

Eve of War

The following document was created for use in my personal portfolio. It outlines the world-building documentation for an AAA RPG experience.

Martians arrive on Earth in 1895, forcing two sisters to flee to London in the hopes of refuge.

1895. The village of Woking sleeps soundly as a meteor shower lights up the night's sky, oblivious to the approaching threat as Martians turn their greedy eyes towards Earth; a fertile and resplendent planet with plenty of resources that they can no longer find on Mars. Lily and Eve sit huddled together on the vast plains of moorland, counting falling stars, until one falls too close to home.

Based on the popular novel *War of the Worlds* by H.G Wells.

Narrative RPG that seeks to evoke emotional response in the player.

Driven through the perspective of two young sisters.

Centralised around their bond, and determination to survive.

Benchmark Games:

- **Banishers: Ghosts of New Eden**

Bond between primary characters.

Emotional narrative.

- **Dragon Age: The Veilguard**

Linear open-world controlled experience.

Puzzle solving.

Limited resource collection.

- **Stray**

Minimal combat.

Focus on understanding the narrative through pick-ups.

This is a story of determination, survival and fear, witnessed through the eyes of two small children facing a colossal threat unfolding around them.

Genre: Horror. Puzzle-Solving and Stealth.

Themes

- **Family**

Lily and Eve have only ever had each other to rely on.

Their bond to each other is strong - demonstrated through the narrative.

- **Oppression Through Proportion**

Level/World design to emphasise on differentiation in sizes.

Large buildings. Large Martians. Small protagonists. Vulnerability through size.

Inconsequential collateral damage in a war they want to survive.

- **Staying Alive**

Not a game about fighting back, or overcoming the Martians.

Young characters - with a hope to survive.

In line with the original novel, all they need to do is live.

Locations

The following locations are explorable content in the game, adapted from the original novel, and showcased in order:

Woking (Surrey)

1. Opening the game in a homely British village, showing a calm and serene life.

Horsell Common

2. Adjacent to Woking, the first Martian cylinder (ship) arrives on Horsell Common, and proceeds to begin incinerating fearful onlookers.

Woking (Surrey, Destroyed)

3. Returning to Woking under fire from the Martians, a village reduced to rubble and fire.

Pyford Church

4. On the way to London, a brief respite in a destroyed church.

London

5. Many survivors of the growing invasion flee to London to avoid the Martian's key weapon: the heat ray. London has become a battleground and society has begun to collapse.

The Thames

6. The Martians use the Thames to travel through London uninhibited by the uneven surface of buildings and roads. This is also the location where a key event revolving around the ship Thunder Child takes place. Engaging the Martians with firepower, it sacrifices itself to save the people fleeing.

7. The Countryside (final)

7. The Martians succumb to their greatest threat: Earth's bacteria. The final location of this event is set in the scorched countryside, where new life persists, despite the odds.

Prominent Characters - Original Concepts

Eve of War brings the story of *War of the Worlds* to players through the new perspective of two originally created characters:

Lily (16, Woking) – Protagonist, playable character for much of the game.

“Close your eyes. Keep them closed. We’ll play hide and seek, okay? We’re quiet little mice, running from the big bad... octopus.”

Age: 16

As the older sibling and the protagonist of the game, Lily understands the reality that she’s facing and the overwhelming threat that comes with it. The adults are scared, the artillerymen are scattering, no one knows what to do – and no one is coming for them. She’s strong, determined, and constantly attempts to make light of the end of the world for Eve, turning even the most daunting of experiences into playful games. Her priority is to shield her younger sister from the horrible truth of the world: to protect her both physically, and mentally, as they escape to London.

Eve (8, Woking) – Secondary protagonist, playable only when Lily is indisposed.

“Pretty stars. Do you think Ma and Pa are watching them too?”

Age: 8

As the younger and less educated sibling, Eve is a persistent source of positivity and comfort throughout the journey, actively allowing herself to be shielded from the growing awareness that the world is changing. She knows more than she lets on about the changes around her, but in order to not worry her older sister, she acts as if she does not. This shield of naivety extends only so far however and Eve will showcase a greater understanding of the overall threat at various points in the journey where she seeks to comfort Lily in distress. Otherwise, she plays along with Lily’s attempts at minimising the end of the world down to an adventure.

Woking (Before)



Image Credit: [Phillip Shadock](#)

"17th Century Early Modern England Farm Cottage"

A **quiet village** nestled on the outskirts of London, this is the perfect escape-to-the-country location for those who spend the majority of their lives in the capital.

Purpose

Introduction to the story.

Provides false sense of security to the player

Gameplay

Core gameplay tutorials

Introduction to puzzle solving and character switching mechanics

Exploration

Minor NPC side quests

Mood

Quiet, Safe, Happy

Welcoming, Vibrant

Some poverty, it is relatively minimal in comparison to London.

The People

Kind, and happy to live their lives without the hustle and bustle of London.

Popular retreat for the elderly.

Farm life is primarily maintained by the younger generation.

No ambition for industrial life.

Horsell Common



Source: Jeff Wayne's Musical Version of War of the Worlds

Horsell Common is a wide, open-space common with Bronze Age barrows, protected heathland, and thousands of trees. The **sandpits** were of interest to H. G. Wells and are the landing location of the first Martian.

Purpose

Smaller exploration area that triggers pivotal opening cutscene and contrasts the two versions of Woking before/after.

First look at the enemies for the game (Martians emerging from their cylinder transportation).

Death of first key character, Ogilvy

Gameplay

Initial lore exposition of the world through NPC interactions, including key character: Ogilvy.

Introduction of first iconic '[Ulla, Ulla](#)' audio which is then used throughout the game.

Mood

Tense

Curiosity

Fear

Woking (After)



Source credit – *Jared Shear*

When the Martians invade and the first cylinder (a transportation pod for the Martians three-legged killing machines) awakens, this area is reduced to a ghost of its former self. Buildings are reduced to burning debris, cattle fences are flattened and the animals in question are nowhere to be found.

Purpose

Introduction of the horror aspect into the narrative

Gameplay

Introduction of stealth mechanics

Introduction of minor combat mechanics

Cinematics blending with gameplay ([See: Final Fantasy XVI Garuda approach](#))

Mood

Danger, Fear

Desperation

Stalked

Drawing on War of the Worlds, the key character to be encountered here follows on the next page.

Character: Ogilvy



Ogilvy, as seen in BBC's broadcast of War of the Worlds, 2019

"Bah! The logistical chances of advanced life arriving from Mars are a million to one, even less, I say!" - Adapted quote from the original novel.

Purpose

First human to come in contact with a Martian. *Exposes the initial disbelief that humanity faces.*

First death we witness in the game. *Raises the stakes of the game and sets the gory/dark tone going forward.*

Demonstrates the dangerous consequences of underestimating the threat.

Age

Late 50s

Location

Woking/Horsell Common

Background

Educated Astronomer

Personality

Boisterous, energetic.

Stubborn and set in his ways. Always believes he's right, due to his education.

Dismissive of others' concerns for his actions.

Pyford Church



Source Credit – Ivan Martinez

Purpose

Sanctuary for refugees, safety

Narrative contrast of safety, compared to the destruction outside

Forces some characters to question their religion - did God send the Martians as punishment for man's sins?

Showcases the degradation and weakness of the adults around the protagonists.

Gameplay

Limited area

Vendor available

Transitional area, primarily focusing on narrative.

Mood

Isolated

Exhaustion

Brief sense of respite

The scenes that take place in the Church are originally in an abandoned house in the novel. Moving this a church strengthens the narrative question of religious presence in this world. Drawing on War of the Worlds, the key characters to be found here are:

Character: The Journalist



The Narrator (right), as seen in BBC's broadcast of War of the Worlds, 2019

"Be a man!" The Journalist scolded, "You are scared out of your wits. What good is religion if it collapses under calamity? Earthquakes, floods, wars and volcanoes - we have seen them all. You think God is absent now? Wake up. You are in his House." - Adapted quote from the original novel.

Age

Late 30s

Location

Assorted, shows up multiple times in the game.

Background

Journalist

Personality

Determined. Wants to reunite with his girlfriend in London.

Impatient. Keen to move forward.

Voice of reason when the Curate questions his own faith and of others around him.

Purpose

Originally known as the Narrator, adapted to the Journalist for the game.

Inclusion of the original protagonist in the game, further emphasising the new POV.

Nostalgia - Players will expect to see familiar characters, amongst newly created ones.

Creates tension as he tries to provide voice of reason the Curate (see next)

Character: The Curate



The Curate, as seen in War of the Worlds 1953

"We are safe here," he repeated; "safe here." For a time the curate was silent, and then he whispered: "God have mercy upon us!" - Adapted quote from the original novel.

Age

30s

Location

Pyrford Church

Background

Clergyman who ran sermons in this church. Now forced to question his religion in the wake of the Martians.

Personality

Frantic, confused.

Desperate.

Purpose

Emphasizes loss of faith amidst disaster.

For our young protagonists, this shows that they're holding up better than the adults.