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REEL RUN GDD

Executive Summary

High Concept

Fighting through various themed environments and attacking heaps of enemies evokes a rush of power and excitement.

Overview

Reel Run is a 3D arcade-style beat-'em-up that puts players in the lead roles of popular movie archetypes. In this action-packed game, players face off against hordes of enemies across multiple genre-themed levels, each styled to emulate the film's era while keeping a fun, arcade-like energy. This blend of unique visual styles, intense combat, and familiar movie tropes brings a nostalgic yet fresh experience that makes players feel like true action heroes.

Gameplay Minute

After becoming trapped in a film, you face goons aiming to stop you from escaping. Using a combination of combat moves, you build up combos to manage multiple opponents at once. The player throws environmental objects at enemies to briefly incapacitate them, giving you additional tactical options. Once your Close-Up meter is maxed, you can unleash a Close-Up finisher, a powerful move that punctuates the action and helps clear the scene. At the end of each film, after you successfully defeat a boss, you escape back into the studio to play the next film.

Narrative Overview

While rehearsing for a role in film at the backlot of a major film studio, the player finds a new projector technology that restores old films and lets people explore them from within the film itself. After tampering with the machine, the player is sucked into the projector and must play through various films to escape this innovative technology.

Features

Simple Combat System

Use a four-button combat system, featuring a light attack, heavy attack, dash, and interact button.

Combo System

String together inputs to perform combos that deal varying levels of damage, building a combo meter by attacking enemies consecutively without taking hits.

Close-Up Finisher

Deliver a powerful finishing move to end your combos.

Film Critic Score

Receive feedback on your performance after each level, including gameplay statistics and flavor text that reflects your score.

Improvised Projectiles

Throw specific interactable objects to damage enemies.

Destructible Props

Break certain environmental props with your attacks.

Voice Acted Characters

Hear voice-acted dialogue and sound effects for the game's characters.

Narrative Cutscenes

Quick transition scenes that connect narrative moments.

Variated Visual Style

Each level's visual style reflects the genre of film it portrays.

Enemy Variety

Engage with three primary enemy types—heavyweight, shooter, and lightweight—to keep combat dynamic.

Metrics

Distance

Distance is measured in centimeters (cm).

Time

Time is measured in seconds (s).

Player Speed

Speed is measured in cm/s.

Health

Health, stored as a float value, applies to both the player and enemies. Measured as HP.

Damage

Damage is stored as a float value and can be dealt between the player and enemies. When a character receives damage, the damage value subtracts from their health.

Systems

Review Score

At the end of each level, the player receives a score based on several factors (see chart below for breakdown and formula). The review score appears on the review screen as a 5-star graphic, calculated using the formula and matched to a star rating. This score is stored as a float value.

Player Deaths/Restarts

Each time the player dies and restarts the level, an integer value tracks the total deaths, increasing by 1 with each occurrence. Death happens when the player's health reaches 0, prompting a restart of the current act and a "take" counter that reinforces the film theme. This death count also factors into score calculations on the review screen.

Time Elapsed

Each level tracks the player's completion time, stored as a float value for score calculations. Based on completion speed, players earn a 1 through 5-star rating. At the end of each level, the review screen shows the completion time and awarded star rating.

Review Score Break Down Table

Metric	Weight	Score Calculation Description	Intended Value
Combo Count	40	Actual Combos ÷ Intended Combos	Western: 150, Horror: 250, Romance: 150, Boss Rush: 125
Player Deaths	30	Intended Max Death Value - Player Death Count	5
Close-Up Finishers	20	Actual Combo Finishers ÷ Intended Combo Finishers	Western: 5, Horror: 6, Romance: 5, Boss Rush: 4
Time Elapsed	10	Intended Time ÷ Time Elapsed	Western: 350, Horror: 400, Romance: 350, Boss Rush: 120

Weighted Average Score Formula

Key:

Metric

Weight of Metric

Combo Count (0.4) + Player Death(0.3) + Close-Ups(0.2) + Time Elapsed(0.1) = Weighted Average Score

Output follows the scale below.

Review Score Scale

- 1 Star: 0 to 59
- 2 Stars: 60-69
- 3 Stars: 70-79
- 4 Stars: 80-89
- 5 Stars: 90-100

Light and Heavy Attacks

The combat system features four main input buttons: light attack, heavy attack, dash, and interact. Light attacks deal 15 damage with a 0.2-second windup and impact visual effects. Heavy attacks deal 25 damage with a 0.4-second windup and impact visual effects.

Dash

When the player activates the dash input, their forward velocity increases by an impulse force of 700 for 0.2 seconds. During this time, the player character becomes invulnerable to damage and their health float does not decrease. Once the dash is completed, the player becomes vulnerable again.

Interact and Throw

The player can store one interactable object at a time. When the player presses the interact input near a glowing object, the object is placed in the player's hand. Only glowing objects are interactable and can be picked up. When the player presses the interact input again, the object is thrown in the direction of the player's forward vector at a velocity of 2000 (20m/s). The object is destroyed upon colliding with any mesh, and if it hits an enemy, it deals 25 damage and increases the combo value by 1. Once the object is thrown, the player's hand is empty, allowing them to repeat the process. These interactable objects do not carry over between acts.

Combo System

The combo system, inspired by fighting games, uses a queue-based input structure. Each full combo string consists of three inputs. A built-in buffer system allows for forgiving timing, giving the player a 0.6-second window to input the next attack after the previous one finishes its animation and deals damage. Combo strings calculate damage based on the specific inputs, with an additional 10 damage added for completing a full string. Visual effects accompany the third attack in a combo, signaling a successful execution. Each character will deal varying amounts of damage per combo string.

Combo List

L = Light Attack

H = Heavy Attack

Combo Input	Combo Time
L, L, L	1 Second
L, H, H	1.5 Seconds
L, H, L	1.25 Seconds
L, L, H	1.5 Seconds
H, H, H	2 Seconds
H, L, L	1.5 Seconds
H, L, H	1.5 Seconds
H, H, L	1.75 Seconds

Combo Counter

The combo counter tracks the number of successful combos the player lands. It increases with each successful hit on an enemy and has no limit. If the player hits multiple enemies with a single attack, the counter adds one point per enemy hit. The combo counter resets after 5 seconds if the player is not attacking.

Close-up Meter

The close-up meter increases by one with every successful attack and caps at 30. It operates independently of the combo counter. When full, the player can press a designated input to perform a unique close-up finisher that deals 200 damage. Each playable character has a single, unique finisher animation. After the animation concludes, the meter resets to 0.

Close-up Attack

The close-up attack activates when the player presses the designated input (LB or Spacebar), delivering 200 total damage. The attack prioritizes the nearest enemy, dealing damage equal to their remaining health and ensuring they are always defeated. Any remaining damage from the 200 pool is divided equally among other enemies hit by the attack. Against a boss, the full 200 damage is applied directly to their health. Using a close-up attack also restores 33% of the player character's health.

Camera System

The camera's pitch adjusts inverted to the vertical input of the right thumbstick, while the yaw adjusts according to the horizontal input. The camera follows a boom arm setup, simulating a cinematic camera rig. Both pitch and yaw movements are linearly interpolated (lerped) to create smooth and natural transitions between inputs. The camera dynamically adjusts its distance from the player by interpolating between a minimum and maximum distance based on environmental factors, such as obstacles or combat engagement, ensuring the character always remains clearly visible.

Locomotion

The left thumbstick directional input applies a forward vector in the direction the player is facing. A corresponding walk cycle animation plays on the character model to match the movement. All playable characters move at 600 cm/s with an acceleration rate of 2048 cm/s².

Enemy AI

Shooter Enemy

The Shooter enemy moves at a speed of 400cm/s and uses a line trace to determine if the player is in view. If the player faces the enemy and is within 150cm, the enemy will reposition. If the player moves out of view the enemy, the enemy will reposition. The Shooter deals 15 damage per projectile hit. The shooter waits 1 second between shots and has a 0.5s variance if within sight of the player, this is increased if the shooter is not in sight of the player. This enemy is 190cm tall.

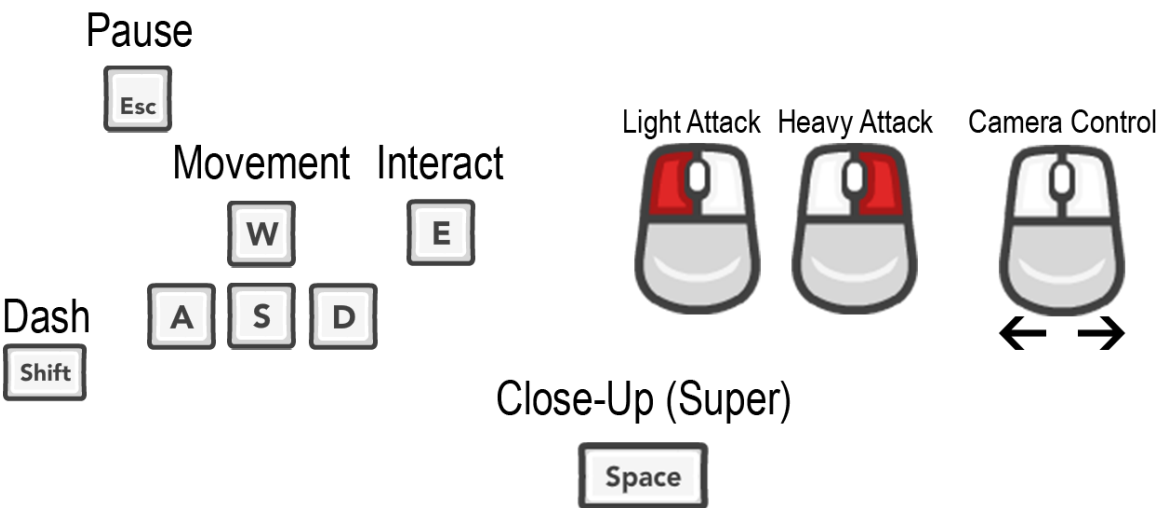
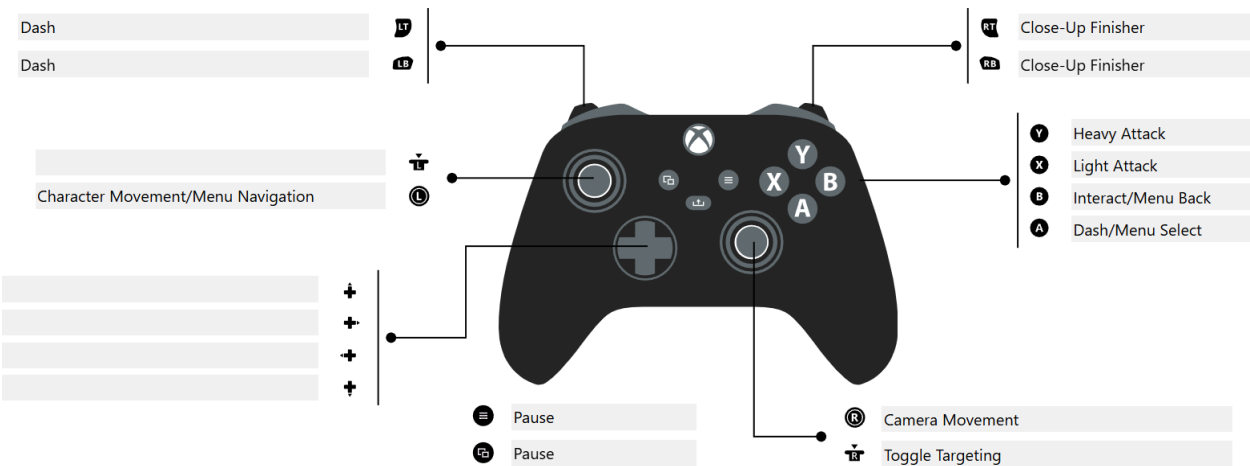
Heavyweight

The Heavyweight enemy moves at a speed of 300cm/s and deals 20 damage per hit. It moves toward the player's location to attack. This enemy is 220cm tall.

Lightweight

The Lightweight enemy moves at a speed of 600cm/s and deals 10 damage per hit. It moves toward the player to attack but will surround the player from a radius of 100cm if more than three enemies are present and attacking the player. This enemy is 130cm tall.

Controls



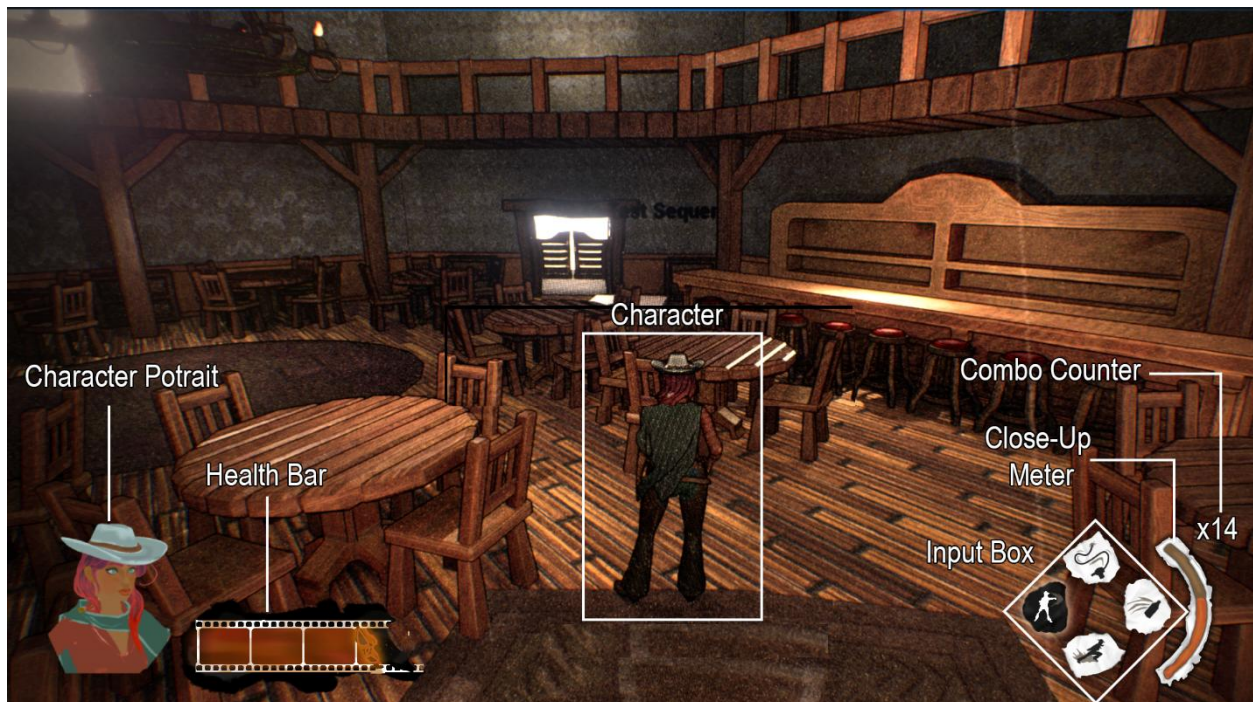
Action	Keyboard & Mouse	XBox Gamepad
Character Movement	W, A, S, & D Keys	Left Thumbstick
Camera Control	Mouse Movement	Right Thumbstick
Light Attack	Left Click	X Face Button
Heavy Attack	Right Click	Y Face Button
Dash	Left Shift Key	A Face Button, Left Trigger, Left Bumper
Interact/Throw	E Key	B Face Button
Close-Up Finisher	Spacebar	Right Trigger, Right Bumper
Pause	Escape Key	Pause Button, Menu Button
Toggle Targeting	Middle Mouse Click	Right Thumbstick Click

UI

HUD

The HUD elements include:

- Health Bar
- Character Portrait
- Close-Up Meter
- Combo Total
- Input Box displaying the last input pressed
 - The Input Box is arranged to match the controller layout and uses iconography to depict the corresponding action of each button



Menus feature a cinema theme with elements like clapper chalk, and film reel. All assets include a highlight effect on hover or selection.

Main Menu

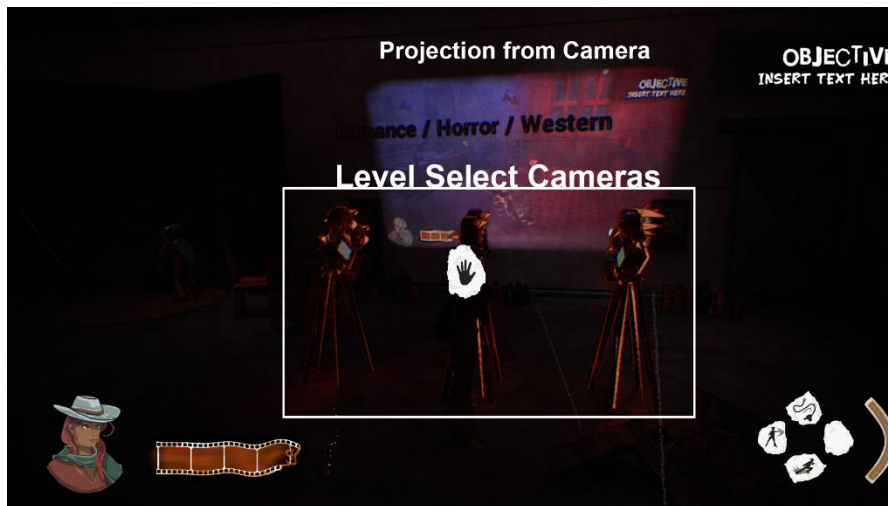
The player will be greeted with a splash screen before loading into the main menu. The main menu displays the title of the game, a “Play” option to enter level and character selection, an “Options” option to enter the settings menu, a “Credits” option to enter the credits menu, and a “Quit” option to close the game. It visually looks like the entrance to the sound stage.



**Playtest feedback button will not be in final main menu*

Level Select & Character Select

After the play button is hit the camera zooms into the white glowing space in the door and then reveals the character select area. Once selected the player has the option to go back and switch between character in the tutorial space. They also select the level in this space by walking up to distorted film camera. A reel of the gameplay from that level will show until the player walks away from the specific camera for each selectable level.



Score Breakdown

The score breakdown screen is non-diegetic feedback provided to the player about their run of the level. This screen displays at the end of every level and gives the player a star rating out of five. This screen has a summary of what they were scored on and then assigns a star value for each metric. It then averages that into a “movie rating” for that level. Along the bottom of the screen movie reviews are generated and reflect the score given for the player.



Characters

Main/Playable Characters

The game's goal is to immerse the player in a cinematic experience, making them feel like the main character. Each playable character serves as the story's focal point, with memorable, unique traits and defined personalities that shape their journey within each level. All playable characters move at 600 cm/s.

Dakota Steele

Dakota is 172 cm tall.

Syd Sweeney

Syd Sweeney is 190 cm tall.

Alejandro Jorge Ortiz

Alejandro is 180 cm tall.

Enemies

Bosses

Cyrus Crowe

Cyrus is 180 centimeters tall and moves at a speed of 600 cm/s.

Stacy Swan

Stacy is 163 centimeters tall and moves at a speed of 600 cm/s.

Ignacio Santiago

Ignacio is 180 centimeters tall and moves at a speed of 600 cm/s.

Goons

Enemies resemble film burn with distorted brown tones that imitate a burning film reel. Their features remain indistinct, defined only by their shape and accessories that match the level's theme.

Lightweight

The Lightweight, a fast-moving enemy, hits hard but is easily defeated. His short, stocky build complements his speed of 600 cm/s.

Heavyweight

The Heavyweight, a hulking enemy, hits hard but moves slowly at 300 cm/s. His top-heavy build and massive arms reinforce his powerful, imposing archetype.

Shooter

The Shooter, is a ranged enemy and repositions himself to keep the player in sight during combat. He moves at 400 cm/s.

Levels and Maps

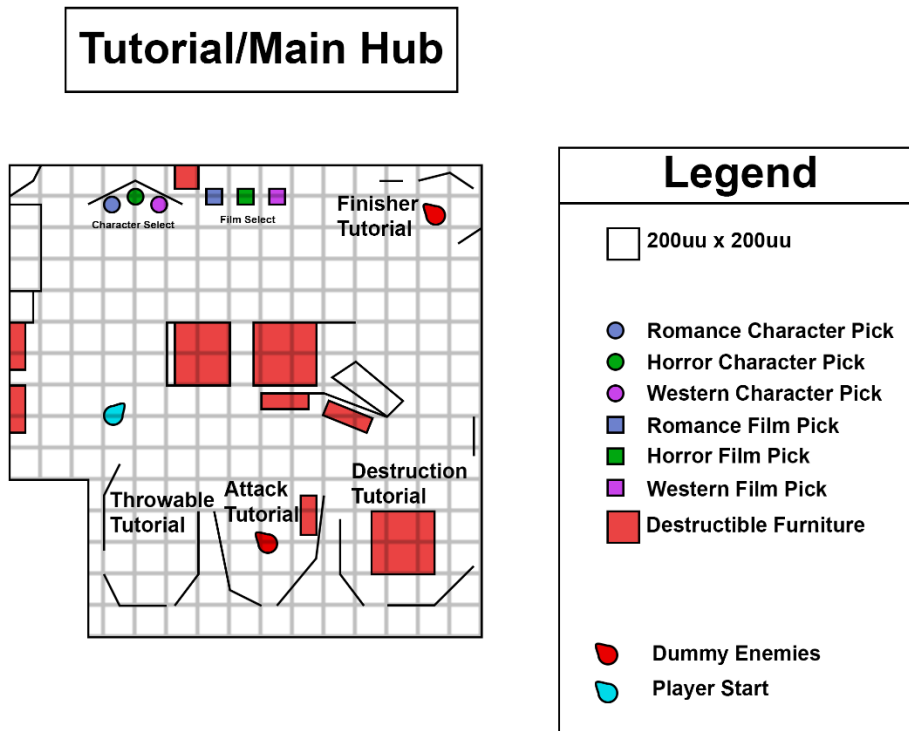
Tutorial Level

Progression

The player spawns into a soundstage where a film director, represented by a disembodied voice, instructs the player on how to play the game. Dialogue and on-screen directions instruct the player to practice moving the camera and character, followed by using the dash. Next, players are instructed how to perform light and heavy attacks to create combos. Following this, players are instructed how to pick up interactable objects and throw them. Finally, players are taught how the attacks they perform build the combo meter, and that when the meter is full the close-up finisher move can be activated. Once the player has been properly instructed, they can interact with a glowing camera in the scene to start the introduction cutscene of the rest of the game.

Environment Design

The tutorial level is based on a Hollywood Soundstage with an open room to focus on practicing combat. Clutter related to soundstages and film production can be found along the walls.



Western Level

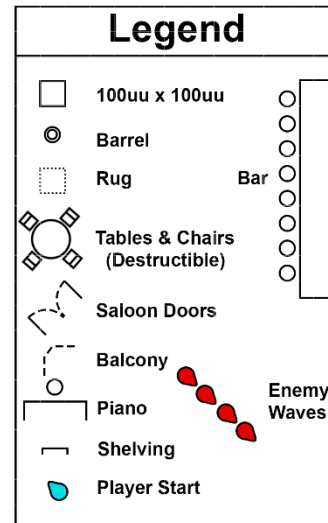
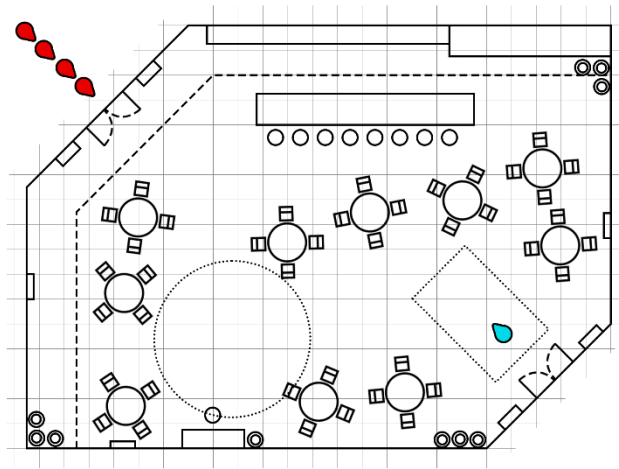
Act 1

7 Waves of enemies approach the player in a saloon showdown. After a wave is defeated, additional enemies spawn for the following wave, until all waves are defeated. The player then interacts with a glowing door to progress to the next act.

Environment Design

The saloon displays abundant wood grain and a classic dining setup, with beer bottles and shades of orange and brown throughout. Wallpaper adorned with flowers, but the wallpaper itself withered with age, while rich lighting emphasizes the browns and oranges of the setting. These details create the impression of a bustling saloon, packed every night and showing signs of wear from its popularity.

Act 1: Saloon



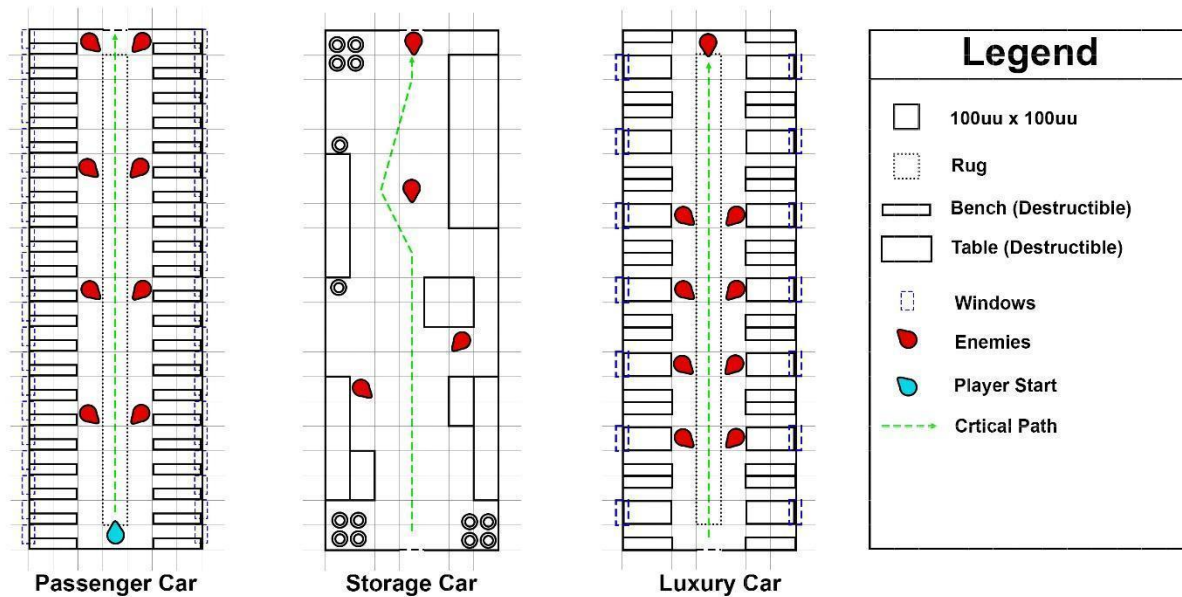
Act 2

The player encounters enemies as they move through the train. The train has three cars, each with its own set of enemies. You start in the passenger car, then move to the storage car, and finish in the luxury car, where additional enemies await. Once all enemies are defeated, the player can interact with the glowing door at the end of the luxury car to start the next act.

Environment Design

Green accents in the train car reflect the period. Flowery petal wallpaper decorates the walls, enhancing the space's luxury. Cushiony seats with wood backing and golden trim shine in the light. Gold-adorned windows complement the seats, while the wide floor plan highlights the world's technological advancements. Beautiful wood flooring stretches across the train, accompanied by a rug walkway that matches the walls. Outside, a false backdrop of the desert horizon scrolls along a wall to reinforce that this is a film set, and the train's forward motion is an illusion.

Act 2: Train

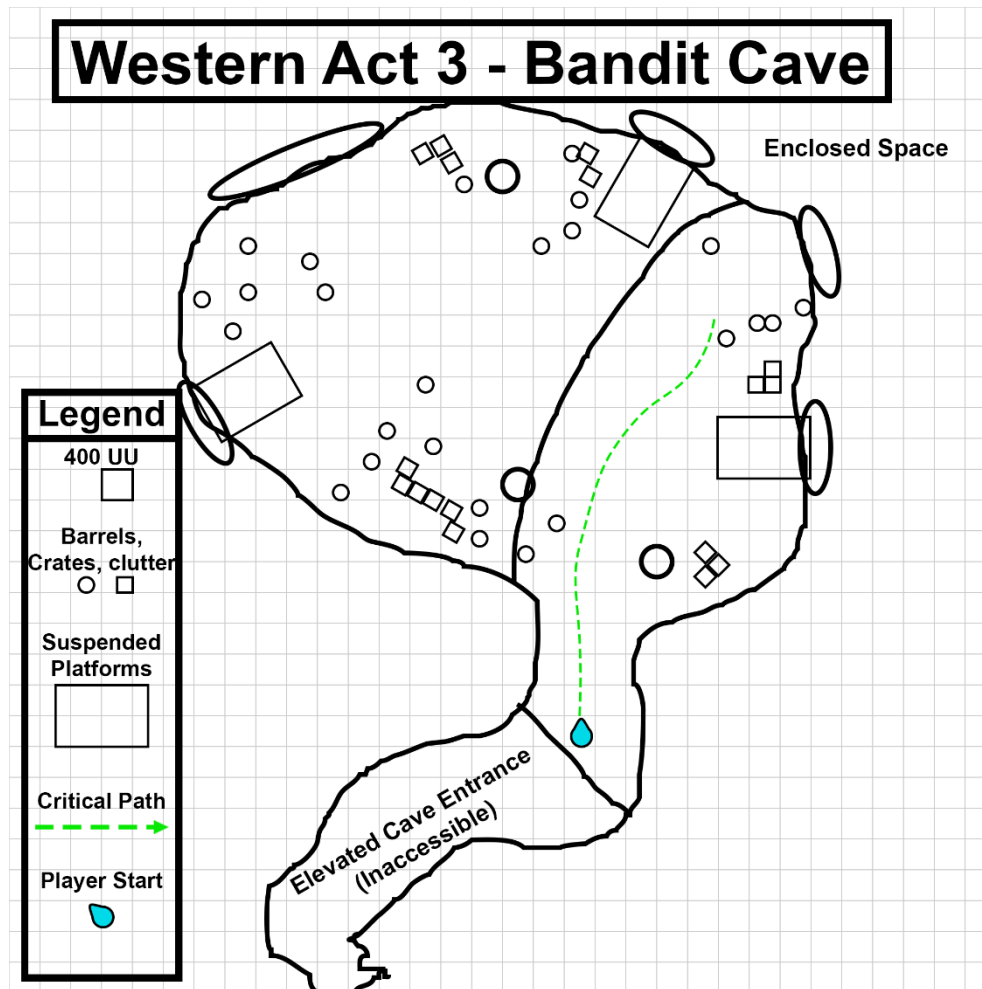


Act 3

The player enters the boss fight arena. The boss, Cyrus Crowe, appears with a large health bar above the HUD UI. Cyrus engages in a 1-on-1 fight with the player, alternating between punches and kicks. Once the player deals enough damage to Cyrus to deplete his health bar, he begins to run away from the player. Dealing another hit defeats the boss and ends the level.

Environment Design

The abandoned mineshaft is littered with the spoils of the Murder Gang escapades. Wooden frames line the path leading into the boss area, showcasing its dilapidated structure. TNT crates and ammo boxes are scattered throughout the cave. Lanterns bathed in red light pay homage to the period, indicating the presence of blast mines. The path of this act opens into a massive corridor with wooden beams and structures, along with piles of crates and luggage.



Slasher Level Breakdown

Act 1

The player navigates the environment searching for hidden enemies to defeat. Once you reveal an enemy, they begin to fight back. Several areas in the environment conceal enemies, adding to the challenge. The player must defeat enemies in a mess hall, then follow fleeing enemies to the auditorium to begin the next act.

Environment Design

Act One begins in the campground near the mess hall. Destructible wooden benches and tables fill the eating area. A queue line guides campers and counselors toward the food, while posters, bulletin boards, scattered papers, and food trays add to the disorganized feel. Bright outdoor lighting and moonlight streaming through the surrounding trees heighten the eerie atmosphere. The lake view serves as the backdrop, with a full moon reflecting off the water and distant trees.

Act 2

The player enters the auditorium and is faced with several enemies. Once the enemies in the auditorium are defeated, the player picks up a handheld radio and a key to the radio tower. The player then follows fleeing enemies to the radio tower. The player searches the area, tracking down and eliminating the enemies hiding inside by using the key they picked up earlier. Upon defeating the enemies, the player follows more fleeing enemies from the radio tower around the campground and tracks down others using dialogue callouts delivered by the handheld radio. Once the enemies around the campground are defeated, the player picks up a key to the cemetery. The player unlocks the cemetery and starts the next act.

Environment Design

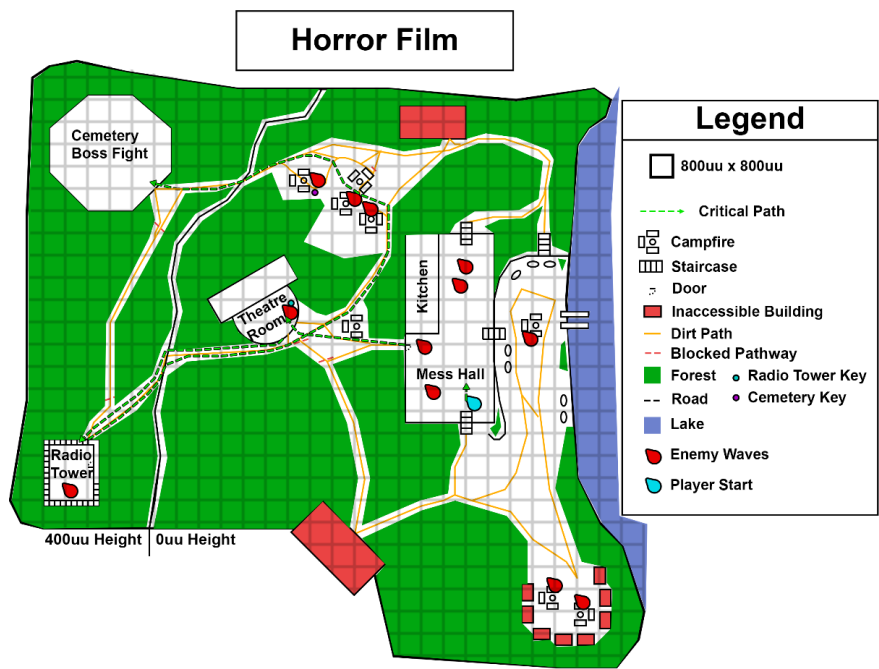
The auditorium is a dimly lit vacuous space with rows of wooden benches. The weathered radio tower stands in view, with old radios and antennas visible through its crusted window. Nearby, the boathouse looms, its creaking wooden steps and flickering lights revealing its age and decay. Canoes rest alongside, while moss and algae cover its base and pool around the edges.

Act 3

The player enters the cemetery to fight the boss as the door locks behind them. The boss, Stacy Swan, appears with a large health bar above the HUD UI. She uses a ranged hunting rifle to damage the player. The player uses various tombstones as cover against projectiles. Once Stacy's health bar is depleted the level ends.

Environment Design

The old cemetery features tombstones scattered throughout the area, with a shack in the distance where the groundskeeper stores his tools. The tombstones vary in size and shape, but the heavy fog makes it impossible to read their inscriptions. Among the cemetery's residents are notable figures from the town. Some coffins lie nearby, and moss grows around certain stones. Moonlight beams into this area, piercing through the densest fog.



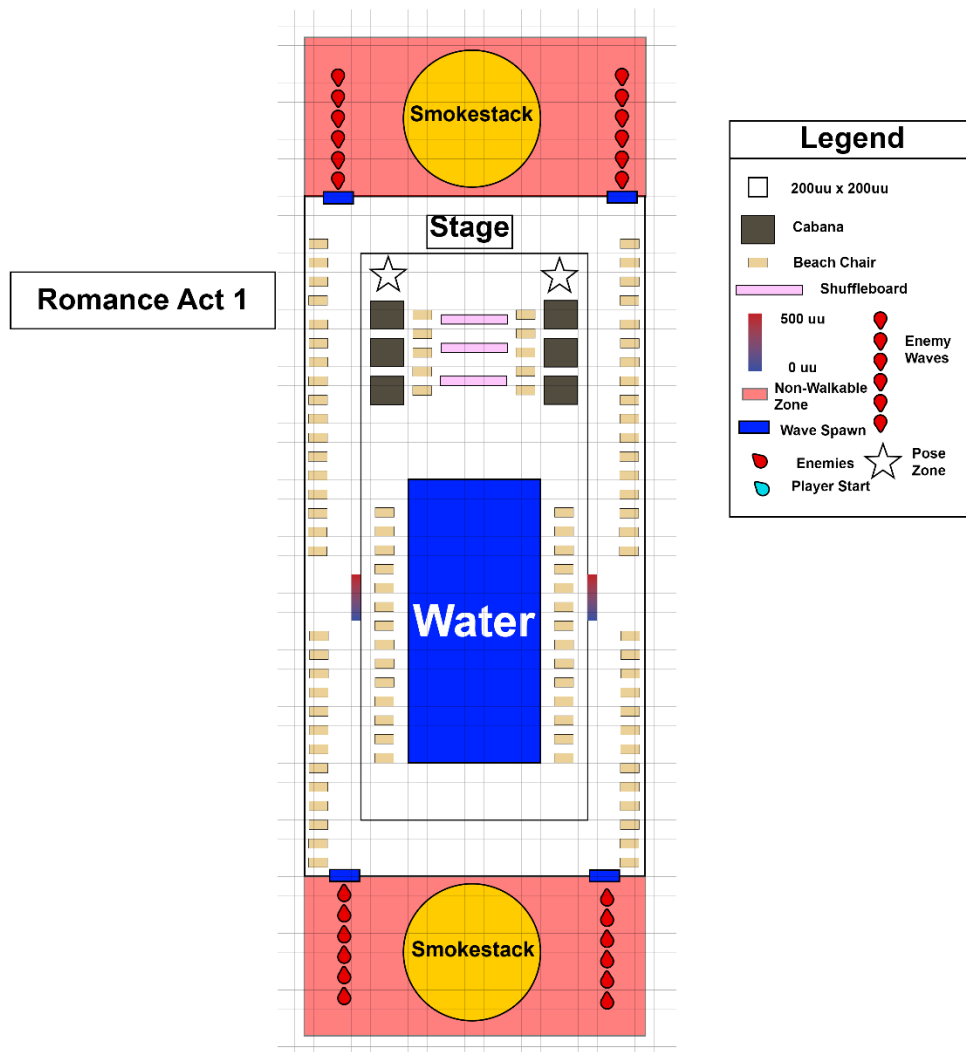
Romance Level Breakdown

Act 1

The player faces off against waves of enemies on the deck of a cruise ship. There are power boxes that the player can interact with to activate spotlights, which draw enemies toward designated zones. The enemies in these zones are stunned (framed as striking a pose). Once the player defeats all enemies, they begin the next act.

Environment Design

The pool shimmers in the sunlight, framed by elegant cabanas, lanterns, and tall palm trees. Champagne bottles sit near the poolside bar, adding to the opulent atmosphere. Neon lights flicker, reflecting off the water's surface, casting a vibrant glow across the area, creating a picturesque yet lively ambiance.

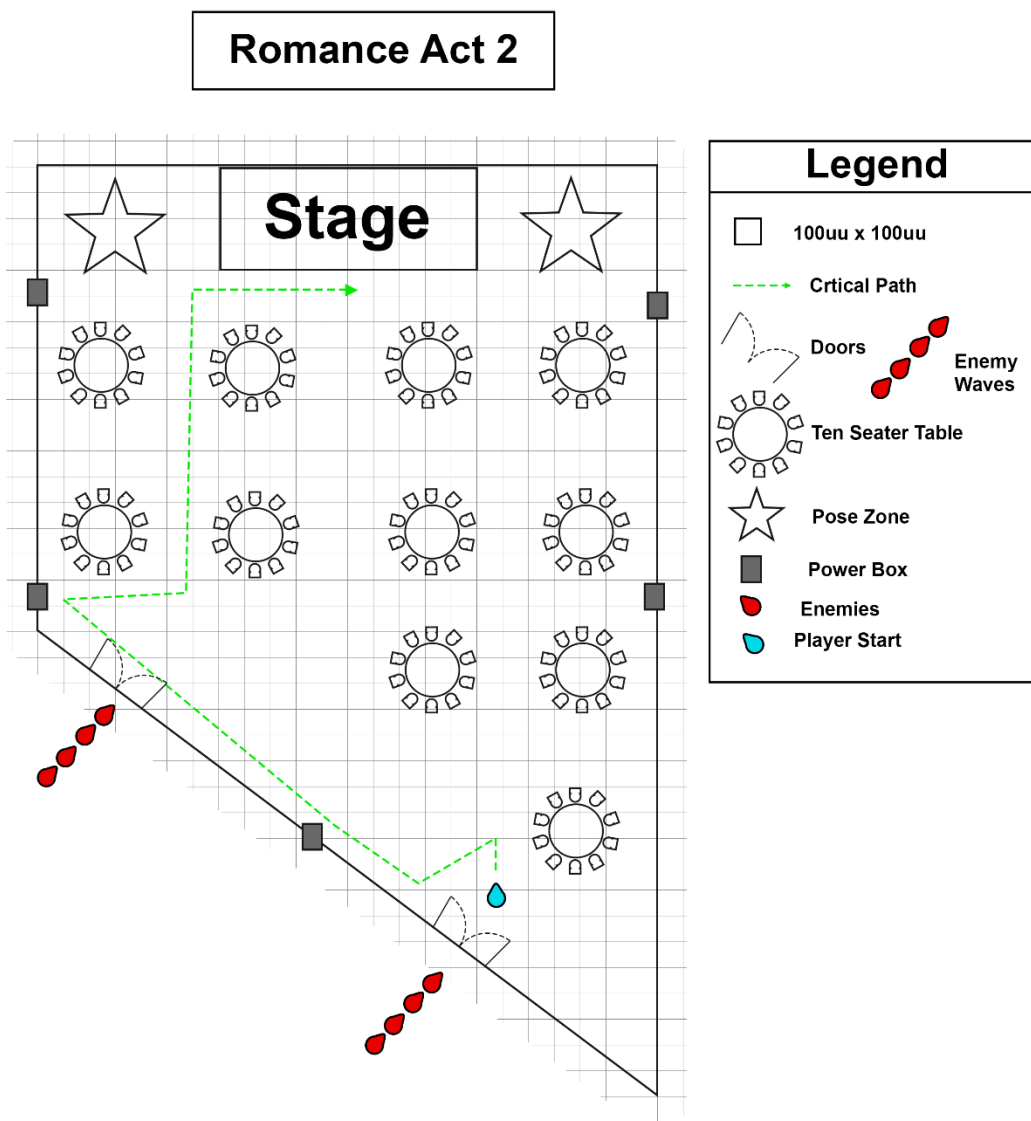


Act 2

The player enters the luxury dining space where enemies dressed as chefs approach to fight. Power boxes around the dining hall trigger the spotlights and activate the pose zones to draw in enemies. Once the player defeats all enemies, they begin the next act.

Environment Design

The dining area boasts grand chandeliers, polished marble floors, and long, lavish tables set with fine China. The walls are adorned with elegant artwork, and soft, ambient lighting creates a warm, sophisticated atmosphere. Champagne bottles, placed as centerpieces, add a touch of extravagance. Large windows offer a view of the ocean, while narrow aisles and the arrangement of tables create a maze-like flow throughout the space.

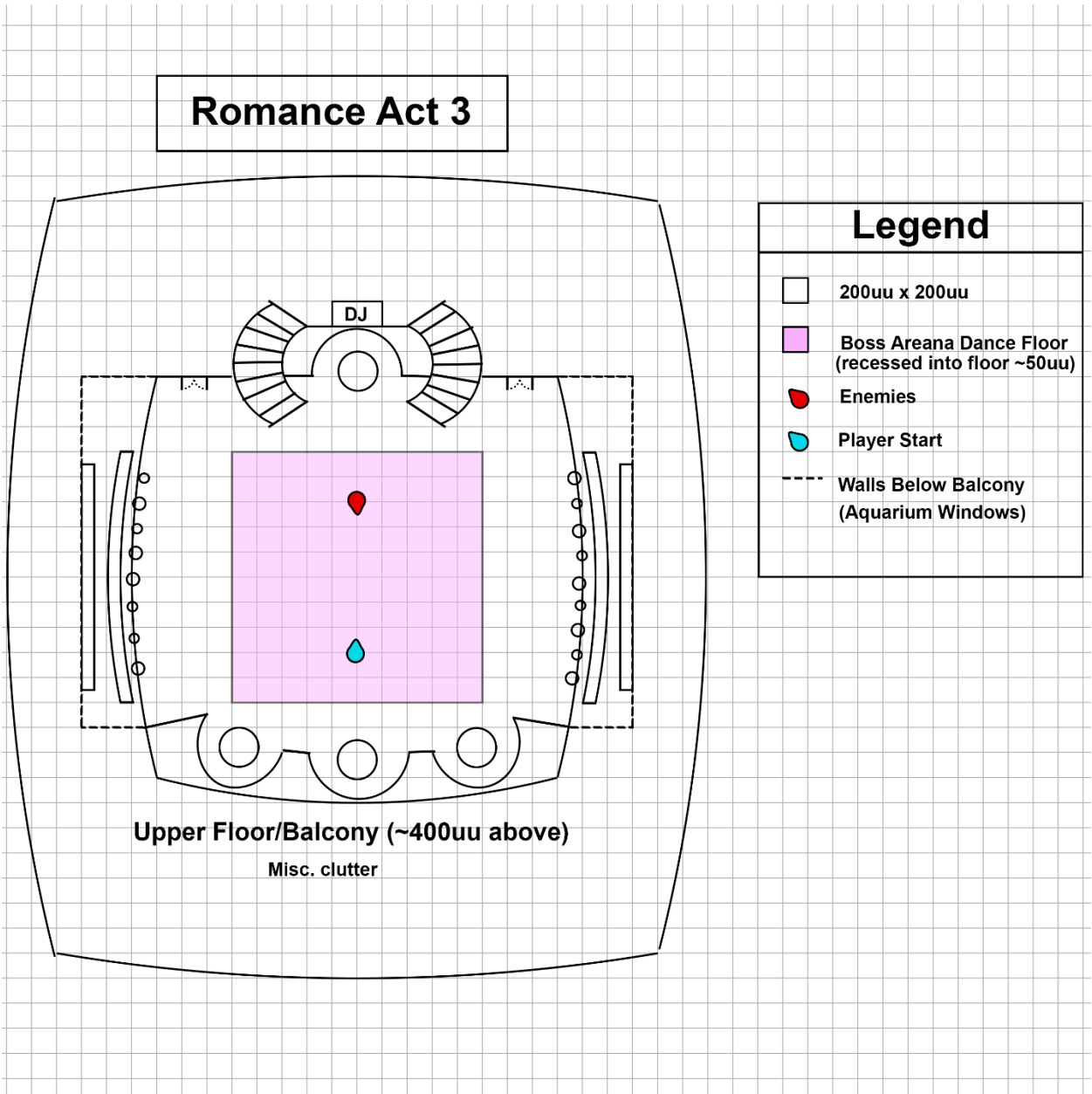


Act 3

The player enters a club on the cruise ship to fight the boss, Ignacio. The boss mimics the player’s inputs and uses similar attacks to the player. The dance floor illuminates specific tiles in sequence to attack the player. The illuminated tiles are electrified and deal 10 damage to the player upon contact, temporarily stunning the player. Once Ignacio’s health bar is depleted the level ends.

Environment Design

The club beams with neon lights, illuminating the space. Circular booths and a bar surround the large dance floor, which features gridded panels that change colors in sync with the music and boss’ attacks. The atmosphere is colorful, with spotlights providing the main lighting.



Boss Rush Level Breakdown

Boss Rush

The player is placed on a large film reel floating above a void where they encounter the game’s three final bosses. The player must fight and defeat all three bosses simultaneously.

Environment Design

The large floating film reel serves as a platform which features several holes that obstruct movement. A spool of film unwinds upward towards the sky. The platform is surrounded by a large tornado carrying a variety of props from the Western, Horror, and Romance films.

