

Don't Fear the Reaper

DESIGN DOCUMENT

by THRIHEXA for the pirate jam 18 - 2026

Theme Interpretation	3
The World Is Watching	3
Game Overview	3
Inspiration	3
Dispatch	3
Gameplay Loop	4
Player Experience	4
Gameplay Elements	4
Reapers	4
Valkyrie – High Imposition (I4 – T3 – P3 – C1 – D1)	4
Shinigami – High Tolerance (I1 – T4 – P2 – C2 – D3)	5
Charon – High Passage (I2 – T3 – P4 – C1 – D2)	5
La Catrina – High Connection (I3 – T1 – P2 – C4 – D2)	5
Anubis – High Discernment (I3 – T1 – P1 – C3 – D4)	5
Thanatos – All Rounder (I2 – T2 – P2 – C3 – D3)	5
Grim Reaper – All Rounder(but different) (I2 – T3 – P3 – C2 – D2)	5
Attributes	6
Imposition	6
Tolerance	6
Passage	6
Connection	6
Discernment	6
Incident Description Inspiration for the composition(from helluva boss)	6
UI Elements	7
Main Menu	7
World Screen	7
Reaper Screen	8
Incident Screen	8
Incident Result Screen	8
Dialog Box	9
Art	9
Audio	9
Development Software	9
Team THRIHEXA	10



Theme Interpretation

The World Is Watching

The theme is approached through an esoteric lens: death is universal, inevitable, and impartial. You watch the world unfold as the intermediary between souls and reapers, tasked with dispatching the right reaper to guide each departing soul, all under the ever watchful gaze of the otherworldly.

Game Overview

The player assumes the role of an afterlife dispatcher, tasked with managing incoming reports of newly deceased souls. Their primary responsibility is to assign the appropriate reaper to each departure, ensuring that every soul is guided efficiently and correctly into the beyond.

Inspiration

Dispatch

The core loop is an answer to a simple question we had playing Dispatch 'What if the dispatching minigame was a whole game?' We've taken that compelling



idea of evaluating a problem, choosing the right specialist, and managing cooldowns, and evolved it into a full experience, where you're not just handling calls, you're managing the otherworldly bureaucracy of death itself.

Gameplay Loop

The core gameplay loop revolves around responding to incidents as they appear across the world map. Each incident presents information about a newly deceased soul, which the player must analyze to infer the required attributes. The player then dispatches a reaper to handle the case, rendering that reaper unavailable for a cooldown period. Once the task is resolved, the outcome is reported back to the player, who must then deal with the resulting consequences before addressing the next incident.

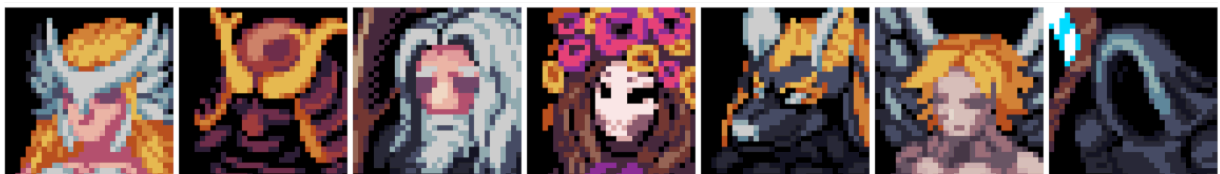
Player Experience

Spanning multiple(3) in-game days, the player manages a continuous flow of death incidents. Each case presents a short decision problem requiring analysis, prioritization, and resource management. The player must learn and apply their understanding of reaper attributes, soul behaviors, and incident conditions to successfully process each death and maintain stability.

Gameplay Elements

Reapers

The game includes seven reapers, each specializing in different aspects of soul retrieval and incident resolution.



Valkyrie

Shinigami

Charon

La Catrina

Anubis

Thanatos

Grim Reaper

Valkyrie – *High Imposition* (I4 - T3 - P3 - C1 - D1)

She was born to command. Few surpass her resolve or her ability to impose order under the harshest conditions. Where she treads, even defiant souls yield to her will. She has no patience for frivolous sentiment or needless explanation; to her, both are a waste of time.

Shinigami – *High Tolerance* (I1 - T4 - P2 - C2 - D3)

The Shinigami moves through scenes saturated with fear, guilt, and confusion without being tainted by them. Even under extreme pressure, he reads every detail with an almost impersonal clarity. Critical situations do not compromise his judgment, nor divert him from guiding souls onward.

Charon – *High Passage* (I2 - T3 - P4 - C1 - D2)

Constant movement is muscle memory to Charon. Regardless of obstacle or terrain, he advances like water in free fall, fast and fluid, finding passage where others would need force. Words are not his tool; souls in urgency need only direction.

La Catrina – *High Connection* (I3 - T1 - P2 - C4 - D2)

For La Catrina, every soul must be understood, not merely guided. Her empathy creates immediate bonds, allowing her to deeply grasp their pain. This extreme sensitivity gives meaning to every gesture, but also exposes her to emotional fluctuations that can complicate her passages, making them slower or even dangerous, though always sincere.

Anubis – *High Discernment* (I3 - T1 - P1 - C3 - D4)

Anubis watches in silence before intervening. His mastery lies not in strength or haste, but in the precise reading of intentions, pauses, and the implications they conceal. Every detail carries meanings that only patient observation can reveal.

Thanatos – *All Rounder* (I2 - T2 - P2 - C3 - D3)

Thanatos acts with calm and precision, neither rushing nor lingering. He analyzes and empathizes when needed, adapting to any situation before acting. He keeps a steady course, making measured adjustments to ensure that the souls move forward smoothly.

Grim Reaper – *All Rounder(but different)* (I2 - T3 - P3 - C2 - D2)

The original reaper. He is the oldest and most reliable presence, a classic professional that carries out his mission with absolute consistency. The Grim Reaper follows no impulse and answers no circumstance. He proceeds steadily like the flow of time, allowing the passage to continue uninterrupted.

Attributes

Imposition

Some souls resist. Some deaths unravel. Your will must bend them, guide them, or drag them into order. Authority is the only key.

Tolerance

The world can burn, freeze, or shock you. Endure the poison, the terror, the weight of other's pain. Only then can you withstand the trials ahead.

Passage

Souls drift, scatter, and slip between planes. Master the invisible roads and hidden gates; appear where death calls, no matter the distance.

Connection

Lost, unseen, or unwilling, they will not come alone. Reach them, earn their trust, and lead them gently into the passage.

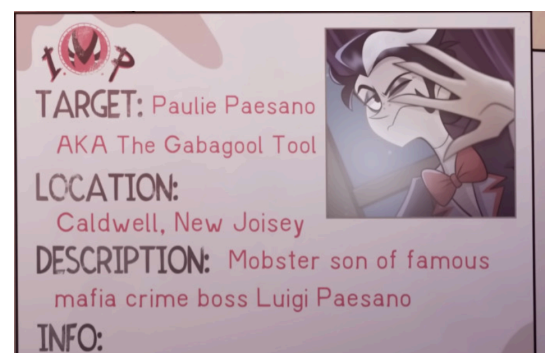
Discernment

Nothing is as it seems. Death hides in disguise. Understand the unseen threads, or risk drawing the wrong conclusion and losing the soul entirely.

Incident Description Inspiration

for the composition(from helluva boss)

Incidents are reports generated by the recently deceased. Each incident



displays contextual information about the victim and the circumstances of death, offering clues about which attributes will be required to handle the case effectively.

UI Elements

Main Menu

The menu is the player's first point of contact with the game and serves as an introduction to its overall tone and themes, presenting death as a central concept.



World Screen

The main screen explores three core ideas. The first is the concept of the "planet." Fully representing Earth with detailed, distinct locations would require significant effort for limited gameplay value. Instead, inspired by The End of Evangelion, the planet is presented in an abstract form. It does not correspond to any real-world geography, functioning instead as a symbolic space. Souls are represented as crosses on this surface, echoing Evangelion's visual language while reinforcing the game's themes of death and abstraction. The second element is the frame that surrounds every screen in the game. This frame exists to evoke a sense of separation and emotional distance from the subjects being observed. The player is positioned as an ordinary office worker of the



underworld, performing bureaucratic tasks where souls are reduced to entries and figures on a report. The deliberately non-diegetic UI reinforces this detachment. The third element is the "world is watching" interpretation of oversight and judgment. An ever-watchful eye observes every decision the player makes, and drawing inspiration from the eldritch presence of Giygas from EarthBound, each mistake accumulates unresolved souls that linger overhead, staring down in silent anguish. Their presence grows with failure, turning error into a visible, oppressive weight.



Reaper Screen

This screen presents detailed information on each reaper, including their name, attributes, experience points, rank, and narrative description. From here, the player can allocate upgrades, shaping each reaper's attributes. The layout is built upon the same framing established in the world screen, a structure that all other menus follow for visual consistency. Beyond textual elements, this screen features a tombstone motif used to visually represent the reaper's attributes.



Incident Screen

This is the game's most critical screen, where soul incident reports are presented and the core puzzle takes place. The personality and, most importantly, the circumstances of death define the puzzle's requirements. It is the player's responsibility to interpret these details, identify the primary attribute demands, and dispatch the most suitable reaper. In keeping with the game's sinister death motif, the selected reaper's attributes are displayed in an inverted pentagram.



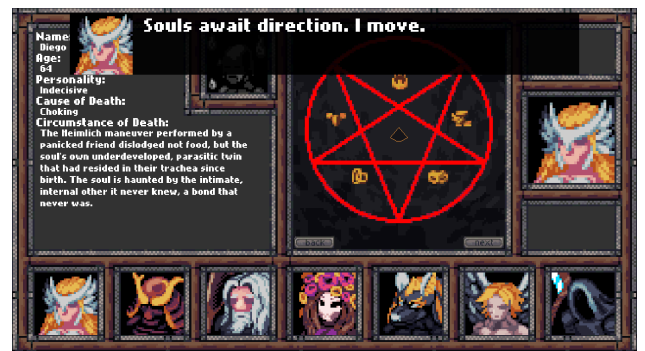
Incident Result Screen

This screen reveals whether the player's deduction was successful. The selected reaper's attributes are evaluated against the incident's requirements, determining the outcome. The soul's information is presented once more, accompanied by the result visualized through a balance scale inspired by the Anubis myth of the Weighing of the Heart. The scale tips to the left in cases of failure and to the right when the assignment is successful.



Dialog Box

At specific moments, there is a randomized chance to trigger short dialogue lines from the reapers. These contextual remarks provide insight into their personalities and perspectives.



Art

The art direction is the backbone of the game's thematic expression. Visual elements are deliberately stylized to reinforce the tone of death, detachment, and cosmic oversight, ensuring that every screen communicates the game's core ideas before any text or mechanics are understood.

Audio

The audio design reinforces the game's atmosphere by maintaining a consistently sinister tone. Inspired by *Have a Nice Death*, sound effects and music emphasize unease and detachment, supporting the themes of bureaucracy, inevitability, and the quiet horror of routine death management.

Development Software

- Gamemaker for programming
- Aseprite for graphics and UI
- FL studio for SFX and BGM

Team THRIHEXA

Lead Programmer:	Arisu
Lead Game Designer:	Darakyus @Darakyus
Pixel Artist, Animator:	Stone Knight @StoneKnight14
Writer:	Tander
Sound Designer:	Tusho @nat.silva2006