Mistborne Game Design Document (GDD)

Game Title: Mistborne
Genre: Survival Detective Thriller Adventure
Platform: PC (Steam, itch.io)
Target Audience: Fans of short, immersive thriller games (e.g., Firewatch, What
Remains of Edith Finch)
Developer: Anton Tkachenko
Contact: https://x.com/anttka4cz/

Release Plan: Chapter 1 (Free, 10-15 min, available now); Full game (Paid, ~1 hr,
targeting Autumn 2025)

1. Overview

1.1 Game Concept
Mistborne is a first-person survival detective thriller set in a fog-choked
forest. Players control Ethan, a young man searching for his missing friend Lily.
Through exploration, simple puzzles, and unsettling discoveries, players unravel
an occult mystery tied to her disappearance. The game emphasizes atmosphere,
narrative, and suspense, culminating in a cliffhanger that sets the stage for
future chapters.

1.2 Core Features
- Atmospheric Exploration: Navigate eerie, fog-laden environments with a focus on
immersion.
- Narrative-Driven Gameplay: Uncover the story through environmental clues,
Ethan's inner thoughts, and unsettling discoveries.
- Simple Puzzles: Solve intuitive puzzles (e.g., decoding symbols, unlocking
hidden paths) to progress.
- Survival Elements: Manage limited resources like flashlight battery in dark
areas.
- Cliffhanger Ending: Each chapter ends with a suspenseful twist, encouraging
players to continue the story.

1.3 Unique Selling Points
- Short, gripping experience tailored for players seeking concise yet impactful
adventures.
- Tense, occult-themed narrative with a focus on mystery and suspense.
- Free Chapter 1 to attract players, with free codes shared on itch.io to build
community.
- Community-driven development, incorporating player feedback for future
chapters.

2. Story & Setting

2.1 Premise
Ethan's weekend trip with his friend Lily takes a dark turn when she vanishes in
a remote forest. After his car breaks down on a foggy, desolate road, Ethan
ventures into the wilderness, guided by strange symbols and eerie clues. Each
discovery—bloody sneakers, an occult camp—deepens the mystery, hinting at an
unnatural presence watching his every move.

2.2 Setting
Primary Location: A dense, foggy forest with abandoned structures (e.g., cabins, campsites).
Atmosphere: Dark, oppressive, with low visibility due to fog. Ambient sounds (rustling leaves, distant whispers) enhance tension.
Key Elements: Occult symbols, abandoned belongings, and environmental storytelling (e.g., scattered notes, eerie carvings).

2.3 Characters
Ethan (Protagonist): A determined but anxious young man driven to find Lily. His internal monologue provides narrative context and emotional depth.
Lily (Missing Friend): A cheerful friend whose disappearance drives the story. Clues about her fate are revealed through exploration.

3. Gameplay Mechanics

3.1 Core Gameplay Loop
- Exploration: Navigate the forest, discovering abandoned sites and clues (e.g., bloody sneakers, occult symbols).
- Puzzle-Solving: Interact with objects to solve simple puzzles (e.g., arranging symbols to unlock a door).
- Survival Management: Use the flashlight sparingly in dark areas to conserve battery.
- Narrative Progression: Uncover story beats through Ethan's thoughts, environmental clues, and dialogue (skippable).

3.2 Controls
- WASD: Move Ethan.
- Mouse: Look around (first-person perspective).
- F: Toggle flashlight (required in dark areas; limited battery).
- Space: Skip dialogue.
- Esc: Open pause menu.

3.3 Progression
- Chapter 1 (Free): 10-15 minutes, introducing Ethan, the forest, and the mystery. Ends with a cliffhanger (e.g., discovering the occult camp).
- Full Game (~1 hr): Expands with additional chapters, deeper puzzles, and a more complex narrative. Each chapter builds toward a larger revelation about Lily and the forest's secrets.

4. Development Status

4.1 Current Progress
- Chapter 1: Complete, free to play (10-15 min). Available on itch.io.
- Future Chapters: In development, targeting a full release on Steam by Summer 2025.
- Community Engagement: Free codes shared with itch.io followers. Feedback actively sought to shape future chapters.

4.2 Development Tools
Engine: Godot 4.
Assets: All models, textures, and audio sourced under CC0 license (free, no attribution required).

4.3 Team
Developer: Anton Tkachenko (solo developer).
Community Support: Seeking supporters, followers, and Patreons to fund and guide development.

5. Art & Audio

5.1 Art Style
- Visuals: Realistic yet stylized, with a muted color palette (grays, greens, browns) to emphasize the foggy, eerie atmosphere.
- Environments: Dense forest, abandoned cabins, occult campsites with detailed props (e.g., ritual circles, scattered belongings).
- Lighting: Dynamic fog and flashlight effects create tension. Dark areas require flashlight use, enhancing survival elements.

5.2 Audio Design
- Soundtrack: Minimalist, ambient score with subtle, haunting tones to build suspense.
- Sound Effects: Environmental sounds (wind, footsteps, creaking wood) and eerie cues (whispers, distant rustling).
- Voiceover: Ethan's internal monologue (text or voiced, TBD) drives the narrative. Dialogue is skippable.

6. Monetization & Distribution

6.1 Monetization
- Chapter 1: Free on itch.io to attract players and gather feedback.
- Full Game: Paid release on Steam (~1 hr gameplay). Price TBD.
- Crowdfunding: Patreon campaign to fund development. Supporters gain early access, behind-the-scenes updates, and credits.
- Free Codes: Shared with itch.io followers to build community and reward early supporters.

6.2 Distribution
- Primary Platform: Steam (full release).
- Secondary Platform: itch.io (free Chapter 1, early access builds).
- Marketing: Promote via X (@anttka4cz
), itch.io, and Patreon. Engage community through updates and feedback requests.

7. Target Audience & Market

7.1 Target Audience
- Demographic: 16-40, fans of narrative-driven, atmospheric games.
- Interests: Thriller, horror, and mystery genres; short, immersive experiences.

- Comparable Titles: Firewatch, Gone Home, Layers of Fear.

7.2 Market Positioning
- Niche appeal as a concise, suspenseful adventure.
- Free Chapter 1 lowers entry barrier, encouraging players to invest in the full game.
- Community-driven development builds loyalty and ensures the game aligns with player expectations.

8. Community Engagement

8.1 Feedback Goals
- Refine gameplay (pacing, puzzle difficulty, atmosphere).
- Ensure narrative clarity and emotional impact.
- Identify bugs and polish Chapter 1 before full release.

8.2 Engagement Plan
- X: Regular updates on development progress (@anttka4cz
).
- itch.io: Share free Chapter 1 and codes; collect player feedback via comments.

- Patreon: Offer supporters exclusive updates, early access, and credits in the game.
- Surveys: Post-release surveys for Chapter 1 to guide future chapters.

9. Milestones & Timeline

9.1 Completed
+ Chapter 1 developed and released (free, 10-15 min).
+ Initial assets sourced (CC0 license).
+ Social media presence established (@anttka4cz
).

9.2 In Progress
- Developing additional chapters (narrative, puzzles, environments).
- Gathering feedback on Chapter 1 to refine direction.
- Building Patreon and itch.io communities.

9.3 Future Milestones
- Q1 2025: Complete Chapter 2 prototype; begin playtesting.
- Q2 2025: Finalize all chapters, polish gameplay, and prepare Steam build.
- Autumn 2025: Release full game on Steam; continue community engagement.

10. Credits

- Developed by: Anton Tkachenko
- Assets: CC0-licensed models, textures, and audio (no attribution required).
- Supporters: Future credits for Patreon backers and early adopters.

11. Call to Action

Play Chapter 1 for free on itch.io and share your feedback to shape Mistborne's future! Follow on X (@anttka4cz
) for updates, and support the project on Patreon for exclusive perks. Let's uncover the mystery together!

Note: This GDD is a living document and will evolve based on community feedback and development progress.