



The Waves and the Overwhelmed

Fight the Raging Ocean of Emotion to find Dry Land

A Game Design Document

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Game Overview

Game Concept

The player takes control of Tor, an old Scottish man who has lived his life with regrets and now has an opportunity to revisit his mistakes to reflect and maybe change them. He will pilot a ship across a vast ocean. He will encounter great waves which represent a choice in an emotional situation and must do certain exercises on the boat to stay emotionally afloat. The whole game will be a metaphor/analogy for regulating and managing emotions in deeply emotional situations while still making a sound choice. The game will also encourage reflection and looking back on your actions to see what could have gone better and what could be done, if anything, to repair potential damage.

The game is about teaching the player to reflect; it seeks to show the player how, in a scenario, there are many options and then enables them to reflect at the end with hindsight on the path they took.

The player will be in control of the speed of travel heading into a situation, whether allowing them to slow down and think, or to speed up when you know the path they want to go down. They can even bring the boat to a stop, but even then, the waves will catch up to them.

It will use nautical themes; the mode of transport is a boat, the direction is controlled by turning a wheel. The boat will not be an old-fashioned pirate ship such as the Jackdaw you see in Assassin's Creed Black Flag, it will be a more modern sailing boat of different sizes for the different levels, but would have the wheel that you would see on a classic pirate ship to give the nautical theme.

Genre

The genre best fits into Action-Adventure, as it will have the long-term obstacle of getting through the levels, across the ocean, to dry land, as well as the player having to manage their emotions specifically anxiety while on the boat.

It fits into the action-adventure genre for several reasons, starting with reflex-based decisions resulting from arising scenarios; a scenario leads to a decision which leads to an action where the boat is turned based on decision. The game is very narrative driven, where Tor is going through a reflective journey of his life, what he could have done better, reflecting on it and where else life could have taken him.

Unlike a lot of action-adventure games there will not be an inventory. Instead, it will be more focused on managing resources that are represented through diegetic

environmental changes, such as the sky going grey as the player runs out of resources to manage their mental state, they must reach dry land before run out of resources and sink beneath the waves.

It could also be considered a therapeutic game as it may help people learn new strategies to cope with their anxieties and trauma in an abstract scenario.

Target Audience

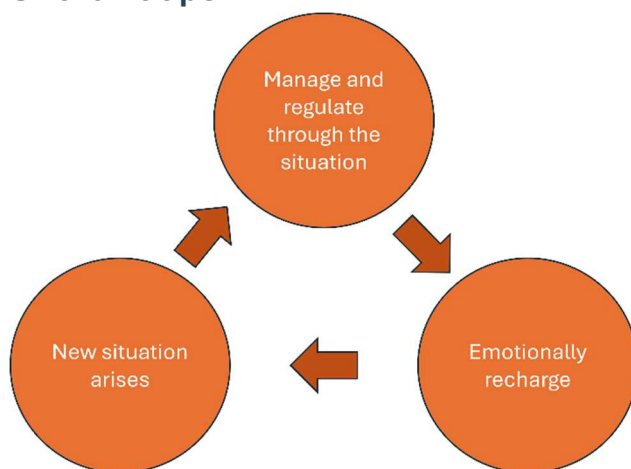
The game is targeted at young people with anxiety issues. The people that play this game need to be open to developing themselves and their emotions. It is aimed at helping those who struggle with complex social situations and those who attempt to control or manage everything around them.

It is also about helping people learn how perspective is very useful when dealing with their's and others' situations; looking back at a situation as a bystander or on the opposing party, to understand if the situation could have ended differently. Further, this will encourage reflection understand how situations can develop differently with hindsight, as in the moment reactions can be very emotionally based.

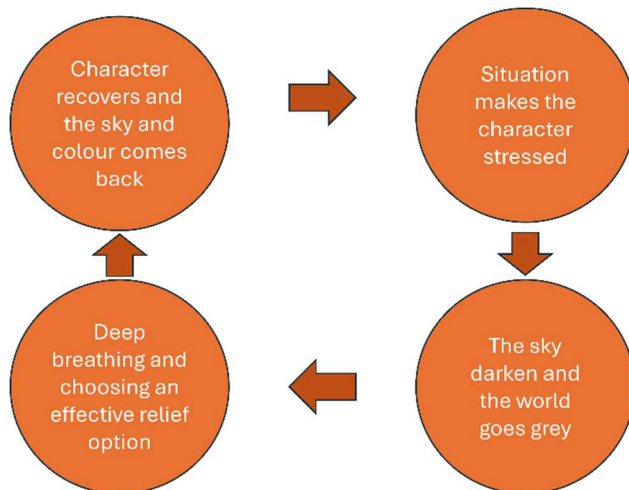
Game Flow Summary

The levels will unlock linearly; completion of a level will unlock the next stage in life. In each situation the player will have two to three options; they will vary based on the complexity of the situation at hand.

Short Loops

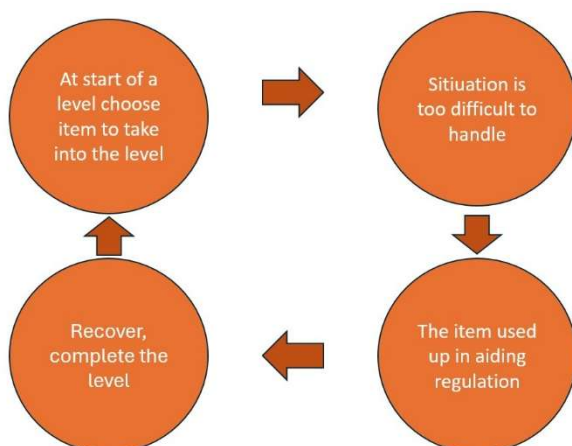


This loop is a repetitive task the player should be doing frequently. As situations arise, they will have to manage and regulate to recharge through relaxation or meditation. The game will be designed in such a way that player should also not feel they have to meditate or breathe perfectly. It will be acceptable to struggle with the emotional regulation; they can forget to emotionally recharge and not be significantly punished. There will be consequences for not performing this loop perfectly, but it's not about perfection, it's about managing yourself through a situation.



This loop shows how stressful situations change the environment: the sky will darken, and the colour will drain from the world. This is to show that they are struggling, that they are not coping with the situation at hand. Going through the process of deep breathing and choosing a relief method will enable the player to recover: the sky will become brighter again, and the colour will come back to the world. The point of this loop is to show that it's okay to have dips, that it's okay to feel overwhelmed at points, it's how you manage it and how you get through it.

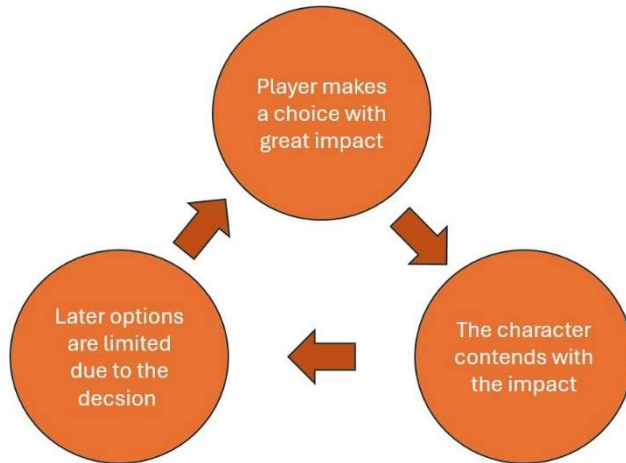
Medium Loop



This loop is about preparation the player can go through, influencing the rest of the level. At the start of the level, the player is given options of what they can do to prepare, such as choosing a item that holds personal value that will be a comfort in a difficult situation. How they prepare may give them an advantage in the level and provide a resilience shield,

so they do not drain their emotional resources on difficult situations. At the end of the level, they are then encouraged to reflect on what they could have done better both in the preparation and throughout the level. This exercise is to build resilience in effect but in the game, you will recover the resources for the next level.

Long Loop



This is a story-based loop where some choices along the way will have impact on the rest of the story. They will have knock on effects such as the player's character losing a friend because of the actions they took. If they lose a friend, they will feel the impact and lose the friends support that will impact their available choices in the future. It will be represented that Tor is struggling because of the impact

of his choice; certain choices will have story impacts leading the player to an ending based the choice made.

Look & Feel



Special thanks to Lara Howells for help with visualisation and for the use of her art for concept

The artistic style of the game will have a hand painted look; it will be a 3D first person game.

The two settings for the game will be the Ocean and The Hall of Memories. The Ocean will be the main area for the game where the player will navigate situations and emotional turmoil; the colour will drain from the world as Tor struggles more.

The Hall of Memories will be a diegetic menu where the player will be able to adjust settings and enter levels by walking around, going through doors and adjusting settings such as volume, by moving a slider that the character can see; it may even have a part of a tutorial where the player mentions everything is too loud so they have to work out how to make it quieter.

The mood of the game will change depending on the mental state of the character but there will always be encouragement to find a light in the proverbial dark.

The lighting will be very bright and intense in the Hall of Memories, but when it comes to the ocean, set at night, the light will come from small lights on the boat such as a lantern or a flashing light on top of the boat mast as well as moonlight when the sky is clear. There will also be a lighthouse towards the end of the level so that the player knows when they're getting close to the end.

Monetisation Model

This will be a premium game with an upfront price between £20-£30 for an individual licence but may be increased based on the production. It may be offered in professional scenarios in which case a larger purchase price will be sought, or it may be purchased on a timed and user-based licence in professional scenarios only.

It is important to recognise that selling to professional organisations as a coping mechanism or a way to help people will be something to think about in the long term, but in a short term it would be best to launch the game on Steam and other platforms where it can be marketed to people as a story game with mental health theming such as other titles including Life is Strange. To get into the professional marketplace evidence needs to be built to show its effectiveness as well as research on its use and impact in the desired market.

Unique Selling Point

It is aimed to promote emotional regulation for young people but also be applicable to any age. It may be worth selling the game to therapeutic centres so it can be used to help train professionals or can be used to help people under specialist care, free usage would be given for research purposes to build evidence of effectiveness. The game will be designed more as a playable experience than a typical game with less traditional game user interfaces such as on-screen text; the player and character will perceive the same information.

This game will aim to support individuals to be more grounded, with the ability to look back at what they could have done and how that would affect people. However, it would encourage the player to not jump to judging themselves harshly or thinking they could have done better and that it's about their growth overall. It will also be attractive to those who play very narrative heavy games, but it will be different to most due to the audio delivery of the story over visuals.

Core Pillars of Design

The Journey

This game tells the story of a man's life from childhood to teen angst, to getting a job, and losses you have in life. The story is key to the game feeling immersive, as if the player is travelling along this man's life with them not just viewing it from an outside perspective; viewing it from his perspective as he relives worst moments of his life. The player will also impact the narrative that takes place by their actions and choices and how they manage Tor's anxiety. If the player loses a friend through a decision they make in a situation that arises, then that friend will be missing from the narrative unless opportunities arise to recover that friendship. The narrative won't only come up at the key decision-making points; it will be delivered to the player consistently through audio as they navigate the ocean of emotion. For each level there will be a defining emotion; in the childhood level there will be frustration; for adolescence there will be anxiety; for adulthood the emotion will vary depending on the decisions made in earlier levels but will include emotions such as love and grief. The narrative will also show how perseverance and carrying on in the face of adversity or hardship can make a person greater as a whole. This is to convey to someone potentially having difficult moments or not feeling like they're enough, that sometimes you just need to carry on; that there's something positive on the other side.

Nautical

The game's main area is an ocean. This ocean, full of emotional states will show Tor the decisions he made in his life and how they could have made them differently. Tor will be in control of a boat that he will need to maintain control over as a situational storm approaches him every few minutes. A storm will contain a scenario that Tor lived through, where he made a fight or flight response that drew his life down a dark path; now he has the opportunity to divert to a new one taking a different route. For the different routes, Tor will have to fight with the wheel to maintain his desired direction. It is intended that this emotional turmoil that Tor will experience will be represented through the sky darkening and the colour draining from the world.

Emotional Balance

Tor experiences emotions that may destabilise him and his ship and the game will be about how the player helps Tor handle his emotions. The emotion will come from audio of scenarios happening to Tor. The scenarios come from different situations that Tor went through in his life. The player will have to guide Tor through finding his own balance and not comparing himself on others. Tor's journey is aimed at helping the player understand that although life and emotion can feel turbulent and uncontrollable, there are ways of managing these feelings. The hope is that players of this game will walk away with a new way of looking at their own emotions in

relation to what they experienced through the game; hopefully they can look back and empathise or sympathise with what Tor experienced. The game will also teach a few techniques to help the player in their own difficult situations. This includes both immediate responsive strategies, such as deep breathing but also preventive strategies, such as meditation. After each level there will be an opportunity to reflect on the level, the decisions made and its ripples in the waves. It will show the long-term effects of Tor's reactions to the situations he faced.

Gameplay Systems & Mechanics

Breathing

This system is all about keeping Tor feeling balanced. It sits entirely atop the Emotional Balance pillar as it is the starting point for calming Tor or helping him prepare for a Situation Storm.

When playing on a controller, to breathe in the player will first hold both the right shoulder buttons and right trigger down then release and then to breathe out the player will have to hold the left shoulder button and the left trigger. The following mechanics use the same buttons and action but in different scenarios:

Crisis Breathing

Crisis breathing is Tor's way of instantly regaining control when struggling with his emotions. This type of breathing is about controlling hyperventilation and reducing panic.

Deep Breathing

Deep breathing is a strategy that Tor can employ when they see a situation storm on the horizon. This type of breathing is for creating a state of calm to build resilience for the oncoming storm.

The Manual to Tor

This is a book all about Tor, built from his memories and subconscious with three key parts: one a guide on all the ways he learnt how to stay calm in life but neglected to implement, secondly a guide to his key life moments, his regrets and how he wishes he could have done better, thirdly a notes section for the Tor to record information and actions to refer to later or for Positive Affirmations. Mechanics under this system can relate to all three pillars.

Guide to calming

This mechanic will relate back to the core pillar of Emotional Balance. It will be half of the book and will be filled with suggestions Tor was given over the years on how to calm himself when feeling anxious or angry. It will also cover the strategies on how to build resilience and what thoughts help keep Tor grounded.

Guide to Tor's life

This mechanic will relate to all three pillars. For The Journey, it will guide the player through the events of Tor's life showing all the poor decisions he made. For Nautical, it will show you the paths available for the rest of the level and if you are replaying the game, it will show the player previous paths taken and the resulting ending. It will explain why Tor regretted each decision and what he wishes he could have done better.

Notes

This is a small section at the back of the book for Tor to use to reflect on his journey along with space to write positive affirmations for himself. This mechanic fits under The Journey and Emotional Balance pillars.

Strategies

This system will fit onto the Emotional Balance pillar as it will encompass the strategies that Tor can employ to calm himself or use prepare for a Situation Storm.

Personal Items

Before a level starts the player can choose an item for Tor that will be available to calm him in crisis. Each of the items on the table below can be chosen at the start of a level to help Tor. However, each items effectiveness varies between levels and overall, 1 equalling minimum effectiveness and 5 equalling maximum effectiveness.

Item	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
His first teddy bear	5	1	3
His mum's sapphire earrings	2	3	4
His wife's wedding ring	1	1	5
A cross and chain that his dad gave him	1	3	4
Rabbits foot	5	5	5
Scarf kitted for him by his grandmother	4	2	4
His first dog's collar	1	5	4
An interesting stone	5	3	1

Meditation

This is a method for to Tor to use when a storm is on the horizon and will build his resilience up before facing the challenges of the oncoming storm.

Reminiscing

Tor can choose to cast his mind back to happier memories while outside of a storm, this again will build his resilience for the next storm.

Positive Affirmations

A method to help Tor recover once a storm has passed but his resilience is low. He will talk himself down through thinking positively about himself and writing the affirmations in the note section of The Manual to Tor.

Crisis Breathing & Deep Breathing (see above)

The Path Taken

This system fits on to the Journey pillar as it is all about the decisions Tor makes and where it will drive the narrative.

The Choice of Adulthood

The three options at the end of the second level will decide the theme of the final level. It will change two of the five situations in the level and make a particular ending substantially more likely.

✦ **A Drunk Mistake**

If Tor decides to spend the night partying with friends and gets extremely drunk, he will make an unwise decision and get arrested, causing a falling out with his girlfriend and him to fail his exams and not go to university.

✦ **Job and a House**

If Tor chooses to spend the night with his girlfriend, he will fail his exams but get offered a job and starts to make a life for himself with his girlfriend and future wife.

✦ **University**

If Tor makes the decision to study, he will go to university but will not alienate anyone by doing this as he will study not too far from home.

Ending

Each choice made will add points to an ending:

✦ **With his Wife (Love Ending)**

Decisions that bring Tor closer to his loved ones will increase the chances of this ending, where he will get to spend eternity with his beloved.

✦ **With his Friends (Friendship Ending)**

Decisions that bring Tor closer to friends will increase the chance of this ending where Tor will enjoy spending days out with his friends for eternity.

✦ **With no one (Alone Ending)**

When Tor made the choices he took in life that pushed away all those he cared about and loved, this will increase the likelihood of spending eternity alone.

✦ **Secret Ending**

This ending can only occur when both friendship and love find a balance, this ending will see Tor, his wife and a few close friends spending the day on the beach.

Reflection

The Journey and Emotional Balance are the pillars for this system due to the focus on looking back at what Tor has gone through in each level and finding his own way to cope with any poor decisions made.

End of Level Reflection

This can be done at the end of a level to review the it and the choices made. The player will have to select one of two options that Tor will write down in the notes section of his book. Selecting the words that describe Tor and his feelings on the decisions he made will give the player an opportunity to reduce the impact of one of choices they made on the ending they get (see Impact on the Ending mechanic).

Impact on the Ending

The player can use their effective reflection to lessen the impact of a choice that the player feels they made poorly. This allows Tor to do something to

lessen the impact of the choice, such as apologising or making amends with someone he hurt with his actions.

Situation Storms

The pillars this system fit into are The Journey, due to each storm representing a complex situation in Tor's life where he made a decision that he regrets and Nautical, due to storms being something you would face crossing a ocean, having to manage the boat he is sailing in to get through it.

Impact of events

As a situation storm build towards the choice, the memories will feel more impactful to Tor and this will cause drain to Tor's mental state.

Choosing a Wave

When Tor gets to the heart of the Situation Storm, he will get the choice between waves where he will be drawn to the path he took in life and will have to fight to forge a new path.

Grey and Colour

Emotional Balance is the pillar of this system because of how it represents Tor's emotional state. The worse it is the less colourful and the darker the world will become. To recover from this Tor will have to use his crisis techniques to get himself out of his mental hole and restore light and colour to the world. This will functionally serve as the health of Tor for the game, when it becomes too much for him he will black out and wake up back in the Hall of Memories.

Loss

The three ways that Tor can be "damaged" are making a regrettable decisions, the impact from the memories and sensory overload from the storm. The sensory overload will not be instant and will build up the longer Tor spends in the storm.

Gain

Ways for Tor to recover are expending his Personal Item, Breathing, Reminiscing and being away from the storm in calm waters. A well selected Personal Item will help Tor recover the most and in the same way the storm drains him, being away it and in calm waters will gently help Tor recover.

Failure

When it becomes too much for Tor he will lose consciousness and then be returned to the Hall of Memories, this will result in having to restart the level and the loss of any Personal Items taken into the level.

Impactful Audio

The Journey and Emotional Balance are the pillars for this system as the mechanics are about how terrifying nature of the storm he is within and the memories Tor is recalling impact his resilience and therefor the choices he makes.

Sensory Overload

The storm will cause continuous impact on Tor's resilience and mental state. The thunder especially will damage his mental state, the only way to avoid

being overwhelmed is to progress through the storm to the choice where once the decision is made the storm will quickly pass, but the player must be careful about speeding through the storm; becoming a balance between speed and understanding the choice to be made.

Words Hurt

The audio will sometimes include verbal attacks on Tor. This will cause damage to Tor's resilience.

Navigation

All three pillars are integral to this system as the mechanics are about piloting the boat and how Tor's reactions affect the story.

Diven by emotion

As a situation occurs the player will need to breathe to maintain full control, as they get more annoyed or angry the situation that aligns with their anger will draw the boat towards it.

The Tides

The tides of the ocean will knock the boat around at random points, how the player reacts to this may cause the player to make an unintended decision.

The Boat

This system fits on the Nautical pillar as well as the Emotional Balance pillar as the boat is not only what Tor will sail across the ocean aboard but also will be representing his proximity to an ending by what is happening on the boat.

Speed

The player must be careful about going too fast so they do not miss details of the events leading up to a decision which may lead to a choice Tor may regret. Similarly, the player must also not be too slow or be overwhelmed by the Sensory Overload of the storm.

Perception of the Boat

The players choices impact on Tor's perception of the boat.

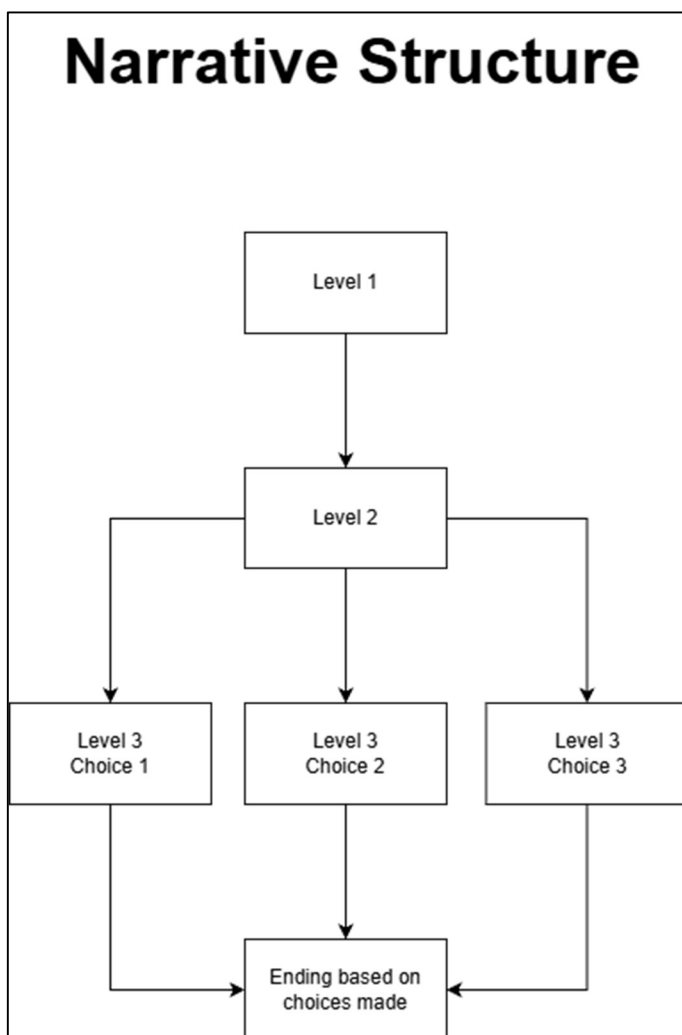
- Choices that lead to the "alone ending" will make the boat fill with water.
- Choices that lead to the "love ending" will fill the boat with memorabilia of love in his life, a photo of Tor and his wife, photos of him and his family and art created by his wife or flowers.
- Choices that bring Tor closer to the "friendship ending" will fill the boat with items from good times he had with his friends such as photos of him with friends, a trophy from a game that he won with them and a guitar that his childhood friend played.

Narrative

Background

The story takes place in an afterlife that takes the form of a 'Hall of Memories'. Behind each of three doors in the Hall of Memories lies an ocean to cross, representing a period of Tor's life. The player takes control of Tor, an old man, who has lived his life with regrets, and this is an opportunity for him to rewrite those regrets. He is haunted by the ghosts of his past poor decisions made in anger or distress but now he has the opportunity to remake those decisions, and the player will be the one to help him. He establishes that nobody taught him how to regulate and control his anger until very late in his life and that he struggled with it from an early age. The player will be a guiding hand to this troubled man.

Introduction



The game opens as Tor dies alone in a hospital bed far from anyone who cared about him. He opens his eyes in the 'Hall of Memories' and realises he is in an afterlife. The first words he mutters are "How did I get to heaven?". He will feel strangely drawn to the first door of the three, which is the only unlocked. The door looks like that of his childhood bedroom and he will recognise it instantly. Walking through the door he will find himself on a small boat on a vast ocean. On the horizon he sees a storm that seems to be drawing ever closer by the second, as it draws closer, he starts to hear a situation from when he was a child where he had his toys taken off him due to not concentrating at school. The boat arrives at the storm's edge and two waves seem to be coming at the boat, the waves were representing Tor's

reaction to the situation, one where he reacts poorly and one where he chooses a new path.

Story

Each level will have five situations that the player will have to navigate Tor through by turning the boat towards their chosen reaction to each situation. These choices will have impact on further levels, if the situation in level 1 is poorly handled the boat may take on water, representing Tor going down to lonely path he went in life.

Over the course of 'Childhood' (level 1) Tor will face situations where he made poor decisions in his early life and now has the opportunity to correct them (outlined in the level's description).

Moving on into 'Adolescence' (level 2) Tor will face another five situations. In this level the final decision will define the path of Tor in his adult life. The final choice in this level will take the form of deciding to go to university, starting a job and move in with his girlfriend or lose everything to one drunk night.

In 'Adulthood' (level 3) the choices will vary depending on the final choice of 'Adolescence' (level 2). Tor will have to make a choice about how he spends his final days when he discovered he has terminal cancer. This doesn't matter in the grand scheme of things, but it will matter to Tor and will define the end of his life. When this level ends there will be an image that shows Tor, this image will be dependant on the path taken by the player (see 'The Path Taken' system).

Setting & Tone

There is no specified era for when this takes place, it is more abstract and it is left to the player's imagination based on the audio that they hear to visualise the story and what is happening to Tor.

This game takes place in a limbo where the dead take their opportunity to relive their lives and evaluate what they did well, what didn't go well and how they could have done better. Looking at their lives with hindsight will take them through to the afterlife they deserve.

The ocean represents the journey of life and the troubles and turmoil someone will face going through it. The waves and the storms are the way the person is feeling and how it affects them is reflected in the features of the boat and the amount of water it takes on board.

The tone will be very sombre and reflective looking at a life that was lived with regrets and how it could be improved. Tor starts the adventure as a sad man who died alone but over time he regains a perspective on his life and realises he didn't

need to die alone, it was the result of the choices he made. It will be ambiguous if this limbo changes what happens in Tor's life. In the end it will be clear that Tor appreciates the journey he's taken through limbo and it will provide closure on his life to look back at what he's done and what he could have done better. The adventure will end with Tor hopefully having his "happily ever after" along with the player being uplifted and able to walk away with new skills and strategies to cope with life.

Areas

Hall of Memories



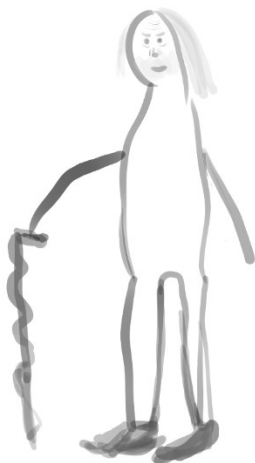
Artistic Impression of the Hall of Memories

The hall of memories will function as a level select menu but also as a place to rest before their journey across the ocean. It will be an area made from white stone, and it will appear to be producing light so that the area feels otherworldly and heavenly.

In 'Childhood' (level 1) the player will be on a small sailing boat which they will pilot around the ocean. Each 'Situation Storm' will draw the player in so that they have to confront what happens and they can't avoid it.

In 'Adolescence' (level 2) the boat will grow in size and functionally look different, a medium sailing boat that looks more fitting for someone that has some degree of experience on how to pilot a boat. In this level the water will be more fierce and choppy meaning that the player has to deal with rougher sea conditions.

In 'Adulthood' (level 3) the boat will be a full size sailing boat that is for someone who has sailed for most of their life. It will look weathered as if it had been used for many years. Again, the water will be choppy, and the storms will be at their most ferocious in this level.



Characters

Tor

Tor is a man who has lived a hard life, yet often the difficulty of his life was of his own making, the decisions he made led him to have a difficult life. He is a man too often driven by anger, now he has an opportunity to make decisions with the ability to stay calm and think clearly. He will explore his memories and discover that his decisions have left him on the verge of a horrible afterlife.

Tor is his own antagonist as he self sabotages and drives himself into his own ruin when blaming everyone

else for it. Now, with eternal damnation on the horizon he needs to change his ways and find the protagonist within himself for his own journey. He is driven by his emotions including fear, anger and anxiety, most of all.

The image is of Tor as an old man, this is the only time we actually see him.

Levels

Level 01 – Childhood



The objective of this level and each level is to make reasonable decisions and manage the impact of them on yourself. In this level the experiences and decisions needed to be made will be based around experiences a child would go through.

In each level there will be a disagreement with a friend's decision with each having different impact. In childhood that will be what high school does Tor go to, the one with his friends or one that would be better for him.

1. The first decision will be Tor at six years old having toys taken off him due to him not engaging at school. The choices will be to keep playing and ignore his mum (+1 point towards alone ending) or to tell his mum he can't read the words in his work (+1 point to the love ending).
2. Tor will be caught by his teacher not paying attention in English class and will tell him off as his work is poor in quality (if Tor chose to tell his mum about how he struggles to read the teacher will ask what is wrong rather than jumping to disciplining him). The choices here are to storm out the classroom in anger (+1 to the alone ending) or he can tell the teacher that he cannot read the words on the page in front of him and she will spend some time helping him (+1 towards the friendship ending).
3. In next situation will find Tor being bullied after being either disciplined or helped by the teacher earlier, a classmate will try to assist saying that he struggles too and it is nothing to be ashamed of. The choice here will be to reject the help and walk away from both parties (+1 point to alone ending) or to accept the help and stand up to the bullies, confessing that he does struggle but that like his classmate said "it is nothing to be ashamed of" (+1 to the friendship ending).
4. Tor's parents will take him to the family's doctor and try to get him to talk about his reading and writing issues at school. The choice here will be to reject the idea that he struggles and storm out of the doctor's office (+1 point towards the alone ending) or he can talk the doctor through how he sees words jumble and move on the page as he tries to read (+1 point towards the love ending).
5. The final situation of this level will take place just before the end of primary school where Tor will be given the opportunity to go to a school renowned for their specialist

dyslexia training. This choice will be different from all other childhood choices where there will be three options to choose from and the impact on the endings will be greater because of the importance of this decision. The first option that Tor can take is to accept that he can't go to school with all his friends (however if Tor took the friendship choice in situation 3 where he accepted the help from his classmate he will be less sad due to the fact he will have one friend there) but that he will get the support to do well there (+2 to love ending (+1 to friendship ending if Tor took the choice to make friends in situation 3)). The second option will be to appeal to his parents to keep him with his friends and that the support that they provide will equal the support he could get at the other school (+3 to the friendship ending). Finally, he can choose to leave the decision to his parents but let them know he will hate them if they take him away from his friends (+3 to the alone ending).

The choices made in this level will be the least impactful but aim to show the player how the game works, including the choices system and the mechanics of operating the boat.

The critical path in this level is to choose positive paths that help Tor confront his problems and keep his friends close while seeking to improve himself.

Level 02 – Adolescence



In this level the experiences and decisions need to be made will be based around what a teenager would go through.

The disagreement in Adolescence will be that a friend doing drugs and whether to do drugs with them, ignore it or report them.

1. Tor will be adjusting to high school and struggling with the demands it makes on him, it will all come to a head when he feels his teacher is not listening to him and respecting his difficulties. He can choose to rip up his work in front of the teacher (+1 point to the alone ending) or vocalise his issue and stand up for himself to the teacher in front of his friends, involving a more senior teacher (+1 to the friendship ending).
2. Tor will have seen a girl he has liked since he was 9 at his high school, now 15, he will approach her, but despite his best efforts he will be turned down by her. He can get angry with her and call her a tease (+1 point to the alone ending) or he can

respect her decision and be courteous and she will mention that her friend had said she liked him and to talk to her (+1 to the love ending).

3. Tor again will be confronted by bullies, this time they try becoming physical. Tor will either fight back against them and be the one that gets in to trouble (+1 to the alone ending) or will get the attention of a teacher who investigates and realises what is going on and pretends to escort Tor away but actually helps him with his bullying problem. (+1 to the friendship ending).
4. Tor will be visiting a friend's house with his new girlfriend when he walks in on his friend doing drugs. After leaving quickly his girlfriend encourages Tor to tell someone to get his friend help. If he does this, his friend will get spoken to by the police and in trouble with his parents but get the help he needs (-1 to friendship ending but +3 to the love ending). Tor can choose to ignore her, which the friend will thank him for but admits he has a problem and wants to stop which Tor is able help him with (-1 to the love ending but +3 to the friendship ending). Alternatively, Tor can ask the friend for drugs but this will get his friend caught by the police for distribution and Tor ends up watching his friend go to prison (+3 to the alone ending).
5. At the end of this level there will be a decision that shapes the ending and adulthood level, Tor will have a choice to stay in and study for exams, which will allow him to attend university to study engineering (+3 to love ending and +3 to friendship ending). He could choose to spend the evening with his girlfriend; this will result in him failing to get into university, but he will be offered a job and move in with his girlfriend (+5 to love ending). Finally, he could go out with friends to a party; the party will go wrong, Tor will get arrested and he will spiral almost losing his girlfriend, fail his exams and struggle to find work (+8 to the alone ending).

The critical path in this level is to again focus on increasing both the love and friendship paths by choosing the study option for the final choice, this is the best route to get the secret ending.

Level 03 – Adulthood



In this level the experiences and decisions needed to be made will be based around experiences an adult would go through such as having kids, moving away and losing a loved one.

The friend decision in adulthood will be that a close friend has an abusive partner; Tor can report it to the police, attempt to reason with the abuser to leave or forcefully stop the abuser.

In this level situations 2 and 4 will vary based on the path taken at the

end of the Adolescence level: Each A situation will be on University path, each B situation will be for the Job and House path, and each C situation will be for the Drunk path.

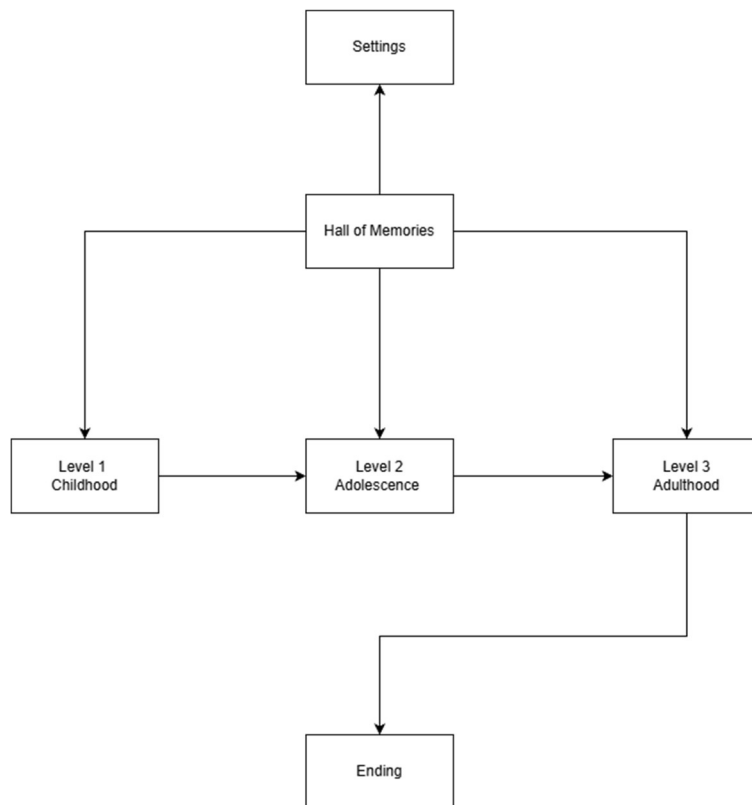
1. Argument with his girlfriend about Tor not being able to make commitments. Tor can choose to deny it and get angry causing his girlfriend to leave him (+5 to the alone ending), or he can apologise and admits that his barriers cause him to push people away (+3 to the love ending).
2. This choice is dependent on which path Tor took at the end of the 'Adolescence' level.
 - A. Tor will have to choose a specialism to study at university. He can choose to do electrical engineering which his university friends chose to study (+2 to friendship ending) or mechanical engineering which is his real passion and what family encourages him to do (+2 to the love ending).
 - B. Tor will get a job opportunity far from home. Taking it will mean he has an opportunity to make his own way in life and start a family (+2 to love ending) or he can look for another job close to home where his friends are (+2 to friendship ending).
 - C. Tor will have to pay a fine for the damages he caused while drinking. He can refuse to pay at which his dad will pay the fine (+3 to the alone ending) or he can take responsibility for his actions and pay the fine (no impact on the ending).
3. Tor will discover that a close friend has an abusive partner. He can choose to intervene in one of three ways: he can physically intervene but he will get hurt and the friend will push him away but the abuse continues(+3 to the alone ending), he can try to talk the abuser down and ask him to leave (+2 to the friendship ending) or he can go directly to the police (+2 to the love ending). The later two choices lead to an end in the abuse.
4. This choice will again be dependent on which path Tor took at the end of the 'Adolescence' level.
 - A. Tor's dad will fall gravely ill on the day of his graduation, but his father will insist Tor attends his graduation. He can choose to stay (+2 to the love ending) or go to his graduation (+2 to the friendship ending).
 - B. Tor will see some money going missing from the accounts at work, but his friend tells him to ignore it but that doesn't sit right with Tor. He can choose to investigate, where he will find out that the money is being sent to a legitimate local charity, at which point he will offer his help to the charity (+2 to the love ending) or he can ignore it at which point his friend will tell him the truth and Tor will again offer help to the charity (2+ to the friendship ending).
 - C. Tor will get into a bar fight. He will be arrested and charged with common assault. If he pleads guilty he will get a community order (No impact on the ending) if he pleads not guilty it will go to trial and receives a custodial sentence; while in prison his father dies (+3 alone ending). Both options result in a criminal record.
5. Many years later when Tor is fifty-seven, he will get diagnosed with terminal prostate cancer. He will get to choose how he spends his final days. He can go on a small trip abroad with his family (+5 for the love ending), he can pay for his friends to have a

party in celebration of his life (+5 to the friendship ending), or he can reject them all and die alone (+5 alone ending).

Interfaces

Game User Interface (GUI)

Information Architecture



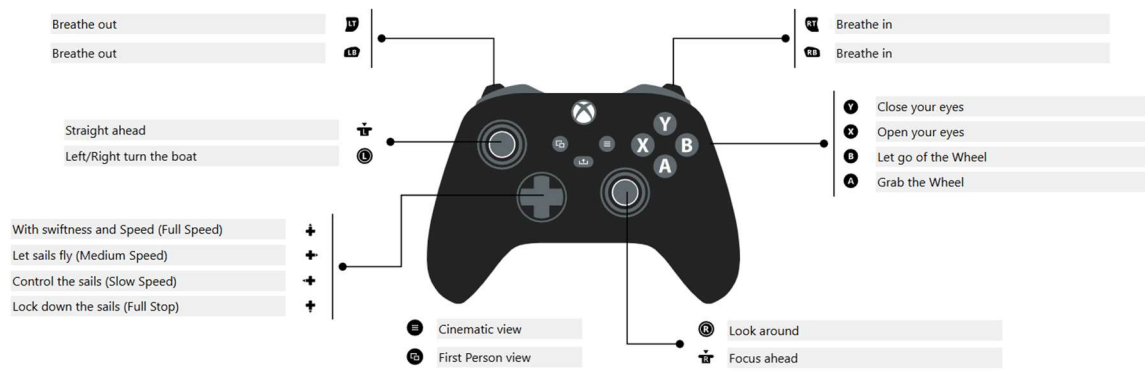
The user interface will be primarily diegetic with the strength of the storm and the colour of the environment which will be the indicator of how close the player is to failing. The choices will be shown as spatial text on the waves. 'The Hall of Memories' will function as the game's menu, level selection will be the doors, the settings will be sliders on the walls and exiting the game will be a door at the far end of the hall. The aim is to have no non-diegetic UI to create a highly immersive experience.

Input Controls

The standard input controls for the game are as follows for controller:

- Primary controls of taking hold of the wheel and opening eyes are mapped to the left and bottom face buttons due them being a classic resting position with the opposite effects of closing eyes and letting go of the wheel to be on the top and right face buttons.
- Breathing is mapped to the triggers and shoulder buttons, having to press both the shoulder and trigger of each side to breathe in and out respectively.
- Turning the boat is mapped to the left stick, left and right will turn the boat in that respective direction while clicking down on the stick will reset the wheel, then the boat will travel directly forwards.
- Changing the speed of the boat, a secondary action, is mapped to the directional pad as this is an action to be done while not using the left stick. There are four speeds the boat can take, full, medium, slow and a stop.
- The right stick will be used to look around and pressing the left stick will focus the view ahead.
- There will be two buttons for setting the view of the game between a cinematic 3rd person perspective and 1st person perspective.

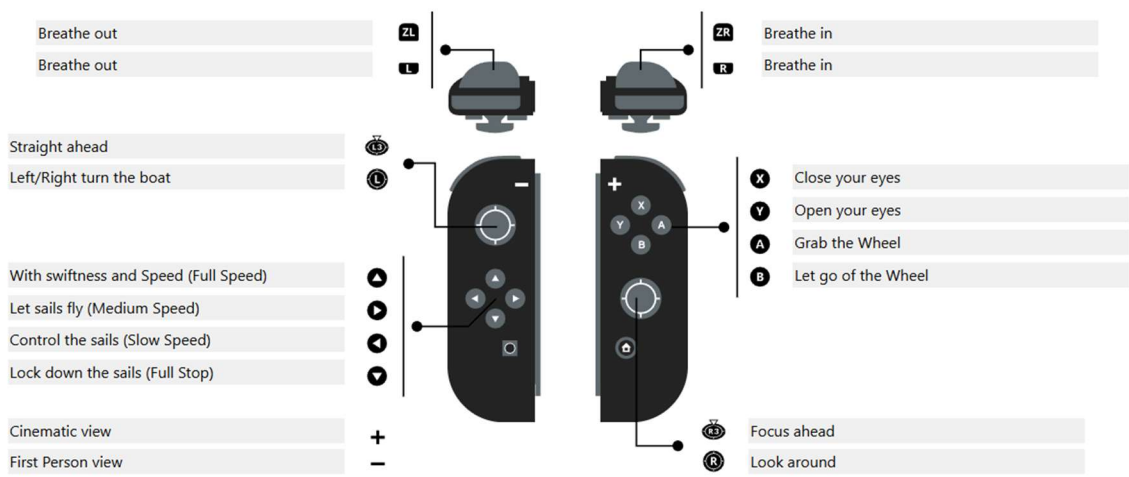
Xbox



PlayStation



Nintendo Switch



Audio

Story Audio

The story of the game will be delivered almost entirely by audio either told by Tor or by the audio of memories as if the player is listening to an audio drama. Multiple voice actors will be needed for different stages of Tor's life ie child, teenage, adult and old man.

Music

- Soft orchestral music will be used for the Hall of Memories to represent the heavenly aura of the environment.
- The calm ocean will have gentle string and wind-based music to it, instruments such as harps and flute will play the primary role for this music. There will be a different track for each level but will fit along the same theme for all three. When Tor is in a storm the music will be drowned out by the sound effects of the storm.
- The ending will be accompanied by piano music but will differ between the endings, upbeat and cheerful for when Tor is surrounded by his friends, soft but warm for when Tor is with his wife and for when Tor is alone the music will be sombre and hollow.

Sound effects

- The sound effects for the ocean and the storms will be key to the immersion of the player.
- The thunder needs to be terrifying. The waves have dynamic variation based their size and frequency. This will help the player know when trouble is on the horizon and that they need to engage with preventive strategies.
- When in the Hall of Memories every sound needs to reverberate substantially as it will be a very acoustically wet environment. Every footstep needs to be heard echoing off into the infinitely long hall.
- The sound effects of the story situations eg a bar fight, happening need to be represented closely to what would happen in real life. This is to give the player the best chance at being immersed in the world and be able to visualise what Tor experienced in life.

Asset list:

Waves of various intensities

Thunder crashing

Sails flapping

Music for the levels and 'Hall of Memories'

Seagulls

Tor's voices (child, teenage, adult and old man)

Audio for the situations

- Voice of characters in various situations eg mum, dad, teacher, friends, bullies and girlfriend
- Ripping of paper
- Fight noises
- Party noises and music