

Ex Nihil: The Nothing Inside

A game for the Xbox 360 & Play Station 3.

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1. Basic Information

There is a certain lack of immersion when playing a game of the Survival Horror genre. Typically you are either playing an everyday Joe type character who barely manages to survive or you are playing a special-forces type of character. What hasn't been attempted is a game where the player makes their character. By crafting an involving, emotional, story and letting the player create their own character to explore this world the player will be immersed to a level that has thus far gone untapped.

Ex Nihil is, at its core, about destiny and having the choices in your life taken away from oneself. The main character is a boy or girl (referred to as a male from now on for simplicity) in their late teens that begins to have weird hallucinations that shortly become reality, transforming the orphanage he lives in into a den of carnage. All of this has been brought about due to a selfish pact made by his birth mother, a pact that has left the boy a gaping wound in the fabric of reality. This allows demons to seep into the world and wreck chaos. The boy must choose whether to give in to his tainted nature or fight it and try to save the world.

However since the main character has had his fate written for him, that of a living portal to the underworld, there is also a chance to rebel against that. Due to a quirk of the process that turned him into such he will also find himself with a variety of mystical powers at his command. With these powers the character has the choice of rebelling against his very birth and fight to force the demons back into the realm they came from. Or he can embrace the darkness within and fight to seize power from the demons themselves. It's up to the player which path he walks in this manner, possibly even taking the good path through the game but doing not so nice things all the way. Giving them the option to be a redeemable demon tainted mortal or all out monster is key.

The most important ability that the player will possess is the ability to summon and control demons. The rift within the characters soul is more than just hyperbole it is an actual gaping wound where most peoples spirit would lie. Using this he can bind demons to himself, store them within his body and summon up to two of them at once to fight his foes. There will be a limit to how much he can do this via the magic system but this is an integral part of the gameplay, detailed later on in more detail. However it is also important to the two player mode since the second player will control one of the main characters demons.

By nature the game is going to be fairly dark and considering the subject matter, violence involving children, it is of the utmost importance to not act as if it is in any way good. Due to this even the time when the player is acting totally evil they will never have the option of actually bringing noticeable harm to any children or teenagers, these are all things to happen off-screen. However the impact of their decisions should allow them to come across the effects of their decisions while moving through the later areas.

Showing mangled children and teenagers is in bad taste but letting players come across bloodied beds when they refuse to go and save the boys who are being attacked is just as, if not more so, effective than a scene like in the movie Saw. Essentially this should be a lot more in line with movies like Psycho than anything you would really see in modern movies. When things happen off-screen it leaves what exactly occurred up to the imagination of the player which is worse than showing exactly what happened.

More detailed information will be found in their own sections below with section two giving more information about the game itself. Section three will provide more detail on the smaller details to the game such as characters locations and what the game will look and sound like. Lastly section four will have a rough walkthrough of the game as well as something of a script for it, giving vague details about the conversations that will occur. None of this is totally complete information since such is unnecessary until moving into actually working on the product but it should still serve the purpose of allowing visualization of what the finished product could be.

It is of total importance to take note that this game does not fall into any category neatly. It looks like a third person shooter but focuses mostly on melee combat. While it is something of a survival horror game you are not alone and you are more than equipped to handle most enemies with relative ease. Essentially the game ends up as a blend of a modern day survival horror / third-person action game genre with a bit of high fantasy thrown in. The setting of the game will be almost similar to a less intense version of the Devil May Cry series.

The hardest part of the game will very likely be making players care about the characters in this world without cramming things down their throat. In most games it is usually fairly easy to be mean and spiteful to others since they are just people you have recently met. What is of the most importance with Ex Nihil is to give the players time to meet and get to know these other NPCs before putting them in a situation where they must decide how to act towards them. This way they are choosing to send friends to their doom or whether or not to save a bully. The point of this is that hopefully it will make even the more callous players think twice before doing something horrendous simply because they can.

In addition the whole prospect of a game that features violence against children, even if 90% of those children are teenagers, is a somewhat taboo concept. Thus it must be approached with the greatest amount of reserve and sensitivity to the players in mind. The purpose of a game like this is enjoyment and to have fun while hopefully creeping them out and pulling them into the story. What we don't want to do is scare people off or draw more heat than even a GTA game.

Thank you for reading this and I hope you find the following sections both informative towards the game and enjoyable to read.

2. Detailed Information

The Story and Related Information

Beginnings

Demons have always done their best to make their way into the mortal realm, stealing away humans and their souls to power themselves. The Angels have stood against them for as long as anyone can remember, forcing them back into their pit when possible and possessing humans to fight the demons when they required mortal shells. This has led to plenty of stories and religions down the years as humans sought to placate both sides and survive as long as possible.

However both sides have always been limited to small scale incursions due to the barriers that separate the human realm from their own. Every so often a demon attempts to influence the mortal realm by convincing a mortal to part with his soul willingly and then using the power it provides to create a larger pathway into the human world. These are blessedly rare due to the fact that they require careful planning and a particularly strong soul to tear through the barriers. This is something the angelic beings refuse to do and are thus limited in how much they can interfere seeing such soul magics as the epitome of darkness. They are not totally against forcing humans to do things they don't wish to do but they avoid dark magics dealing with life and the soul.

The balance has always remained as such with neither side able to gain too much power over the others with the mortals blissfully unaware. However one demon lord has begun a plot that has taken him years to put in place. This demon, Nergal the master of destruction and lord of Jibraxis, the demonic netherworld, sought to shred the barriers between his realm and the mortal realm entirely. Sending one of his demons to infiltrate the mortal world he had the demon find a mortal with a powerful spirit and utterly ruin their life before impregnating them and leaving.

With this mortal, Cecilia Bennington, utterly ruined and in despair, Nergal appeared to her late one night. He offered her a remedy to the AIDS now ravaging her body but he wished a heavy price to be paid. In exchange for her not dying from the AIDS she would give over her child's soul to the demon lord. Not really believing what she was seeing she agreed to it. When she woke up the next morning she felt fine, better than she had in years. Immediately kicking her drug and drinking habits she tried to live a better life and hoped to raise her child.

Unfortunately demons are nothing if not liars and she soon realized she wasn't cured from her sickness. She simply would not die from it and seemed to have gained a resistance to the pain caused by her sickness. This left her walking around like normal even though her body was falling apart slowly but steadily. Shortly after her child was born it was taken from her, her mind slowly falling to pieces due to this revelation as her body literally became a walking corpse as time slowly decayed it.

Her child was born without a soul due to Cecilia's bargain leaving it an incredibly odd little child. Never crying, begging for food or just about anything it was too unnerving for Cecilia's brother and his wife to take care of. Something about the way the child looked at them caused the wife a great amount of distress and they eventually left the child with an orphanage.

Shortly after arriving there he was adopted by a kindly older family who took him in regardless of his bizarre quirks. Years passed, fourteen to be exact, and while he was a bit withdrawn and emotionally distant he was a happy child. His adopted parents worked hard to pull him out of the shell that he had naturally grown into. This happiness was not to last, a suicidal man sped through an intersection at over 100 miles per hour and t-boned his parents car, killing them instantly and putting him in the hospital. After recovering he is ported off to another orphanage, this time one that deals mostly in teenagers who are not likely to get adopted.

Infestation

While nothing all too peculiar had happened to the boy until this time the moment his 15th birthday arrived Nergal had one of his cultists kill the boys' family in a suicidal car crash. With the boy taken from the ones he loved and his emotional defenses down the demon took the chance to move. Tearing open a small rift into the human realm he began kidnapping humans and using their bodies as hosts for new demons and slowly built up an army of them. Once he was happy with the size of his army, something that took several months, he tore open the rift completely and unleashed the demons upon the city.

Charging through the streets the demons tore up everything in their path on the way to the orphanage. Their first goal was to clear the way of any who might interfere with them bringing the boy back to the rift. Their second goal was to get the boy there along with any he might care about. Only by forcing the boy into utter despair and killing him would his soul carry enough power to allow Nergal to break through the realms when he devoured it. Emotion was key to this gambit of his and he needed to heighten the boys' emotional suffering, thus the kids in the orphanage were to be targets as well.

Nergal knows that by doing this properly he will be able to personally enter the mortal realm with his armies and take it over. By killing almost all of the mortals and harvesting their souls he will elevate his position in the infernal hierarchy and become almost like a god. He can then go back to the demon realms and begin taking them over before literally taking the fight right to the angels. His end goal is to rule over all of creation; Heaven, Hell and Earth.

Unforeseen Consequences

There is a third force at work that Nergal forgot to take into account, that of the Demiurge. This ancient entity acts as a balance between the forces of Heaven and Hell. It was he who placed the barriers that keep them from interfering in the mortal realm directly and whenever a demon or angel has gotten too big for his britches it has been the Demiurge who has seen to their destruction. While not always acting directly this force is not one to be taken lightly, something that Nergal has clearly forgotten.

Due to the main character being born to someone with a powerful spirit and having a demon possessed human as a father he has magical power with him. Nergal knows of this but considers it a side effect of the plot he is working, something he isn't too concerned with since the boy would need to learn how to use it for it to be a threat. Since none of the demons are going to be teaching him Nergal sees this is essentially being a non-issue. He hasn't counted on the Demiurge taking a hand in the matter.

Reaching out to the boy when the demons begin their invasion he inserts a bit of his own power into the teenager. This boosts his inborn power immensely and grants him several abilities that work with little thought on his part. He can understand the demonic language, summon and control demons (storing them within his own body) as well as increasing his strength and stamina to above human levels. This paired up with his ability to potentially use magic poses a huge threat to Nergal, one he is unaware of at the beginning of the game.

With his new powers he has the ability to make allies with some of the demons and learn how to use almost any demonic magic's via their tutelage. This powerful magic, paired with his ability to control demons, is of particularly disastrous nature to the demon lord since these are previously only traits that a power demon would possess. Unfortunately for Nergal the teenager is now seen as a powerful demon to be by some of Nergals' troops meaning that defectors are likely.

Game Information

Almost the entirety of the game will be played in a third person viewpoint. In some few situations the main character will have flashes of events occurring to other characters through their eyes. These will be rare and reserved for the times it will aid the narration of the story so as to not be overly jarring to the player.

Each section of the game will be broken up into a variety of chapters, each chapter having a particular focus on moving the gameplay forward. Before a chapter begins a stylized splash screen will state what chapter it is, time of day/night and the name of said chapter. In addition there will be a picture in the middle of the screen showing the goal of the level, be it a kidnapped friend you are trying to rescue or a demon you are hunting down.

Depending on what chapter in question is being played then the focus of the game will change. Most of the game will be played as a straight third person action-adventure game with a focus on combat and some puzzles. Other stages will shift the focus to things such as stealth based gameplay, avoiding enemies for one reason or another. Lastly some stages will be built entirely around big boss battles and consist of going through several stages of defeating a boss. However the basics of the brutal third person action gameplay will never go away since that is indeed the main focus of this title.

The game can be played as a two-player game, with the second player taking control of one of the demons summoned by the main character. Exactly which demon is being controlled can be swapped around in one of the pause menus. Play should be enabled to work on the same screen or over the respective online network. If played locally then it will be a split screen, horizontally. There is no tether forcing the players to be close by each other but the two will suffer if they stay too far away for too long. The first player will lose his magic points, leaving him unable to summon new demons, while the second player will lose health at a slower rate. This effect should occur at fairly long range though and serve as a deterrent not a punishment.

There will be three difficulty levels: easy (whelp), medium (mortal) and hard (demon). Easy will grant the player bonus health and weaken all enemies by reducing their health total and making them act less intelligently with how they attack. Medium will provide a challenge to players but nothing too stress inducing since this is the difficulty most players will enjoy playing at. Hard difficulty will be there for those hardcore gamers who enjoy a challenge. Enemies will not do any more damage than normal, however they will employ their more powerful attacks more often than not. This should force the player to not just rush into battle and hammer on enemies since they will survive most initial assaults and begin pummeling him in return. Beating this difficulty should rely more on strategy and patience than raw power.

To complete the game on easy or medium the game should keep players interested but not overly drag on. Between the puzzles that need to be solved, stealth sections and learning to fight the bosses twelve hours should be the minimum. On hard it might take a bit longer due to some puzzles being a bit harder or more complex and the enemies taking more damage will make some of the boss fights take quite a bit longer, especially the Tiamat one.

If at all possible it might be interesting to implement a difficulty option for both the combat and puzzles. This allows those players who like the combat but don't feel like fiddling with puzzles to play the game their way while someone who doesn't do well with the fighting can still have feel like they accomplished something by doing harder puzzles. It works quite well in the Silent Hill games and I think it would work well here as well.

The Fist of Marduk

This is the only true item that the main character will acquire but it forms the crux of most of his abilities. This is a magical artifact that can only be wielded by a mortal or demon of great power and capability. The bracelet has three configurations, each carrying a markedly different use.

- The first configuration is the Titan configuration; with this configuration active the player can bind a demon's spirit to the bracelet and summon up a sword. The demon's nature would figure into what sort of weapon is created so more physically powerful demons would create a sword with high physical damage and defense while a water demon infused sword might bypass certain enemies' defenses.

* While in melee combat the player can perform a number of simple combos. Using a quick demon would enable longer combo strings as well. Depending on the type of demon being used jumping sword attacks might be possible as well.

- The second configuration is the Dragon and this causes something of a mystical bow to appear in the hands of the bearer. By pulling on the bow string a magical arrow will appear on the string, ready to be fired. Much like the Titan configuration the demon's nature would figure into what sort of arrow and bow is created. Physically powerful demons might carry some knockback properties, knocking struck foes down, while a fire demon would set them aflame for a time.

* This is not as varied as the sword seeing as how the bow is a fairly simple affair.

- The last configuration is the Lugal configuration and this is the means with which the player can bind demons to himself. It takes the form of a black whip that glows with a golden fire. By striking a physically weakened enemy with it you can attempt to wrestle them and pull them into yourself thus binding them. This allows you to summon them at a later time, use them to power the other configurations or call upon their magics.

Magic

While the main character has a lot of magical power he doesn't have the knowledge or training necessary to use it freely. This leaves him needing a focus, a place that bound demons can take quite easily. By using those demons that he has captured within himself the character is able to cast a number of spells for a wide variety of spells. Not all of the spells so gathered would be combat useable, some might only be really useful for navigating the environment or moving through flooded areas of the subways. However there are plenty of possibilities with a system like this that could be explored.

Captured Demons

Pretty much any demon of any type can be captured and held within the character. However capturing duplicates serves little purpose so the whip will refuse to hold to any demon the character has already captured. However within each breed of demon there are a number of variations, such as Alal who are more physically powerful than others of their kind or are perpetually on fire. By capturing these specific ones the player is able to bring even more varied effects to bear. This is something that would need to be carefully figured out and balanced in addition to figuring out ways to ensure that players don't bypass a unique monster that would give them a skill they need to complete an area.

3. Miscellanea

Characters

Main Character (Default Names: Jonah, Rena) Laughner – A 15 year old orphan who lost his family a little over a year ago in a fire. He lived with relatives for a short time but they handed him over to the state for undisclosed reasons. In actuality they found him creepy and a bit off putting due to his distant demeanor. He is an incredibly quiet and reserved young man who would rather not speak if the decision was left up to him. By default he is a distant and somewhat callous individual, not mean or evil but simply uncaring and indifferent. Over the course of the story he can either remain as he is, with nothing changing for him, become a foul wretch, complete with fall into depravity, or redeem him, stepping out of the darkness and into the light.

Appearance: The main character is going to be mostly generic looking. While the character customization will allow for some diversity there are no extreme hair colors or anything like that. The male is wearing fairly normal clothes, pants and a shirt (customizable) while the female can either wear pants or a skirt with a shirt (customizable). I will include some details on the customization in a below section. One guaranteed thing is that they will always have paler skin. This doesn't rule out tan, Asian or darker skin tones but they will all have an "off" color to them, something that makes them look almost a bit sickly.

Cecilia Bennington – Once a beautiful model the years have been quite bad to Cecilia. Dating an abusive boyfriend was the first stage and getting hooked on drugs was the second. After several years of this harsh lifestyle she found herself pregnant, alone, without a job and suffering from the first stages of HIV. It was during that time a man approached her and began to make friends with her. She believed he sought to bring her out of the gutter she had fallen into; in reality he simply wanted her child's spirit. In exchange for her child's soul he would be born healthy and she would not die of AIDs. However her body has been ravaged by the disease, not killing her but rendering her a living corpse. Her child was taken from her as she fell into a downward spiral of drugs and alcohol to hide from what she was becoming; a veritable walking corpse.

Appearance: While once a beautiful woman the years have not been kind to Cecilia. Her dirty blond hair has become thin and stringy while her green eyes have something of a hollow look to them. In addition her skin is pale and stretched over the bones, giving her an incredibly sickly look. She usually dresses in dark clothes with hoods to cover her face, embarrassed at just how badly the disease has torn her beauty apart.

Mark Henries – A 42-year old single man with two young children, he is the head of the Helping Hands Orphanage. Mark is a caring man who genuinely wants to help the children that are under his care. However he has something of an unhealthy taste for younger girls, something he wrestles with on a constant basis due to his close proximity to all the young girls in the orphanage. While not a bad man he is sorely tempted and this will be his undoing. He will be taken by the demons and turned into a monstrosity that will attempt to kill the children.

Appearance: Mark appears as a middle aged, balding, black man. His hair is short and frizzy but with a growing bald spot in the back of his head. With an infectious smile always on his face he presents a hospitable figure. Typically dressed in casual dress clothes of a beige or dark yellow color he looks like a professional who has stopped taking care of himself completely.

Ralph Anderson – Love Interest (Female) / Best Friend (Male) & Lisa Condren – Love Interest (Female) / Best Friend (Female) – These two 16-year olds have almost interchangeable personalities. When one is in the best friend role they are fairly boisterous and happy go lucky sorts of personalities. They want to have fun and want to see the main character stop being such a downer all the time and actually smiling some more. Due to this they are going to be a target of the demonic horde, looking to draw the main character to them.

The one that is working as a love interest will be something of a shy type. While not as withdrawn as the main character they have had a fairly difficult home life before being taken and put into the orphanage. Alcohol, abusive parents and other sorts of bad rumors are talked about them, thus leaving them feeling like they have few friends. They are smitten with the main character though and this leaves them as another target.

Appearance 1: Ralph has dark hair, tan skin and brown eyes. He is dressed in an orange t-shirt with a white stripe down the left side and beige slacks. His medium length hair is usually left messy when he wakes up, him loving the way it looks like that. Always ready with a smile he is considered to be something of a troublemaker even as a love interest due to his love of pranks. While never really all too serious he would desperately love to protect his friend or love interest and he can be quite foul mouthed and aggressive if they are in danger.

Appearance 2: Lisa is a shy, demure sort even when she is the best friend type. While she loves to have a good time she hates to be the center of attention. She is an attractive enough girl but a few things mar the image and make her an easy target for picking on; namely her abundance of freckles, glasses and the braces. Ginger hair and pale blue eyes and pale skin put together the image of a girl with too much Irish in her blood. However she is something of a mutt with no real knowledge of just what the heck her ancestry contains.

The Demiurge - A background entity that has connections to the player character, having infused him with a portion of his own energy when the boys' soul was hollowed out. It is due to his taint in the boy that he is able to exist as a soul feeder. He is able to harness the power of angels and demons and use it for good or evil, a talent that the Demiurge himself uses to keep the balance of good and evil in the world. Whenever demons or angels attempt to gain a foothold in the human world he chases them out through mediums.

The Demiurge is totally unknown to humanity beyond a couple of mentions in some religious texts. What he is in reality is the balance that keeps the world in check, the entity that ensures neither Heaven nor Hell ever tip the balance of good and evil. Both demons and angels are more than aware of this entity existing and they loathe him for getting in their way. He will play a larger role in future games but for now his only real appearance will be in the ending and even that isn't going to be a full on appearance.

Appearance: The Demiurge is not seen at any true point in game. It will appear as a black and white shadow in some of the cut scenes, lurking in the background as something of an easter egg. It will not be pointed out but astute players may notice it when a scene of grave import is going on, especially since it has lent some of its power to the player. For the most part he is nothing more than an Easter egg.

Main Character Customization

Character creation will break down into several variations on a number of categories.

Basics – Pick sex, skin color, eye color and personality (quiet, angry, boisterous). Personality has a few minor effects on reactions to certain situations.

Face – The player can pick from a pre-made face with minor alterations to the brow, cheeks and chin after picking the facial template. They can even pick imperfections like some pimples, freckles or acne (appropriate considering the age group in question).

Body – The player can pick from several body templates and then change them to make the character more muscled, fatter or everything in between.

Hair – Players can pick from a number of hair styles changing between three hair lengths per style and a variety of colors, only natural ones though.

Piercing – Boys and girls can pick from a number of piercings for various parts of their face (nose, lip, eyebrow, labrette, etc).

Clothing – The player can pick from a number of shirts, pants or sets. They can then pick from a few color variations on the clothing. This step is fairly similar to the way the Sims 2 does it.

Accessories – This is a catch all for all sorts of other things from bracelets, watches, rings, etc.

Enemies

Listed here are a few examples of demons that the player will encounter through the course of the game, not an entirely exhaustive list. Very particular members of the following species can be captured to serve as the player characters demonic servants.

Alal – These creatures were known to the Christian world as ‘Succubus’ and are seducers of men. They take the shape of comely women of various ages, ranging from teenagers to mature women, whatever will make it easier to seduce their target. When they are acting as warriors they appear completely in the nude but missing any form of sexual organs (nipples and genitals). They’re always mixed in with other demons and work as support, casting spells to buff up enemies. On their own they would rather flee from a fight than stand their ground.

Asakku – The Asakku take form as bloated corpses, disgusting bodies held together by literal thread, leaking pus and diseased green blood everywhere they walk. These vicious demons come in a variety of forms, differentiated only by the relative power levels of their particular inhabiting spirit. When attacking opponents they will either spew a stream of bile at their target, damaging and poisoning them. Some of the stronger ones will instead use magic’s to throw down status ailments on foes, causing dizziness and confusion amongst other, more virulent, afflictions.

Dahaka – Taking form by possessing and mutating lizards and reptiles, the Dahaka appear as winged Komodo Dragons with slimmer bodies. Children of the demon lord Tiamat these creatures fly about waiting for victims below them before diving them, breathing fire or acid (depending on type) before landing to bite at their prey. They are aggressive and animalistic resorting to pack attacks or surprise to take down their prey. These creatures are powerful but they suffer from a serious lack of maneuverability.

Edimmu – These wraith-like demons take form as almost stereotypical ghosts. They appear to be wearing tattered white robes wrapped in chains, covering their face at all times. In reality the Edimmu themselves are small, child-like wraiths that use magic to appear larger. They attack by throwing yellowish energy bursts at people to drain their psychic energy (MP) until it has been all sapped and then draining their very life essence (HP). If pressed into melee combat they will attempt to wield their chains as clubs, battering people with the padlocks on the chains.

Elue – Known in the days of yore as the Alu these mutilated creatures are more dangerous than they might first appear to be. For the most part they are walking corpses, animated bodies of the dead that seek out the still living to maim them. However they are slow moving and almost entirely witless, preferring to just charge into combat and try to attack foes. Simply being touched by the Elue brings pain as they transmit the pain of death to their still living foes. They are incredibly slow moving but powerful enough to kill foes quickly. However they are further hampered by the fact that they are missing at least one arm and / or leg due to possessing the bodies of those recently killed by their fellow demons (usually a fairly messy, disgusting death).

Gallu – The Gallu are the huge guardians of the demonic netherworld, keeping those who are stuck there imprisoned and all others out. They appear as gigantic suits of armor in a stylistic mix between Samurai armor and more European variants. However they all possess various animal heads instead of any form of armor. These don't classify them as different types of creatures like the Lilitu; they are simply unique to each individual Gallu. These creatures rely on raw power more than anything else to crush those that stand in their way. They are known to be called the children of Persephone and Nergal, whether figuratively or literally is unknown. What is known is that they are unfailingly loyal to whoever rules Jibraxis.

Lilitu – These powerful monsters appear as man-animal hybrids of all different sorts, ranging from the vicious tiger/demons to the sneaky rat/demons. Relying purely on physical attacks the majority rely on brute force with a distinct minority employing hit and run tactics. Names tend to be things like (Tiger Lilitu) and such with very few of them having personal names, only the truly powerful take an actual name. These are the foot soldiers in Nergals' army, acting as the cannon fodder and storm troopers of his forces. Lilitu are more of a race in the same sense as humanity than other animals with lots of room for diversity between individual species.

Tartaruchi – Guardians of the palaces in the underworld the Tartaruchi are Nergals' personal guards. Appearing as figures cloaked in purple robes with a variety of Cuneiform symbols all over it these are the most feared creatures in Nergals' entire demon realm. They fight by wielding a wicked iron hook on a chain in their left hand and casting ice magic with their right hand. Few demons dare cross these creatures with most running scared. Only the Gallu show no fear to these monsters. When their cloak is removed they appear as black skinned humanoids wrapped head to toe in layers of chains. It is in fact one of these chains wrapped around their body that they use in their left hand to fight enemies.

Thammuz – Wearing the clothes of a middle ages European hunter, these dark skinned demons carry a large blunderbuss in their arms. While not all that aggressive by nature they are known to be the hunters of the demon realm, widely known to be excellent trackers.. As such they are more than willing to use their demonic weapons against those that their master sends them against. Their gun is, as could be expected, not just a normal weapon. Instead of firing lead rounds it fires off bursts of hellish flames that have a mind of their own, attempting to curve in mid-air to strike their target. They're not homing weapons per se but they help with their aim greatly.

Yan-Gant – Looking like nothing more than the missing link itself, the Yan-Gant looks like a hairy, primitive caveman with glowing red eyes. Moving with a slow loping walk these creatures look like mindless brutes but they are far from it. Not only are they highly intelligent and capable of using traps against enemies they shy away from physical combat. They prefer to use their left hand to attack enemies from a distance. This deformed hand has five lit candles in the place of fingers and the creature can, at will, cause them to flare like a flamethrower at enemies.

Main Enemies

Nergal – Known as the Lord of destruction and chaos, Nergal is ruler of the demon netherworld and a demon overlord. He is considered to be one of the strongest demons in the Hell dimension, not due to physical attributes but solely on his magical prowess and influence. He has many powerful demonic servitors, not the least of which are his “wife” Persephone, his advisor Hanpa and his seven *Utukki*, the demon generals. Between these powerful demons and his own might he is able to control a large and powerful realm with relative ease, suppressing any who might seek to overthrow his rule. His major failing is his timelessness, he doesn't understand the fact that one mistake, one oversight can undo hundreds of years of his planning. Nergal appears as a tall, dark skinned man with handsome but sinister features. He has a pair of oversized horns upon his brow that curve out to the sides and he is always dressed in a black suit of plate armor. In his left hand he carries a mace with a lions head, a powerful destructive weapon, and in his right. His dimension is one of many that is analogous to hell, a place where evil souls go to be tortured for eternity. However there is one exception; Nergal will often elevate those who suffer the torments well to full demon status, allowing them to serve him.

Persephone – Once known as Ereshkigal, Persephone took a name more suiting to a role she played once in the days of the Greeks. She is known as the goddess of those dead who end up in their realm and is the wife of Nergal. While a non-combatant in the strictest degree she serves her husband through the use of her undead minions and via her magics which allow her a small bit of clairvoyance. Centuries ago she found herself banished from her home realm by her own parents for unknown reasons and thrown into Nergals'. Through quick cunning she was able to elevate herself to his side as a lady servant, a consort and then something of a wife to the demon lord. While bearing no love for her “husband” she would not like to see him killed since that would leave her in a precarious position of not having a protector. Persephone appears as a pale skinned woman with dark black tresses kept in a fanciful style and piercing blue eyes. She wears elegant gowns that would have been in style amongst the nobility in the dark ages, a fashion she enjoys quite a bit and compliments it with various pieces of jewelry

Hanpa – Once the lord of the demonic Netherworld Hanpa was deposed by lord Nergal several millenia ago. Lashed into servitude Hanpa has since served as advisor to Nergal, not truly bemoaning his fate since it takes all the stress of ruling away from him but still leaves him plenty of power. He is the father of Pazuzu and the two couldn't be more opposite; Hanpa is a cunning manipulator who never gets into fights, running at the first sign of trouble. Hanpa appears as a short, overweight, hunchbacked man with wrinkled grey skin, a long white beard and fluffy white eyebrows that cover his red piercing eyes. His left hand holds a ruby cane for support and his right hand is always hidden up his sleeve, concealing a gnarled hand that was ruined by Nergal during the takeover.

Kur – Kur is an ancient entity of unknown origin, not strictly a demon and definitely not an angelic being. This monstrous entity guards the rift that leads into the underworld, seeking to prevent any from crossing into it. He doesn't seek to stop demons from marching on the human realm but he does attempt to stop any angelic being or any other demon who is a non-resident of the Netherworld realm. Appearing as a ten foot tall grey suit of armor Kur carries a gigantic Khopesh (essentially a primitive scimitar) into battle in its left hand and a morning star in its right hand. Kur's major weakness is his inability to move more than a certain distance from the rift, a weakness that when paired with his lack of magic makes it easy for people to run from him.

The Seven Daeva – Nergals' Demon Generals

Rabisu – Known across the demonic realms as the Hunter of the Fallen and the Sinner Hound, Rabisu is one of the most feared warriors of those dark realms. Widely regarded for his ability to hunt down any individual across the realms, set traps to hinder or capture them and use his bow to kill them. A vicious predator he is widely considered to be something of a beast, almost animalistic in how he acts at times. Rabisu appears as a skinned human male, no skin covering his sinew and muscles, except that he is pitch black instead of red in color. He is the progenitor of the Tartaruchi demons, having bred them in his own image.

Namtar – A sickeningly disgusting creature, Namtar is known as the Lord of Plagues. Looking much like a decaying corpse with the skin pulled tight against the bone, this walking cadaver brings death and sickness in his wake. He is swathed in ripped and tattered dark green robes with a gnarled wooden staff in hand. All demons quake before him due to the fact that with but a touch he can spread disease to almost anyone, a skill that has singlehandedly wiped out armies that were arrayed against his master. Creator of the Asakku demons, Namtar is used when death would be too quick a punishment for those who have crossed Nergal. The only thing that keeps Namtar allied with Nergal is the fact that the demon lord is so powerful and influential he is the only being that could ever command this monster.

Tiamat – An ancient demon of incredible might, Tiamat was once worshipped as a veritable god by the Sumerians. Known now as the Chaotic Mistress of the Sea this demon is immensely powerful spirit. Taking the shape of a powerful dragon-like entity that is more at home in the water than she is in the sky, Tiamat is a terror to all that might use the waters, destroying ships and spreading stories of the Kraken and Leviathans that would destroy ships at sea. In addition she is the birth-Mother of the Dahaka species of demons, them ruling the air while she herself rules the seas. It's not that Tiamat cannot fly but her wings are better suited to help with swimming than quick aerial movement.

Pazuzu – One of the most well known demons out there, Pazuzu is known as the Lion of the Winds. As his name implies he appears as a bipedal lion, covered in orange fur with green patches. He has X-shaped wings, four that move in unison, that appear as thick grey peacock feathers and this allows him an incredible amount of aerial mobility. While not having created them Pazuzu is the patron of the Alal demons and they worship him in this regard. He is seen at all times with a retinue of powerful Alal bodyguards. By his very nature he is the least destructive of the Daeva preferring to remain aloof and enjoy himself flying around rather than fighting and killing. However when he sweeps into a location everything in his path is wiped out utterly.

Asag – Widely known as the Bastion of Earth, Asag is the most physically powerful of the Daeva. Taking the form of a Naga, the lower body of a snake and the upper body of a man, his entire body is made out of solid stone. A fanged face with two sharp horns that sweep upwards, his three fingered hands have long sharp claws attached to them. Many who hear him move have thought that there was an avalanche coming, the sound of stone grounding on stone causing that belief. As he moves the ground shakes beneath him and he uses this as an intimidation tactic. A vicious and arrogant monster he created the Elue demons by raping mortal women. The ensuing spawn were born as decrepit monsters, knowing only hatred and destruction... just like dad.

Utu – The only one of the Seven Daeva who doesn't appear as a monster, Utu takes the form of a tall, broad shouldered angelic figure with sickly gray skin. His once white wings are now skeletal bones that are wreathed in flames, acting as wings only in the vaguest sense of the word. He is a powerful warrior, carrying a two-handed sword made entirely of flames. Utu is known as the Fallen Angel of Fire, he was once an angel who turned to the side of darkness. He was cast out of the angelic realm and turned into a demon although he was allowed to keep part of his angelic appearance as a punishment. Due to this he has gone from a quiet and calculating angel into a hate filled, destructive monster of a demon. He is considered to be quite the loose cannon.

Lamashtar – The last of the Seven Daea, Lamashtar was once a mortal woman. When her youth began to leave her she embarked upon some disgusting and depraved methods to keep her beauty and grace. For her depravity she was cursed to forever only gain sustenance from the darkness that she embraced, something that has earned her the nickname the Devourer of Children. Her form was changed into a powerful Lilitu, with the upper body of a demonic woman with a beautiful body and the lower half of a lion with the tail of a scorpion. A vicious and depraved woman she enjoys nothing more than devouring the body and souls of both demonic and mortal children... especially human children. In combat she wields her sharpened claws to slash foes and her scorpion tail to stab foes, injecting them with a paralytic poison.

Locations

Helping Hands Orphanage – This four floor building lies in the middle of a fictional town (Southwall) in Connecticut. The demons begin their invasion here, seeking to bring the main character back to the demon rift to be sacrificed to Nergal. The orphanage is a much older building, having initially been a victorian style home that was renovated and converted into an orphanage. The game starts out on the top floor, the boys dorm in the orphanage, and ends up in the roof for a bit before making its way downwards into the other floors. The third floor will still be mostly normal, the recreational area, but by the time they reach the bottom two floors blood is everywhere and the demons have begun warping the building into a monstrous, haunted entity. The orphanage is held by the demonic Lamashtar.

City Streets – The city of Southwall has been thrown into a complete and utter panic by the demons attacking. What was once a fairly bustling, if somewhat small, city has been utterly wiped out by the demonic invasion. Many of the bigger buildings have been set fire to, frozen or even levelled entirely, rendering some streets and roads completely impassible. This makes navigating through the city a frustratingly difficult affair rendering any sort of National Guard or military ground assistance nearly impossible. The sky has become totally wrapped in darkness, blacked out by the Dahaka and Alue flying overhead and the foul magics emanating into the city. This renders aerial assistance for the city a near impossibility. Several of the Seven Daeva are currently residing within the city, causing chaos and destruction.

Subway – The subways of Southwall have been rendered entirely useless by the demonic invasion. Some sections of the subway have been entirely collapsed while others have lost electricity or are flooded. However the only way to reach the now sealed off sewers is through an access tunnel within the subways. This means that anyone seeking to destroy the rift or even plunge into it will have to travel through these tunnels, fighting through the demons and traveling through abandoned tunnels and train cars.

Sewers – When the demonic infestation occurred a tear into the demon realm opened in the depths of the sewers below the city. Any workers or transients who were down there were killed in short order by the stronger demons, their dead bodies serving as food and vessels for the weaker demons. Now the sewers have been mostly sealed off by the demons to keep humans away from the delicate rift and they will be even more defended as the main character marches on the city. While these initially resemble any other sewer there is now blood on most of the walls and a grey and green mold on most of the walls that is poisonous to humans.

Demon Rift – A swirling purple and black vortex with patches of land that are connected by bridges, this is a place of pure chaos. Upon entering into the rift all semblance of the mortal world falls away, replaced by a realm of entropy and destruction. This is only a façade, an entry into the realm itself without actually being a true opening. The ground here is unpredictable and can be composed of virtually anything, going from cobblestones to granite to bleeding flesh while the walls move around almost as if it has a mind of their own, transforming your path as you traverse it. Traveling through this rift will dump you into the demon realm itself although getting past its guardians is another matter entirely. The realm itself is sentient and rather malign, despising humans as weak. However it fears the main character due to his unique and unknown nature.

Jibraxis - Netherworld – This is the Demonic Netherworld itself although the passage through the rift will dump travellers right in the middle of Jibraxis Castle. The castle is an incredibly large structure that contains quite a number of personal guards of both Nergal and his wife, as well as a number of other powerful demons. Jibraxis is no place for the curious and many will be killed quite quickly. However the main character, due to his unique nature, does not set off the usual alarms within the castle. Due to this the main character can infiltrate deeply into the castle and try to destroy Nergal himself if he so chooses.

Controls

I will use an Xbox 360 controller to give an example as to how the controller will be used for this game. The similarity between the 360 and PS3 controllers is miniscule enough that this would translate over easily enough.

Left Thumbstick – Move Character

Click Left Thumbstick – Crouch Down (Toggles)

Right Thumbstick – Move Camera

Click Right Thumbstick – Reset Camera to behind Character.

D-Pad Up – Swap between Melee and Ranged weapon.

D-Pad Down – Open Demon Selection Menu

D-Pad Left / Right – Select Active Demon

Blue X Button - (Tap) Chosen demon follows you. (Hold) All follow you.

Yellow Y Button - (Tap) Chosen demon attacks target. (Hold) All attack target.

Red B Button - Action Button. Recall targetted demon.

Green A Button – Jump / Mantle Object

LB - Sprint

LT – Auto-Target (with melee weapon), Enter Aim Mode (with ranged weapon)

RB – Hold to Ready Magic, Release to fire

RT – Attack (with melee weapon), Hold to Ready Weapon (with ranged weapon), Release to fire

Back Button – Open Pause Menu

Start – Open Inventory

Graphics and Sound

The basics of the graphics should be something fairly realistic but with a stylistic twinge to it. Perhaps something along the lines of realistic cel-shading, where you have more realistic graphics done in alternatingly bright and dark colors with a thick border around them. This should help them stand out quite powerfully from the background at all times. All demons and enemies will appear in lifeless greys and other dark colors while humans and allies will appear in more vibrant colors than even the backgrounds. Color shifts can even occur mid-cutscene to illustrate someone turning traitor or shifting to help the protagonist.

- Look of Characters: Characters should have a fairly realistic appearance, nothing too odd since they are essentially normal people. The demons will be highly stylized though with impossible anatomies, demonic appearances and just generally malevolent. Since the game takes place in modern day they will be even more archaic in their appearance due to them using things like chains, swords and clubs as weapons whereas the humans would use guns or whatever weapons they could improvise out of their surroundings.

- Music: The music for the game will be a mix of gothic rock and somber classical tones with the occasional energetic techno beat mixed in. Each of these sounds will be linked to certain situations so when a fierce fight breaks out the gothic rock will be more appropriate while the somber classical tones will be used during the more emotional scenes. The techno will be reserved for more intense situations, such as a character resolving themselves to a situation or the main character bracing for a hard battle against a demon. These will be short lived and very spaced out so as to not break up the flow of the game.

4. Basic Walkthrough

This is a rough walkthrough of what a play through the game might look like. Not only is this very rough but all of the ideas aren't fully fleshed out. There is plenty of room for improvement and making the game much more intense to the player.

Opening

The game opens with a car driving up to a large Victorian style building. As it starts to turn up the driveway we are shown a sign that states this is the Helping Hands orphanage. When the car parks a matronly older woman gets out of the car and opens the back, letting the main character out. Walking him up the door she smiles at him and consoles him over "the dreadful incident" at the last orphanage. Patting him on the shoulder the door opens and we are shown Mark Henries for the first time.

After a short time spent with Mark offering his condolences to the player character they are sent to their room. It is here that they meet the character that will be their friend. From here the game will jump around from day to day, showing interactions with the other children in the orphanage, some minor events and things of that nature. The character can pick responses to these situations to start shaping the way that their character turns out. This will continue for roughly two weeks time (giving plenty of chances for him to interact with others although the exact amount is up in the air for now).

One night as the children are preparing to sleep there is a loud smash and crashing sound from downstairs. Some of the children leave their room to go and check out what's going on only to find themselves face to face with supernatural monstrosities. Chaos breaks out with the demons trying to kill the adults and capture children, feasting on some of both sides. The building is seriously damaged in the melee and both the main characters best friend and love interest are kidnapped by the demons. Pinned down in his room by a huge monstrosity he/she slips out a window and goes across a balcony nearby to get out of his bedroom.

From here he will have to travel up and down the length and breadth of the orphanage to either rescue the children or try and figure out some way to stop the demons. However the demons are not hurt by any improvised weapons that the children try (something the character sees when sneaking into a room) and he must sneak past them. There are a few environmental traps he can set off to rescue fellow children but for the most part he is hiding and trying to not be noticed. If he is he can try to flee the demons but certain areas will be more or less instant death.

Reaching a particular room he is besieged by the same monster that had him pinned down in his room. Diving through the door he is confronted by a small demon named Hebi, a demon that takes the form of a small water snake. This creature piggybacked on the demonic invasion and isn't really hostile, more just curious. However upon seeing the main character it is immediately cowed by the power it senses within him and, while offering up some cryptic statements, offers to hand over a relic that it had found to him/her. Taking it in hand it is revealed to be the Fist of Marduk, a thick and ornate obsidian bracelet connected to a jet black ring by ruby chains.

While Hebi begins to explain the purpose of the bracelet the monstrous demon from earlier begins bashing down the door to the room. Hebi instructs him quickly on how to use the bracelet to create a sword and then binds himself to the main character. Using the water sword formed from Hebi within the bracelet he/she chases off the monster. After defeating the demon Hebi further explains the method with which you can control demons. Using these four tools is the key to saving those he cares about and stopping the invasion (or great power if the character is evil).

Heading forward Hebi instructs you on how to use the energy whip from the Fist to gather and bind new demons to your service, starting with the lone demon looting in this room. Traveling through the orphanage the main character will eventually find his best friend held hostage by Mr. Davies who is just about to have his way with several teenage girls. Upon killing him, and rescuing your friend (or leaving him to die) it is revealed that not just the orphanage but the entire city has been attacked and mostly leveled. Lamashtar reveals herself when they try to head outside and the character must use their weapons and any demons they've gathered to destroy her.

Upon her death the player will learn how to use their demons to harness magic and is set loose upon the city. From here there are several paths the player could take through the city but the choice is mostly a matter of aesthetics, the demons they face and most of the locations are functionally identical. The only real difference is the order in which they fight enemies, if they choose to go through the museum they will fight Utu first but if they choose the construction site they will fight Pazuzu first. After defeating these two Daeva they will reach the docks, the only place where there's still an accessible, if slightly flooded, entrance to the subway.

While here they are attacked by Tiamat, a milestone battle that takes place over a number of stages. First Tiamat attacks the player on the docks and they must fight back using magics and ranged weapons. After this Tiamat moves to crush the player with her girth leaving the player little choice, they jump on top of her back. Tiamt begins to swim rapidly through the water in a scene almost reminiscent of Shadows of the Colossus and the player must climb to her secondary wings and hack at them and slow her down so that they can climb to her head and stab her a few times. This leads to her taking to the sky and summoning her Dahaka to attack you, a phase that only lasts long enough for you to kill a bunch of them. She then crashes into a building with the player leaping off at the last second. The final stage takes place against her upper half with her half buried in rubble. Upon killing her the player can head down into the subway.

The subways are found to be a mess, partially flooded and full of rail cars that are no longer working. However the humans down here, trapped in the subway during the attack are still mostly alive. Due to their exposure to the rift energies they have begun changing into something else. The player must fight their way through these ghouls to reach Asag and defeat him to enter the sewers. While these aren't too radically transformed from before there are dead, decaying bodies everywhere and blood painting the walls. Cutting through the demons here will lead to Namtar and only by destroying him will the rift even reveal itself.

Upon entering the rift the player is besieged by a number of powerful demons led by Kur. With no choice other than fleeing the player must do so and in the process loses their way. However they are able to bend the realm to their will by finding "seeds" littered through the realm, slowly forging a path. The last seed is taken from Rabisu, the last Daeva, and opens the path to the Netherworld. Kur reveals himself and the player must take him out in a battle that puts him on the defense most of the time.

With Kur dead the player can enter the Netherworld and finds themselves in Nergals castle. Infiltrating it will require some stealth and plenty of demon killing. While exploring the castle the player runs into Persephone and Hanpa but neither will stand in the way of the player. Persephone even offers the player her magics and even herself if he will destroy Nergal and rule in his stead. Shortly thereafter the player encounters and fights Nergal to rescue his love interest. If the player chooses they can now seal the portal, locking themselves and the love interest in the Netherworld but saving humanity or kill the love interest and take Persephone. This leaves them the new demon king who will continue to assail mankind.

Ideas for Sequel

* A MMO game that has demons and humans interacting side by side with an almost WoW type antagonist system. So the humans and demons would inhabit entirely different locations, be able to adventure around in those areas, completing goals and missions, trying to put their faction on top. There would definitely have to be an option for racial traitors, demons who join up with the humans and vice versa, bringing their unique talents to the other side.

* Another game in the series could also take place in another city while this is going on and focus on a new main character. One would have to figure out what sorts of powers to give them to make it interesting but different from the original game.

* One could also pick up in the demon realm with a starting point based on how the last game ended. Might need to make a new MC for this sort of game considering how I have the ending for this game planned. It might be an interesting twist to let the new main character be a demon aspiring to protect the mortal world, which would be a nice twist.