

The Forest

Pitch Document

Written by
Elizabeth Daugherty
Full Sail University

Executive Summary

The Forest is a fantasy survival game. Its gameplay is based around unique interaction with a mysterious forest that the player seems to be the only human within. The player takes on a hunter-gatherer position and crafts tools. The secrets in the forest will be revealed to the observant adventurer.

Audience Analysis

The target players of *The Forest* are players looking for a low-stakes survival experience where their understanding of the world comes from free exploration. The primary gamers would also enjoy games like *Minecraft*, or *ABZU*.

The fantasy elements of *The Forest* are subtle, and the choices players make are less involved in dialogue with other characters and more in the actions that the player takes. So, fans of more traditional fantasy, choice-based games like *Skyrim* or the *Dragon Age* franchise, will find a unique and possibly challenging experience.

Players of *The Forest* will also appreciate the open-world setting, where their interactions within it have in-world consequences. Does the player want to take on a dominating presence in the world around them, or do they want to coexist with the natural and magical forces in play?

Story

Long ago, there was a small kingdom of humans that lived among the coastal forest. They were protected from danger with a strong stone wall that surrounded them. But as their population grew, with bounties from both the land and the sea, they found that the walls which once kept them safe now seemed like a crowded cage.

Some of them left the kingdom and the forest, venturing past the bordering mountains. Others set to sail across the sea and look for new land. Others decided to settle in the forest, outside of the protective walls. This drew the attention of the faeries living in the forest, who had been there since before the time of humans.

The Fae, a naturally mischievous group, hid themselves among the humans that went in and out of the walled-off kingdom. They played tricks on the humans, harmless ones at first. Hiding small items around their homes or tying dresses in knots. But it quickly escalated. Loosened wagon wheels that broke and spilled their contents, breaking windows in winter, removing bricks from the road so that people tripped. The Fae made people sick, broke bones, and all the while they laughed like it was a joke.

The fearful humans began to look for the Faerie Queen to beseech her to leave their people alone. They found the magic fairy ring in the forest, in a glen not far from the kingdom, and summoned the Queen. She agreed to a truce. If the humans would stay out of the forest, then the Fae would stay out of the kingdom.

For generations, this peace held. But soon, the story of the Faerie Queen became just that. The human king forgot his ancestor's promise and allowed the humans of the kingdom to journey into the forest when their population became too much for their walls.

The first humans in the forest came to a clearing on a hill. They cut down trees for lumber, dug a well for water, and hunted animals for meat. The Fae quickly discovered the treachery and attacked the humans.

They descended on the kingdom in great numbers and destroyed the kingdom. They killed all of the humans save for one family so that they would remember the power and promise of the Fae.

The last human family knew that they would die with all the kingdom's crops razed, with their shelter destroyed, and with no one to help them. They fled to the coast and found a small boat in hopes that they could sail somewhere safe and new... but their oldest child fell from the boat and was lost to the waves.

Until they washed ashore and were found by a remorseful fairy... who changed the course of that human's life forever.

Characters

The Faerie Queen

The Faerie Queen is an ancient demigoddess. She rules the Fae folk by right and with a charismatic smile. She has the ability to take over any fairy's body and force them to act out her will, whatever it may be. She also has magic powers from the forest that are very versatile. She can use them to create, destroy, or to bestow knowledge.

The Player Character

This character doesn't remember anything about their past. As far as they know, they've only ever lived in their cabin in the forest alone.

Competition Analysis

As consoles and computers become more and more advanced, the possibility for open-world games expands.

Unlike sandbox games, such as *Minecraft*, *The Forest* provides relatively limited resources while still supplying everything the player needs. Most sandbox games give the player nothing to start with, and plenty in the world to survive with. This is what distinguishes *The Forest* from a sandbox game, making it a survival game, but with a sandbox feel.

However, pure survival and resource management games like *Don't Starve* offer a limited world to operate in, and very few emphasize the exploration aspect for the sole purpose of learning about the world and not simply for finding resources.

A roleplaying game with an open world like *Skyrim* can offer some very extreme aids to players, allowing them to become powerful titans of magic or valiant and strong warriors. *The Forest* doesn't provide magic or strength stats with each new stride in the game, and instead relies on the player being prepared and planning ahead, paying close attention to the world around them instead of drinking potions to get out of a tight spot, or grinding levels so they can build up their gear and strengths.

Gameplay [2 page maximum]

The Forest begins with the player character, after choosing from a few basic male or female models, waking in bed in their cabin. They pick up a list of to-do chores on the bedside table, and then the player has free range over the world around them.

The player would decide from the list of three things they start with (cook meat, get water from the well, string bow) where they go first. Inside the cabin they have several things they can interact with and learn. There are gloves and shoes, some chopped firewood for the fire, a cooking pot, and a few books about the wilderness (a mostly-complete guide to poisonous and edible plants, a personal journal with an entry from the player character about how they've begun to wonder about where they come from, and a beginner's crafting guide).

If the player puts any of these books into their pack, then the to-do list updates for each one respectively. Find an edible plant, complete the plant guide, craft arrows from the crafting guide, and search for clues.

Hidden under the bed the player might find a story book. It tells about a magic Faerie Queen that lives in the ancient forests of the world. If the player finds this, they unlock the "Find the Faerie Queen" chore immediately.

As the player ventures outside of their cabin to complete more of their tasks, they will find the water well on the property, a patch of empty soil, and a rickety table for crafting with their un-strung bow on it. They will also see a bear patrolling the edge of the forest clearing. The player is prompted to hide and wait for the bear to leave, crouched behind the well or the table.

From there, the chore "deal with the bear" will appear on the to-do list. The player can, on their own, determine if they will use their guides to build traps, arrows, tracking knowledge, and practice with the bow or craft a blade, or if they will instead harvest materials for and craft an herbal repellent so that the bear no longer comes near the cabin. The player can, of course, do all of this with the only important choice being made is whether they ultimately kill the bear or not.

Killing the bear means that there is one powerful enemy eradicated. It also means that the wild animal population will boom. This is both good and potentially frustrating for the player who now has plenty of prey animals to hunt themselves but might also deal with deer and rabbits competing for other food sources. As well, wolves will eventually move in from the mountains and bring down prey animal populations, but now the player must deal with several lesser enemies as opposed to avoiding only one large one.

The player also has the option to grow a garden on their property if they learn how to craft a shovel. They can grow almost any kind of plant, but in a limited space.

In the forest, the player can discover many things.

There is a skeleton and a pack of supplies very close to the cabin. In the pack is a compass which can be very useful and helps keep the player from getting lost. They find fragments of pages telling stories or reading from journal entries of humans that lived there before. There are broken relics, pieces of gems, and some tools like knives and walking sticks that the player can find and take, even use. A river in the forest can be used as a source of clean water, though it won't always be clean, but could be the player's only choice if something falls in the well and taints the water, which will always be dirty after and will make the player character sick.

The purpose of getting outside the cabin is to explore! The player can do this while taking control of everything around them and dominating nature, or the player can give and take with the ecosystem carefully and survive as a member of the forest instead of its adversary.

Ultimately, the major "questline" of the game is to summon the Faerie Queen. Once the player meets with Queen, she will evaluate the player's choices and decide whether the human has proved that their kind can be trusted and allowed in the forest again, or if the Fae were right to distrust them. If the Faerie Queen believes that the human made "good" choices that she favors, she will reward the player with some passive abilities that make the forest more friendly and fruitful. If the Queen sees that the player made "bad" choices, like killing recklessly, hoarding lots of resources, or generally unbalancing the ecosystem, she will scorn the player and force the player to remember where they're from and why they have been sentenced to a life of loneliness. The Fae will also become a possible threat, sabotaging things the player crafts so they are weak and easily broken, or misshapen and unusable.

Locations

The Cabin

This is where the player starts. It is small but not cramped. It provides the player with a few basic starting essentials, like an axe, the materials for a bow, gloves, shoes, some firewood, some edible plants, guides, and a pack to carry things.

The Glen

The fairy ring is the main feature of the glen. It is where the Faerie Queen is summoned. It is very lush with life, most of it mushrooms and moss and flowers.

The Bear Den

Mostly bare dirt and rock. The bear and her two small cubs live there. Sometimes there will be a carcass from a kill the bear made. It is built into the side of a small, steep hill and surrounded by scratched pine trees.

The Abandoned Kingdom

It is a ruined kingdom. The houses are crumbled and burned, parts of the great stone wall are broken down, the gates are gone. Streets are pockmarked with holes, fields are barren, and most of it is inaccessible from fallen ruin. There is the ruin of a castle at the back end of the kingdom, which is the most desecrated area. Its access is extremely limited, and what's left of it is broken and dusted with ash.