can be found amongst areas of ship wreckage. They can be used to fix the ship and win the game. They can also be used to fix the Snow-Sled and access the tunnels.

FLASHLIGHT:
They player can find a flashlight to assist them in journeying through dark buildings, tunnels and caves. It has a limited duration at the end of which the flashlight becomes inoperable.

Batteries can be used to replenish the flashlight.

FUEL CANISTER:
These will be very rare. These are used to replenish fuel in the Snow-Sled and start Generators to create Warmth Zones.

GENERATORS:
By using a fuel canister, the player can use a generator to create a Warmth Zone.

HEALING SYRINGES:
These can be used to heal damage taken from the monsters' attacks.

KNIFE:

In the starting wreckage of the ship, the player will be able to pick up a knife. The knife can be used to attack the monsters in melee combat.

MAP:
The player can find a map that hints at important locations around the game world.

PISTOL:
The pistol can only be found in certain areas. It can be used to attack the monsters and will be fairly effective. Ammunition is limited. Additional ammunition can be found in the game world.

The pistol is slow to reload.

SHOTGUN:
The shotgun is a unique weapon, only one of them exists in the game world. It has very limited ammo that cannot be replaced. It is extremely effective against the monsters.
It is extremely slow to reload.

SNOWSHOES:
When the player collects a pair of snowshoes, they will instantly be able to walk slightly faster. This will also alter the sound of the characters footsteps.

SNOW-SLED:
If the player finds the Snow-Sled they will be able to use an Engine Part to fix it. This will allow the player to ride it. Whilst riding on the snow-sled, movement will be increased dramatically. However, it will gradually run out of fuel. When it is out of fuel it will come to a stop.

The player will be able to use a fuel canister to replenish the depleted fuel.

Controls

Walk - W, A, S, D
Look - Mouse
Interact - E
Flashlight - F
Map - Q
Attack - LMB

Choose item - Scroll Wheel

WINNING THE MATCH

The game can be won by completing one of two possible objectives.

- Reach the city.
- Fix the ship.

The game should last somewhere between 6-20 minutes depending on the luck and experience of the player.

Challenges of importance

- Passing through the caves.
- Passing through the tunnels.
- Climbing the ruins.
- Investigating the Research Facility.
- Travelling through or round the lake.
- Reaching the City.
- Finding the Ship Parts.
- Finding the shotgun.
- Finding the Snow-Sled.

Assets

- Player Character
- Enemy Monsters
- Shotgun
- Pistol
- Knife
- Ammunition
- Batteries
- Clothes
- Compass
- Engine parts
- Fuel Canister
- Generators
- Health Syringe
- Map
- Snow-shoes
- Snow-sled

- Cabin
- Caves
- City
- Crash Site
- Frozen Lake
- Research Facility
- Ruined Shrine
- Ship Wrecks
- Town
- Tunnels

Characters

- Player Walk
- Player Walk Fast
- Player Walk Slow
- Player Jump
- Player Damage
- Player Death
- Player Stand
- Monster Move
- Monster Move Fast
- Monster Death Knife
- Monster Death Pistol
- Monster Death Shotgun

Weapons

- Knife Slash
- Knife Pickup
- Shotgun fire
- Shotgun Pickup
- Pistol fire
- Pistol Pickup
- Pistol Reload

Knife: Two slashes with the knife kills a monster.

Pistol: A headshot with the pistol will kill a monster, otherwise it takes two shots. The pistol has fifteen shots on pickup. The pistol receives 5 extra bullets when picking up ammo.

Shotgun: Hitting the monsters anywhere with the shotgun kills it. The shotgun has 10 shots and extra ammo cannot be found.

Equipment and Upgrades

- Shotgun
- Pistol
- Knife
- Ammunition
- Batteries
- Clothes
- Compass
- Engine parts
- Fuel Canister
- Generators
- Health Syringe
- Map
- Snow-shoes
- Snow-sled

Environmental

- Snow Particle Effect
- Snow ground
- Mountains
- Cabin
- Caves
- City
- Crash Site
- Frozen Lake
- Research Facility
- Ruined Shrine
- Ship Wrecks
- Town

- Tunnels

Audio

- UI Click
- Standard Footsteps
- Snowshoes Footsteps
- Damage Taken
- Breathing Light
- Breathing Medium
- Breathing Heavy
- Wind Light
- Wind Medium
- Wind Heavy
- Pistol Shoot
- Pistol Reload
- Shotgun Shoot
- Item Pickup
- Item Use
- Monster Footsteps
- Monster Growl
- Monster Breathing
- Monster Attack
- Monster Damaged
- Monster Death
- Facility Voice Line
- Button Press
- Swarm Sound Effect
- Generator Start
- Snow-sled Start
- Snow-Sled Movement
- Snow-Sled Stop
- Flashlight On
- Flashlight Blinking

- Flashlight Off
- Flashlight Reload
- Tunnels Open
- Ship Part Placed
- Ship On

CINEMATICS

- Game intro: (Character stand up)
- Game Outtro: (Ship On)
- Game Outtro: (City Reached)