

Beyond the Walls

Pitch Document

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Executive Summary

Beyond the Walls is a survival-horror, adventure game with third-person shooter and platforming gameplay that explores the message of building trust. Players play through an emotional, coming-of-age story with gameplay that emphasizes players to build up trust and a branching narrative that allows players to change how the story unfolds.

Audience Analysis

Since *Beyond the Walls* focuses on themes of trust, survival gameplay, and a coming-of-age branching narrative, fans of *Resident Evil*, fans of *The Last of Us*, and fans of *Life is Strange* will appeal more to *Beyond the Walls*.

Throughout the story, players play as Emily as she explores the Facility Labyrinth along with Todd. Trust is built through various sequences, such as gameplay and narrative choices. Depending on how players advance through Emily's story in both situations, trust will either decrease or increase, and this will help impact the ending of the story. In *Resident Evil* (1996), *Life is Strange* (2015), and *The Last of Us* (2013), characters like Chris Redfield, Max, and Ellie learn to trust other characters throughout the story and gameplay, which reflects the same style in *Beyond the Walls*. While *Resident Evil* (1996) and *The Last of Us* (2013) focus more on a linear story, their gameplay is where players can witness growth in trust between characters more; however, in *Life is Strange* (2015), players can see trust build-up through the game's branching narrative where players choices affect how other characters feel towards each other.

In *Beyond the Walls*, players struggle to survive by collecting weapons, health items, and key items and using these to fight back or escape a murderous threat. Gameplay is real-time and intense with characters, enemies, and the environment interacting all-at-once. If players act careless and do not take care of themselves or other characters, or miss valuable items, then consequences are severe: the player will die and have to start over. This gameplay style reflects the ones *Resident Evil* (1996) and *The Last of Us* (2013) demonstrates, which is where players have to explore areas carefully to look for essential weapons and supplies, as well as steer clear from harmful enemies that can result in death.

Beyond the Walls utilizes a branching narrative where players' choices affect the story's narrative. Choices like deciding to work alone or together with a partner, deciding to free a dog or leave it in a cage, and deciding to trust someone with a painful truth or not all contribute to a branching narrative experience for players. In *Life is Strange* (2015), players change characters' behaviors towards others by exploring a branching narrative; each choice a character makes in a narrative decision will change the course of the story and lead players to different endings and gameplay experiences.

Reference

Capcom. (1996). *Resident Evil* [Video game]. Capcom.

Dontnod Entertainment. (2015). *Life is Strange* [Video game]. Square Enix.

Naughty Dog. (2013). *The Last of Us* [Video game]. Sony Interactive Entertainment.

Story

Emily, a skeptical teenager, struggles to get through a school day as she wants to live in an isolative life after being sexually assaulted six months ago. She meets Todd, a caregiving student who tries to help her with her fallen books, but she leaves him without saying a word. As Emily walks home, Anthony, a careless bully who enjoys watching others suffer, tries to abuse her with the help of Mike, another student who wants to be cool by following others. Todd runs over to help protect Emily, but within seconds, Emily and the group get sabotaged by a group of soldiers.

Emily wakes up inside a strange and expansive facility that resembles a labyrinth along with Todd, Mike, and Anthony. Shelly, Anthony's obnoxious girlfriend, who was also captured, expresses great fear as she searches for an exit, but as she does, a dark cloud of smoke seeps into the room, also known as Vile, and ultimately kills her. Emily struggles to survive against Vile and escape alone, but after being saved by Todd, a caregiving student she met earlier, she must decide whether to work to escape with him or without him.

“Ignore Todd”: If Emily decides to not work with Todd, then she heads into the next room without him and without saying a word. Gameplay initiates into third-person shooter and platforming as Emily searches for weapons and health items. It is not long before the two meet up again, and this time, have to battle together against a possessed antelope as it tries to attack them. Todd will not go near and heal Emily throughout the game, however, as a result of this choice.

“Together”: If Emily chooses to work with Todd and accept his help, then Todd will be an NPC character and work alongside her throughout the game. Emily and Todd will go through the next room to search for items before fighting against a Vile-possessed antelope, which attacks them head-on. Todd will go near Emily and heal her throughout the game due to this trusting choice.

Emily and Todd will continue through Facility Labyrinth and explore each room for supplies and weapons--fighting against various possessed animals, as well as Vile itself along the way. As they reach the Hallway, they encounter a dog in a cage. Todd explains to Emily that letting him loose might be a bad mistake due to their previous experience with animals. Emily contemplates.

“Ignore Dog”: If Emily chooses to not let the dog loose, then she walks away from the cage and further into Facility Labyrinth. The dog remains in the cage alone, and Emily still remains skeptical.

“Free Granola”: If Emily chooses to let the dog loose, the dog will happily walk alongside her and Todd throughout the game. Todd instantly forgives her, even though he has had a bad experience with dogs in the past, as he gets along with the dog. She

inquires that they name him Granola, which sticks throughout the rest of the game. Emily overcoming her skepticism leads to her building trust with Todd, as well as others like Granola, and this rewards players since Granola is an NPC character that searches for hidden items like weapons and health items, as well as bark when Vile is nearby.

As Emily and Todd (and Granola if rescued) explore further into Facility Labyrinth, they come across Mike, who undergoes an emotional breakdown after being abandoned by Anthony.

“Ignorance”: If Emily does not accept to help Todd with Mike, then she stands there as Mike loses control of his emotions. Todd steps back as Vile approaches Mike from behind. Vile devours Mike and leaves him with his neck twisted backward. Anthony walks out with a cackle as he approaches Emily and Todd with a baseball bat and explains to Emily how heartless she is for letting Mike die. A boss fight with Anthony initiates.

“Help”: If Emily accepts to help, she runs over to help Todd calm Mike down. Mike eases and apologizes to Emily for his obnoxious behavior, but as soon as he does, Anthony bashes him over the head with a baseball bat for deceiving him. Emily rushes after Anthony, and Todd helps. Getting ganged upon, Anthony tries to run away, but he gets possessed by Vile. A boss battle with possessed Anthony initiates.

Emily and Todd (and Granola if rescued) eventually reach the Observatory Deck and confront Dr. Wallace. Dr. Wallace announces that Todd is his son. He continues by saying that Todd has been helping him with rounding up test subjects over the past few months. Emily stands in shock as Dr. Wallace opens the vents to the Observation Deck, which leads to Vile entering. Emily embraces her final choice, which is ultimately decided based on the choices that the player has made throughout the story with the help of continuous behavior tracking.

“Break Free” - Bad Ending: If Emily decides to do more than one skeptical choice in all three narrative choices, then she will not trust Todd and not forgive him. She works solo (and with Granola if she has freed him) to stop Dr. Wallace. Todd, ultimately hurt because of his caregiving behavior, tries to stop his father alone, but he gets possessed by Vile. Emily now struggles to defeat possessed Todd and Vile in a climactic battle. After defeating Todd, Emily opens the door that leads to Dr. Wallace, and filled with fear, Dr. Wallace succumbs to Vile’s murderous plague. Emily then uses a machine to shed pure sunlight into Vile, which kills it. Emily escapes the facility, but after reaching authorities, she cries in her arms--alone.

“Truth and Forgiveness” - Good Ending: If Emily decides to do more than one trusting choice in all three narrative choices, then she will forgive Todd. Emily (and Granola if rescued) decide to work with Todd to fend off against Vile and stop Dr. Wallace. After fending off Vile, Emily reaches Dr. Wallace’s office, but as he begs for forgiveness, she considers on letting him live; however, Todd opens the door, which draws Vile closer to

Dr. Wallace's fear--resulting in his death. Emily and Todd activate a machine that opens ceiling panels that transfer sunlight to the tower, which leads to Vile vanquishing forever. Emily, Todd, and Granola (if rescued) escape Facility Labyrinth together--hand-in-hand.

Characters

Emily

Emily is a 17-year-old who wants to live her own life--by herself--with no help. She struggles to connect with others and decides to trust no one but herself. Six months prior to the story, she was sexually assaulted, which has caused her to act skeptical towards others since that incident. After being captured and brought to the Facility Labyrinth, she now struggles to survive and escape from the experiment. Throughout the story, Emily learns to overcome her skepticism and build up trust with help from her new friend, Todd.

Emily has brown hair, blue eyes, and wears a hoodie, jeans, and boots. The hoodie is an essential clothing piece as it reflects her isolative behavior in the beginning. In the “Truth and Forgiveness” ending, players will see that she decides to always keep her hoodie down, which indicates that she has overcome her isolation and skepticism.

Todd

An 18-year-old student, who observes the world around him and wants to make the world a better place. He has trouble connecting with others, but he tries to overcome this by giving them a hand or connecting with them emotionally. He is a well-built jock with dark hair, brown eyes, and wears a hoodie, jeans, and sneakers.

Anthony

An 18-year-old careless, obnoxious, and self-centered jock, who wants to watch others painfully suffer. As a jock, he has the capability of inflicting immense pain to others. He has light hair, blue eyes, and wears a jersey, jeans, and sneakers.

Mike

A 17-year-old follower, who tries to think that everything he does is cool--even if it means hurting others. He wants to follow others to help maintain his “cool” outlook, but this attachment only leads to his true emotions being bottled away. He has dark hair, brown eyes, and wears a jacket, jeans, and sneakers.

Vile

An animated cloud of black smoke that reacts to and feeds off of the expression of fear in living beings. It reacts by expanding its smoke’s radius, and it creeps like a burning flame when it draws near its victims. It is impossible to see through Vile’s smoke, but when a subject is devoured in its shadows, the subject would look like it gets attacked by an invisible enemy. Vile’s victims suffer by getting possessed or killed by its smoke.

Dr. Wallace

A brilliant, manipulative, and intelligent 39-year-old scientist, who wants to acquire power over others. He has created the FAR organization (Fear Analysis Research) to conduct his violent experiments with Vile after discovering it on the shores of South

African beach. His hunger for power leads him to performing heartless decisions, such as manipulating his own son, Todd, to help gather test subjects for him. He has a shaved head, brown eyes, and wears lab garments.

Competition Analysis

Resident Evil (1996), *Life is Strange* (2015), and *The Last of Us* (2013) demonstrate enticing and fun examples of survival gameplay, themes of trust, and branching narratives. In *Beyond the Walls*, gameplay and narrative have taken huge inspiration from these amazing titles and expands upon those experiences in a few ways.

With themes of trust, *Beyond the Walls* focuses on expanding upon the innovative trust-building gameplay from *Resident Evil* (1996) and *The Last of Us* (2013) by combining the trust-building experience in both the branching narrative and gameplay and having them work side-by-side. A player's choice in one key moment choice will lead to a permanent change in gameplay, such as a player choosing a skeptical choice and having to then play in an isolated gameplay format as other characters decide to not go near you.

With branching narratives, *Beyond the Walls* focuses on expanding upon the resonating experiences that *Life is Strange* (2015) has delivered to players with its branching narrative gameplay, which features emotional outcomes and endings thanks to its various third-dimensional characters; players' decisions in the branching narrative in *Beyond the Walls* also have an effect on gameplay, such as an NPC character not helping the player with health items due to making a skeptical choice instead of a trusting one.

Reference

Capcom. (1996). *Resident Evil* [Video game]. Capcom.

Dontnod Entertainment. (2015). *Life is Strange* [Video game]. Square Enix.

Naughty Dog. (2013). *The Last of Us* [Video game]. Sony Interactive Entertainment.

Gameplay

Gameplay Mechanics

Gameplay focuses on a third-person shooter and platformer. Players view the environment over Emily's shoulder and can interact with other characters, items, or objects with various buttons. To make Emily run, players push around an analog stick.

- A Button: Accept / Attack with wooden plank, pipe, or crowbar / Interact
- B Button - Decline / Dodge
- C Button - Call "Granola"

Branching Dialogue

Throughout the game, Emily will encounter three key narrative choices that the player must choose. Each choice helps shift gameplay experiences and will help determine a specific ending of the story:

- **Chapter 1: Facility Labyrinth** - Players can choose not to work with Todd or to work with Todd. If players choose to not work with Todd, then he will not go near and heal Emily if she is in low health.
- **Chapter 3: Granola** - Players can choose to not let the dog free or to free the dog in the dog cage. Players who do let the dog free will experience Emily naming him "Granola" as he joins the player's team in the gameplay. Granola can seek hidden items and alert players when Vile is nearby.
- **Chapter 4: Dead Ends** - Players can choose to not help or help Mike when he is having an emotional breakdown. Players who do try to help Mike will later have to fight a stronger version of Anthony, who gets possessed by Vile. Players who do not help Mike have to fight a normal version of Anthony, who is weaker.

If a player chooses more than one trusting choice in all three of the narrative branches, then the player (Emily) will achieve the "Trust and Forgiveness" ending, which is where Emily grows to overcome her skepticism and learns to trust others.

If a player chooses more than one skeptical choice in all three of the narrative branches, then the player (Emily) will achieve the "Break Free" ending, which is where Emily undergoes the downfall character arc and does not learn to overcome her skepticism.

Collectibles

"Survival Packages": Backpacks that contain a weapon, a health item, and a unique note that has been left by a previous victim. These notes explain a brief story behind the wielder of the backpack, which will resonate fearful or saddening emotions with players. By collecting all nine "Survival Packages," players obtain:

"Golden Crowbar": an unbreakable and stronger version of the crowbar

“Lifesaving Patch”: a patch that replenishes all of Emily, Todd, or Granola’s health and can be used infinitely.

Locations

Marsh Island, New York - A fictional version of Long Island, New York. This location is only seen in the opening cutscene of the game and is the home of Emily, Todd, Anthony, Mike, and Shelly:

- Marsh Island High School
- Marsh Island Neighborhood

South Africa - Set and based on the real South Africa, the Facility Labyrinth built by the Fear Analysis Research organization resides here. The facility rests near the shore of one of the beaches in South Africa:

- South African Beach
- Facility Labyrinth

Facility Labyrinth - A fictional facility that has been specially structured by the Fear Analysis Research organization for Vile and its power. On the outside, what is seen is a tall tower built in concrete material with an expanded top floor. The area in which the facility resides is guarded heavily by electrical and wired fences and combat-trained soldiers.

Inside the tower, on the bottom floor, is a labyrinth of different rooms--each with well-ventilated areas that allow Vile to attack its victims. Each room has been messed with and dirtied due to previous experiments. On the top floor, which is only accessible through the Waiting Room elevator, is an observation deck, which is where Dr. Wallace, the scientists, and the soldiers conduct and watch the experiment with the subjects and Vile from above:

- Main Hall
- Storage Closet
- Kitchen
- Library
- Morgue
- Hallway
- Theater
- Waiting Room
- Observation Deck

Organizations

Fear Analysis Research (FAR)

This is a 6-month-old organization developed by Dr. Wallace, who conducts research on the emotion of fear in living beings--from animals to humans.

After discovering a mysterious cloud of dark smoke in a box that reacts violently to the expression of fear in humans and animals, Dr. Wallace, hungry for power and money, realizes this as a powerful advantage over others. He formulates a team of intelligent and strong individuals to help him advance towards dictatorship.

Scientists, including Dr. Wallace, perform further research into the cloud of fear-reacting smoke, which he later titles, "Vile." Dr. Wallace presents mice to Vile, and as they grow fearful, Vile reacts violently and grows in size. Vile draws closer to the fear being expressed, and as it approaches and devours the subject in its dark shadows, the subject will either be possessed by Vile itself and react just as violently by attacking other living beings, or it will be destroyed in an unexpected, horrific way.

Over the course of six months into experimentation, Dr. Wallace grows insane with this newly-found power. He assigns specialized combat soldiers to help acquire more subjects--including humans and other animals--to expand upon his research and strengthen Vile.

As of now, Dr. Wallace, the scientists, and the soldiers look ahead to conduct further experimentation into Vile's power by seeking younger and weaker subjects, which leads to the capture of five flawed students--Emily, Todd, Mike, Anthony, and Shelly.

Extras

Chapters

“Chapter 1: Facility Labyrinth”

“Chapter 2: The Road Ahead”

“Chapter 3: Granola”

“Chapter 4: Dead Ends”

“Chapter 5: The Search for the Elevator Key”

“Chapter 6: Beyond the Walls”

Difficulty Modes

“Into the Light” - Vile’s speed, strength, and shadow radius has decreased by 25%. Dodging cannot be interrupted. Weapons and health items have a 25% more chance of appearing.

“Standard” - Enjoy the story as is.

“Into the Shadows” - Vile’s speed, strength, and shadow radius have increased by 50%. The rate of dodging interruption has been increased by 25%. Weapons and health items have a 25% less chance of appearing.