

## Sample Game Summary

A studio is working on an interactive entertainment project for a client. This project, *Wild Woman of Tuskegee Falls*, is a 3d point-and-click, narratively driven, adventure game that has been designed to target women between the ages of 45 to 55. The game is rated E+10.

**Hook:** *Use your psychic powers and wits to solve puzzles, explore, and appease angry spirits, all to secure the return of your missing nephew. If you fail, he may be lost forever!*

### **High Concept:**

- **Narrative Summary**—Rose Grayson is the wild woman of Tuskegee Falls. You may think that’s not saying much for a quiet town, but Rose is a colorful, spirited woman with a lively career as the town medium! Anyone who wants to hear from those who have passed on knows that they can knock on her door and get a glimpse of the other side. While it makes the neighbors whisper, it keeps life interesting, and that’s good enough for Rose. In the midst of a bustling summer, Rose’s sister, Abigail, has left her husband and brought her two children—Rose’s niece Madison, and her nephew Caleb—to stay at Rose’s house. While it’s wonderful to have the family there, Rose knows the change has made the spirits restless. While Caleb still loves hanging out and learning about his aunt’s “haunted house”, Madison no longer seems to be a fan of her aunt, or the house they all now call home. Rose’s sister Abigail doesn’t approve of her sister’s career either, and so séances have been stalled for weeks, leading to a buildup of spectral energies. One night while Abigail is away on business, something strange happens—Caleb disappears at the stroke of midnight. Now Rose and Madison must comb the house together, finding clues and soothing spirits, so that they can solve the mystery of Caleb’s disappearance before Abigail returns. Based upon player decisions, and conversations with Madison, three possible endings occur: Best, where Caleb is recovered and Madison confesses her ability, leading to stronger bonds between Rose and Madison and Rose and Abigail. Good, where Caleb is recovered, but Madison does not confess and relationships remain somewhat strained, and Poor, where Caleb is found, but Madison convinces Abigail that they should leave.
- **Genre**—Adventure Game
- **Camera**—3D tight over-the-shoulder, except in puzzles, where players will move into a 1<sup>st</sup> person POV to have full, clear view of the puzzle.
- **Platform**—Mac and PC
- **Controls**—point and click with mouse and/or track pad
- **Core Actions**—converse (speak with Madison and spirits), explore, investigate, “perceive”, interact, collect, combine, and place to solve puzzles and riddles, soothing restless spirits.

- “Perceiving” refers to Rose’s psychic ability. As the player explores the environment, there will be a little disruption of the environment the player will click on to trigger perception, which will generate a spectral glow on interactive objects within a radius of the area of disturbance. (Replaces hot spots.)
- Goals: (Game) Work with Madison to find Caleb, and restore Rose’s relationship with her niece and sister. (Sub-Goals) Solve puzzles and appease spirits. (Moment-to-moment) Interact and explore and converse to discover puzzles and collect necessary information. (Optional) Players can explore and collection information throughout the house regarding the family history, allowing Rose and Madison to interact and build a closer relationship, depending on conversation options selected.
- Win/Loss Scenario: Win the game’s “best” ending by finding Caleb, and building a positive relationship with Madison, all within the time limit. Win the game’s “good” ending by finding Caleb in the time limit, but keeping a strained relationship with Madison. Win the game’s “poor” ending when Caleb is found in the time limit, but Madison convinces Abigail that they should move out. The time limit is shaped by the fact that Abigail Grayson will be home by 6am, and if Rose and Madison don’t find Caleb, Abigail will take the children and leave (loss). As the disappearance happens at midnight, this is a 6-hour window. With optimal play, this game can be completed in 2-3 hours. Complicating this scenario is Rose’s asthma—if she doesn’t use an inhaler at regular intervals while exploring the house, she’ll pass out till her sister comes home (an instant loss scenario).
- Visual Style—3D with painterly textures
- UI Elements—Journal (for tracking narrative and gameplay events, and puzzles found and solved), Inventory (for tracking objects found, and combining objects when applicable). Inhaler—used when Rose has an allergic reaction to all the dust being stirred up. Hint—three hints per puzzle, with a 30-second cool down between uses. After those are expended, players will have the option to skip a puzzle, which leads to a negative response from Madison, as Madison has to solve the problem for Rose.

### **Environmental Design Overview:**

The game is constrained to the interior of a four-level southern plantation home (basement, ground floor, upper floor, attic). The front porch and backyard were discussed as stretch goals, but are not a current aspect of the design.

- Basement: The basement is a large space split into three spaces: (1) a finished studio apartment with a living space, kitchenette, and bathroom, (2) a storage area filled with boxes, and (3) a utility space with a furnace, electrical box, and appliances for laundry, along with a freezer.
- Ground Floor: This floor includes six rooms: the séance room, a playroom, living and dining rooms, a kitchen, and a bathroom in a Southern Gothic style.

- Upper Floor: This floor has three large bedrooms, a shared bathroom, and a huge master suite—a large bedroom and bathroom combined, all with the blend of New Age and creepy, baroque, Southern Gothic feel, reflecting Rose’s eccentricity.
- Attic: This floor, like the basement, is split. There’s a secret room that takes up ¼ of the space, and the remainder is filled with the detritus of multiple generations of Graysons. There is all manner of furniture, some covered in sheets, stacked paintings, a multitude of boxes, and etc.

### Characters:

- Rose Grayson (PC): A medium and psychic who runs her business out of the ancestral home in Tuskegee Falls (an imaginary suburb outside Tuskegee, Alabama), an eccentric woman of 39 who melds the traditional Southern Gothic style of the house with her own eclectic New Age/60’s-inspired tastes.
- Madison Brooks: Rose’s niece, a twelve-year-old girl on the cusp of being a teen. Moods range from surly to introspective to engaged and excited, depending upon where the player is in the narrative, and how they manage the relationship between Rose and Madison. In the “best” ending where Rose and Madison have a strong relationship, Madison reveals she’s inherited psychic ability, and her fear of that being discovered caused her initial negative behavior.
- Caleb Brooks: Rose’s nephew, an eight-year-old boy who is fascinated to live in “a haunted house”. Caleb is gregarious and energetic, often getting into mischief. In the “best” ending, Caleb is recovered and it’s discovered he utilized an old dumb waiter to sneak into a secret room in the attic, only to become stuck there, being entertained by Gus Grayson, the ghost of his grandfather, Rose and Abigail’s father.
- Abigail Grayson-Brooks: Rose’s somewhat uptight fraternal twin sister. Abigail is an accountant at an international firm, and is often very busy with work. Her marriage is ending, and she’s come home to find stability for her two children. She doesn’t believe her sister (or the long line of Grayson women before them) has true psychic ability.
- Gus Grayson: The father of Rose and Abigail. He passed three years ago, but has remained in the house to keep an eye on his daughters and grandchildren. Gus has been up in the attic with Caleb, in a secret playroom, the two of them have been playing with a huge, impressive old model train set.
- Upper Floor Ghost: A spirit angered because their family’s séance was cancelled.
- Ground Floor Ghost: Spirit saddened because their family’s séance was cancelled.
- Basement Ghost: Spirit acting as a poltergeist as their family’s séance was cancelled.

### Game Flow:

- Players are tasked with exploring the house (beginning on the upper floor, then going from the ground floor to the basement, from the basement to the attic) and solving a variety of puzzles and riddles along the way.
- The upper floor has three logic puzzles, driving a collect/combine puzzle that leads to the collection of a hint from the appeased Upper Floor Ghost that directs them to the ground floor to find a key to the basement, along with four points of optional interaction with objects which prompt conversation with Madison.

- The ground floor has four different logic puzzles, and a collect/combine puzzle, an environmental puzzle, and a riddle, all of which lead to the basement key being found once the Ground Floor Ghost is appeased. There are also six points of optional interaction with objects which prompt conversation with Madison. There is also a refill cartridge for Rose's inhaler to be found on this floor. This adds 6 doses for the player.
- The basement has four logic puzzles (including a fuse/rewiring puzzle) a collect/combine puzzle, and adds in a series of cipher-based riddles that will lead players to the location of the hidden entrance to the attic. Players will revisit the ground and upper floors to finalize their cipher, allowing entry to the attic once the Basement Ghost is appeased. There are also three points of optional interaction with objects which prompt conversation with Madison.
- The attic will have a combination of collect/combine puzzles (2), riddles (3), and optional interaction points, leading to Caleb's recovery as they solve the mystery of his disappearance once the secret room is opened.

## Design Test Directions

Based upon the scenario selected, complete a full level design for **one level** of the game. The level design should illustrate an understanding of scale and layout, as well as building learning, pacing, and challenge into a space based on player actions, environment navigability, and object type, frequency, and placement. The level design should also illustrate an understanding of how to support mood based upon the intended visual design of spaces. Areas not marked with an \* should address the game in its entirety.

- Setting Analysis (aspects of locale and time that impact the level design)-200 words max.
- Culture Analysis (history, norms, social order, etc. that impact the game world)-200 words max.
- Overview (explain level's use of core mechanics/features, proposed visual design choices)
- Gameplay Loop (diagram that illustrates the core mechanics of gameplay)
- Top-down Mock-up\* (for level selected, with item placement and identification key/legend)
- Gameplay Analysis\* (how design supports core mechanics, dynamics, learning)—150 words max.
- Asset List\* (all necessary environmental object components and effects, by the level selected)

### **Follow-Up:**

Propose **one new mechanic** that will add to the **replay value** of the game. Be sure to detail any new controls or assets required, along with an analysis of how this mechanic would impact overall gameplay, pacing, and learning curves for the level selected.

# **Game Design Test Answer**

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## **Setting Analysis**

The entire game takes place past the hours of midnight. It will be primarily lit with interior lighting until around the last 3rd of the game when the sun rises (roughly 5 AM). This will be demonstrated by the windows getting lighter. This will serve as an indicator for the player that they are running low on time.

The house is a large plantation style home. It will be similar in size to the house in the game *Gone Home* but will have a different interior. The floors of every room will be made of wood with the exceptions being the bathrooms and the kitchen on the main floor which would be tile with a decorative floral pattern. The walls of each room would have a combination of decorative wooden chair trim and lighter painted colors. The seance room would have a slightly darker theme, with the wooden trim being a darker cherry wood.

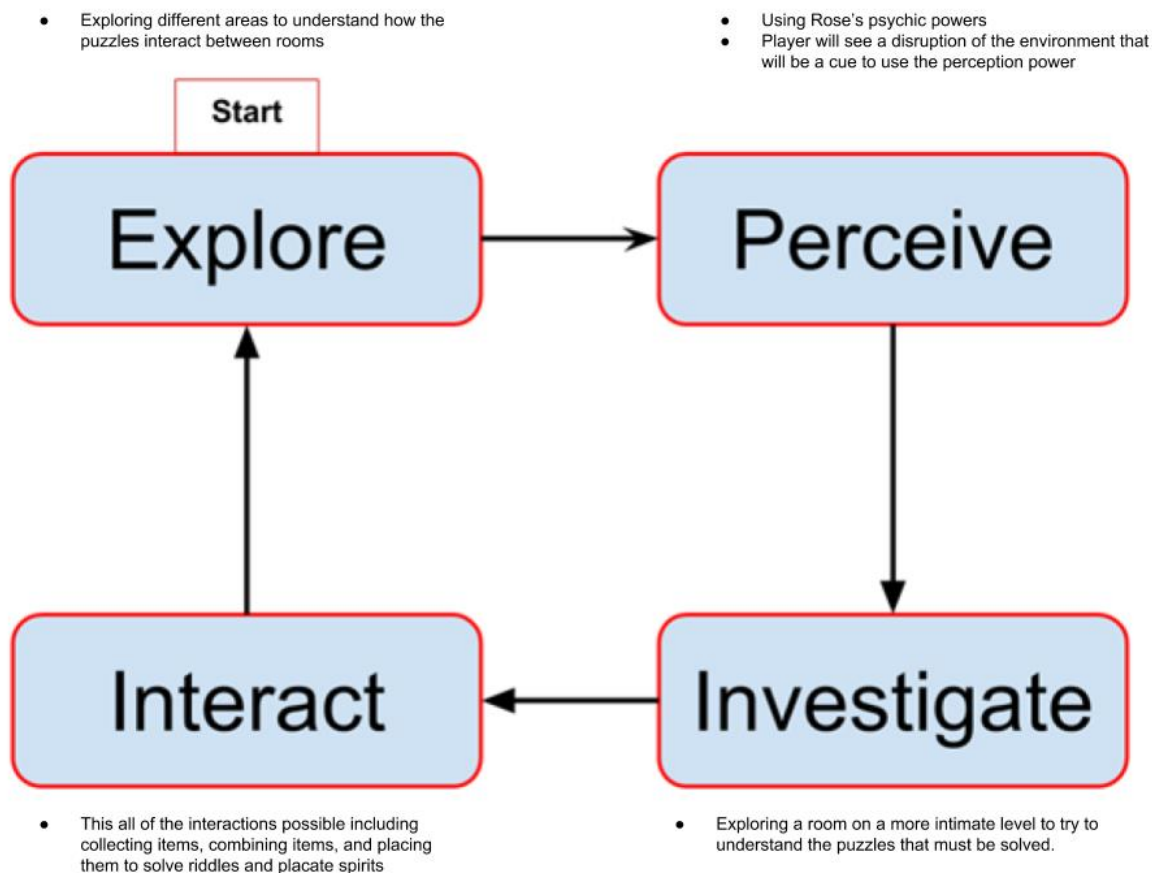
The main entryway would have four columns in front of a double-sided, sweeping staircase that ascends to the upper floors. The ground and upper floors have high, vaulted ceilings with trimmed windows that match. The attic and basement would be normal height.

## **Culture Analysis**

Tuskegee is rooted deep in African-American history. After the Civil War, many freedmen that used to work on plantations in the area as slaves continued to do so after being freed. The Tuskegee Normal School (now Tuskegee University) was founded by a former slave whose father educated him. It's first principal was Booker T. Washington and another notable teacher was George Washington Carver. The city was also at the center of a notable civil rights case, *Gomillion V. Lightfoot*, in which the supreme court ruled that the current state legislature had violated the Fifteenth Amendment in gerrymandering city boundaries in such a way to exclude nearly all black voters and residents. The 2017 census estimates that the city makeup is more than 95% African American and less than 3% White and/or Hispanic.

Rose's parents would have been most likely been philanthropists that were extremely active in the Civil Rights Movement. Given that she lives in a massive plantation house that she would have inherited, there is a high possibility that Rose has some white in her lineage, given that those that had money in this town were the educated children of former slave owners.

## Gameplay Loop



## Overview

The design of the ground floor was completed with the intent that the player would understand the basics of all the core mechanics. In the gameplay loop above, “interact” refers several actions including talking to Madison, collecting, combining, and placing items to soothe the spirits. The player would begin this level having descended from the second floor where they would have already dealt with an angry spirit. The spirit on this floor is a black girl that passed a day or two after her seventh birthday and is sad that she cannot see her family.

### Logic Puzzles (4)

The four logic puzzles can be solved in any order. They are in the following locations: the dining room, the kitchen, the living room, and the play room.

The dining room logic puzzle requires the player to find the photograph of a little girl’s birthday party (two parents sitting on either side of the little girl at the head of the table in front of a cake) in the living room first before it can be solved. Once it has been obtained, when the player “perceives” in the dining room after retrieving it, they are then allowed to start solving the

puzzle as a little girl floating sadly over the table is revealed. If the player “perceives” in the dining room without having collected the photo, they will not see the little girl and instead receive feedback from Madison of something along the lines of, “I think we might need more information before we tackle this problem.” If the player is prepared with the photo, they then must set the table as closely as possible to the photograph to appease the ghost. When the table is set correctly, the ghost hovers closer, smiles sadly, and then fades from the spot. The perception cue on the table goes away permanently after this.

The kitchen logic puzzle requires the player to have explored the playroom. When the player first enters the playroom, wooden blocks in 4 different shapes will fly onto the walls and trigger a “Perception” cue. If the player uses the “perceive” skill, they will get an automatic addition to their journal that will make a note of how many of each shape stuck to the walls. When the player walks into the kitchen, they will see some rolled-out snickerdoodle cookie dough that Rose was making for Madison and Caleb right before his disappearance, along with six different cookie cutters in different shapes and a baking sheet. Upon further observation, it’s noted that Rose left the oven on and it’s hot and ready for baking. Four of these shapes will match the shapes on the wall of the playroom. Regardless of if the player has explored the playroom, every time they enter the kitchen, a quick glimpse of the little girl’s ghost can be seen dashing away from the cookie dough, as if she’s afraid of being caught trying to steal some. If the player “perceives” without having gone to the playroom, they will receive feedback along the lines of, “I’m not sure if the ghost is trying to say something, or just steal some cookie dough. It doesn’t look like it’s been touched, though.” If the player walks over and “perceives” the rolled-out cookie dough after going to the playroom, it will then become evident to the player, through a conversation with Madison, that the shapes seem to match the ones that floated up and stuck to the wall in the play room. The player then must cut out the right amount of each shape, put them on the cookie sheet and bake them. When the cookies are baked, Rose immediately puts them on a plate, and the little girl’s ghost appears, smiles, grabs a cookie to eat, and then disappears permanently from the room. After this point, every time you return to the room, a few more cookies are gone until after the final seance. If you return to the kitchen after the final séance, the plate of cookies will be completely empty.

The living room logic puzzle is that of a checkers set that has been partly played through. When the player walks near it, it triggers a “Perceive” cue and the little girl’s ghost appears on the other side of the board. She looks somewhat happy, and she taps board as an indicator that she wants to play. She sits on the black side and the player sits sit on the red side. The red side has more pieces than the black side does, however, after the first move its clear that the little girl’s ghost doesn’t exactly know the rules and moves twice. The object of this puzzle is that the player must beat the ghost at checkers. If the player does not beat her, the pieces fly back into the same places, the girl looks sad and the player must try again. When the player wins, she looks happy, stacks the pieces into the shape of a smiley face on the board, and fades away from the room permanently.

The playroom logic puzzle is a train set. When the player walks into the room, there are a few “perceive” options that will trigger. One of these is the huge model trainset on the floor. There are 3 trains that start up automatically, and the little girl’s ghost can be seen floating above the trainset and looking at Rose and Madison, and then back at the train set. After interacting, it



becomes clear that all 3 trains are on a circuit and that there is a color-matching station for each train close to the center of the train set. However, there are several track switches that must be flipped before the trains can make it to their appropriate stations. There are three buttons that can be pushed and each one controls two different track switches. The object of this puzzle is to figure out the right order of switches to get the trains to arrive at the right stations. When all three trains arrive at the right stations, the little girl's ghost does an aerial backflip, smiles, and disappears from the room permanently.

There is no order to the logic puzzles that must be solved with the exception being the final riddle at the end. The player can complete the environmental puzzle, but the riddle that appears in the séance room will not appear until all the logic puzzles have been completed and the ghost is placated.

### Combine/Collect Puzzle

The combine/collect puzzle requires the player to go into the séance room to collect a piece of chalk and then the playroom to collect some finger paint and a paint brush. After all of these items are collected, the chalk must be crushed up in the mortar and pestle in the kitchen and combined with the finger paint to make the proper slurry that will be used in the environmental puzzle.

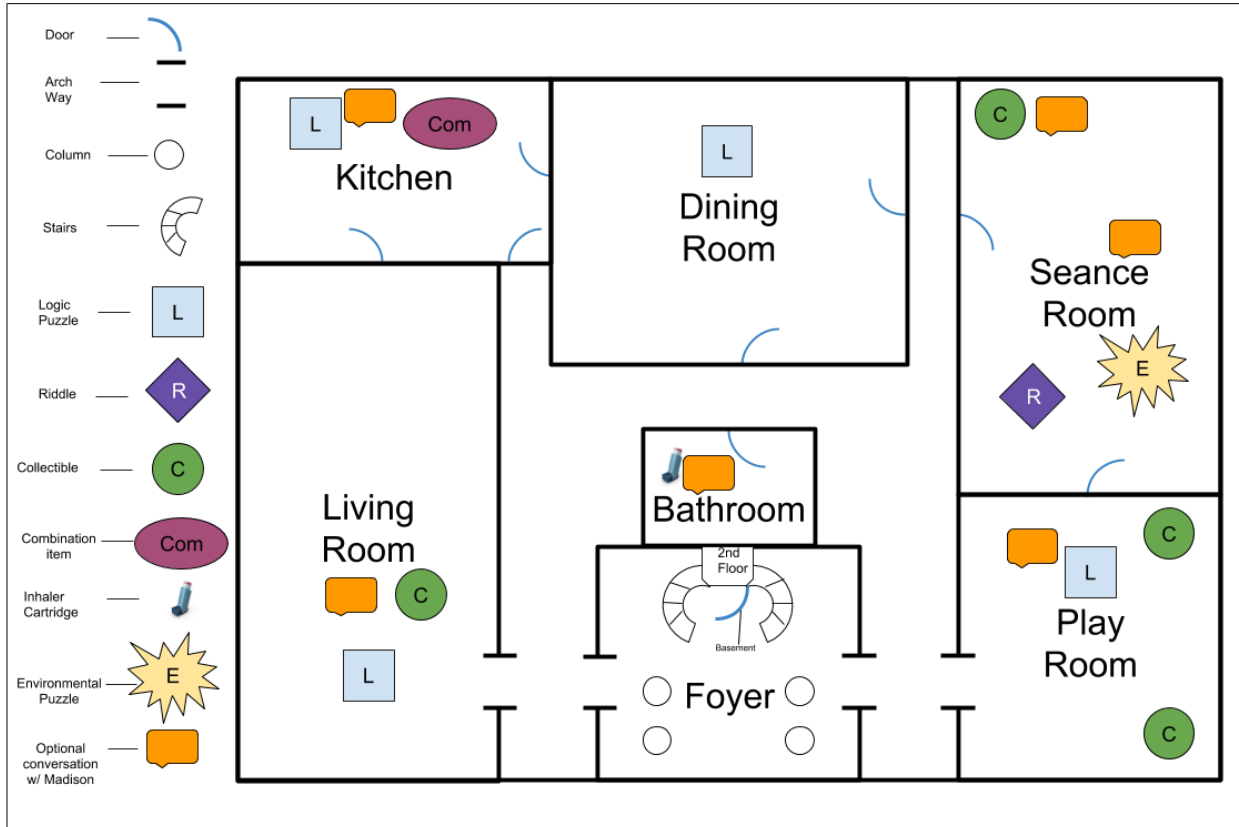
### Environmental Puzzle

The séance room needs to be set up correctly. But when Rose attempts the usual set up, the little girl's ghost appears and blows out her candles. It's determined that something must be different about this set up. When the player first descended from the second floor, on the front of one of the pillars was what appeared to be a lion that was finger painted in green by a child on the left pillar. This is noted in the player's notebook, but if the player does not investigate all around the other pillars, they will not discover that there are 3 more animals finger painted in different places on the other pillars. These are symbolic of the animals that need to be painted on the table with the combination of the right animals in the right places. If the player attempts to paint the animals in the wrong order, Rose will light the candles and the ghost of the little girl will blow the candles out immediately and look displeased. Once the animals are painted in the right place, the ghost allows the candles to stay lit, disappears, and a piece of paper appears that will initiate the riddle puzzle.

### Riddle

The puzzle will appear in the middle of a piece of paper that floats into the séance circle drawn by Rose. The riddle puzzle is related to one of three African-American Folktales (that the little girl would have grown up hearing from her grandmother) that can be cycled through for subsequent playthroughs. The answers are John Henry, Anansi the Spider, and Brér Rabbit.

### Top-Down Mock Up



### Top Down Overview



Foyer



Play Room



Séance Room



Dining Room





Kitchen



Living Room



## Bathroom



### Gameplay Analysis

The core mechanics are supported through puzzles that require you to use all the core actions (Investigate, explore, "perceive" and interact) to complete. When you walk into the room, it will trigger certain actions from the ghost that will encourage the viewer to "perceive" the room using Rose's powers. Using the "Perceive" ability shows the player things that are intractable and other hidden clues about the surroundings. Conversations with Madison will be tied to many of these perceptions as Madison steadily realizes the positive parts of being a psychic through watching her aunt help the restless spirits around the house. The player will also learn that Madison -- while being initially timid -- is an intelligent girl that has many questions about the part of herself that is frightening (her powers) and will usually want to ask questions. This will teach and encourage the player to engage Madison often.

### Asset List (By Room)

- Rose Character Model
- Madison Character Model

#### Entry Way

- Wrap around double Staircase
- Windows
- Walls
- Floors
- Second floor landing

- Arch way
- Greco-Roman Style Columns
- Chandelier

Finger painted symbols will be painted on different sides of the columns with the first only being visible by descending from the second floor.

Living Room

- Couch
- Love Seat
- Coffee Table
- Checker board
- Checkers
- Rug
- Curtains
- Books
- Photograph of a little girl's birthday party
- Lamps
- Door
- Walls
- Windows
- Floors

Kitchen

- Counters
- Wooden Table
- Rolling pin
- Cookie Dough rolled out into a sheet
- Cookie cutters (6 different shapes)
- Baking pan
- Oven/Stove
- Dishwasher
- Refrigerator
- Sink
- Upper Cabinets
- Mortar and Pestle
- Windows
- Walls
- Floors

Dining Room

- Large Dining room table
- Dining Chairs
- Plates
- Forks
- Knives
- Cups
- Windows
- Walls
- Floors

Bathroom

- Toilet
- Bathtub
- Sink
- Inhaler Cartridge
- Mirror
- Walls
- Floors

Séance Room

- Round wooden table
- Chalk
- Paper
- Windows
- Walls
- Floors
- Candles

### Playroom

- Model Train Set
- Finger Paint bottle
- Paintbrush
- Wooden toy blocks in 4 different shapes
- Stuffed Animals
- Puzzles
- Doll House
- Translucent Ghost girl model, around 6-7 years old
- Windows
- Walls
- Floors

### **Question #2 Follow-Up:**

During the second playthrough of the game, Rose will have the ability to find and “perceive” a special item on each floor. Each item is a family heirloom that was present and interactable during the first playthrough, but has now suddenly gained spiritual energy. These items are an old pocket watch, an old ornate silver mirror, a compass, and an old leather-bound journal (that, after some investigation, used to belong to Rose's great Grandmother). The leather-bound journal has the symbol for a special séance in it, written on a bookmarked page. Each item would be found on each floor of the house in a hidden spot.

Each time the player locates each of these items, it will trigger a spectral projection that is either Rose's great Grandmother or Grandfather depending on the item (The journal and mirror belong to her Great Grandmother, and the compass and the pocket watch belong to her Great Grandfather). If the player manages to find these four items, before triggering the final cutscene and opening the hidden room in the attic, they can use the leftover chalk in the seance room to draw the seance symbol on the table and place the appropriate items (the four heirlooms) inside of the appropriate positions. When the candles light, it will summon the ghosts of Rose's great Grandmother and Grandfather, whom she's never met before, but had heard of from her grandmother to be known as powerful psychics.

This triggers a cutscene, where Madison realizes through a conversation with her great-great grandparents that these psychic powers have run in the family for generations and that they are nothing to be afraid of. They also tell her that if she ever needs any help learning, that they will be around to guide her if she wishes. They also reveal that Abigail has also had these powers for years, but chose to bury them and not embrace them out of fear. This triggers the true hidden ending where Madison accepts her powers (and perhaps gains several new ones), talks to her mother about her powers, and makes the bond between the entire family even stronger. From then on, she also actively talks to her relatives to become even more proficient in the use of her powers.

Overall, this would be utilizing some similar mechanics found in the rest of the game. Since it is a puzzle that requires the combination of all items before the end of the game, it should not impact the learning curve.



**Required added assets:**

- Worn leather journal with yellowed pages and calligraphic cursive inside. It has the symbol for a séance chalk figure on a bookmarked page.
- A gold pocket watch with an eye on one side and a balance scale on the other
- An ornate, pure silver mirror with the tree of life engraved on the back
- A gold and silver compass
- Translucent ghosts of Rose's great grandparents, complete with animations.