Supernatural disaster in small-town America leads to ghost therapy (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer* vibes but not quite so snarky)

Premise: You play as a small town America high school student. A never before seen supernatural disaster (mega earthquake/tornado) tears a rift in a dimensional barrier and ghosts are unleashed on the town. Our prototype would take place in the local school but the game could expand to other town locations (I have a meat-processing plant in mind for one). You're a nerdy, bullied kid studying by yourself in the school library when the supernatural disaster hits. You discover that you have the power of the ghost possession mechanic when watching a scene of bullying (similar to something you personally experienced) play out between two ghosts, but you don't really understand how you got this power.

Objective: The ghosts all act as mini-bosses with their own personalities and histories. You must solve puzzles related to their personal trauma to heal them so that they'll return to their dimension.

Themes to Potentially Explore: Empathy, teenage angst, identity, bullying, anxiety about the future/change, suicide, school shootings (maybe this one's too saucy for class?), etc.

Scalability: Like I said before, this could easily scale up to a small town like you might see in *Silent Hill*. Restricting the prototype to just the school seems like a good idea, and the earthquake damage makes it really easy for us to block off access to areas so we could select specific school rooms we want to use without a bunch of empty, less interesting spaces.

Tech, Gameplay, and Art Considerations: As far as tech goes, I don't think there are any unique challenges with this scenario. There would be lots of desks/chairs/books/other population pieces to show off the telekinesis search effect with. I think the space would work well for gameplay with lockers being a natural hiding spot, a mix of narrow and open spaces, lots of doors to peek through, and the possibility for non-linear paths. When it comes to art, I think making the ordinary into something creepy could be a fun challenge for artists. Limited "wow" set piece areas for the school but more possibilities in the town at large.

***The Thing* meets *At the Mountains of Madness* when an eccentric billionaire makes an eldritch discovery**

Premise: A high-profile, eccentric, billionaire inventor (think Elon Musk or Nikola Tesla if he'd made more money) abruptly retires and builds a remote estate in Greenland. This is more than a private mansion, however, as the eccentric inventor has actually come here to research parts of the earth that have been frozen for millennia but are now becoming exposed due to climate change. Being one of the world's preeminent geologists, you're hired on to consult on a recent and secretive discovery. Unexplained electrical interference causes your helicopter to crash just outside of the estate and kills the other experts. The facility is eerily abandoned, save for the eldritch horrors awoken by the pursuit of forbidden knowledge.

Objective: Solve puzzles to move your way through the facility, contact help, and escape.

Themes to Potentially Explore: Forbidden knowledge, egoism, ethics in research, corporate secrecy, ruthless ambition, profit motive, etc (this one would really be more genre and trope-based than any kind of serious exploration of anything)

Scalability: Since the guy who built it was a billionaire, the estate can be as large or small as we want. There could be more technological research areas, natural caves, the billionaire's elegant

private home, warehouses, etc. For the prototype, it's probably best to restrict it to just some research buildings.

Tech, Gameplay, and Art Considerations: Could be cool to do some scripted weather effects with outdoor areas which I don't think would be too hard. Plenty of population pieces for telekinesis search to interact with. Lots of cabinets and lockers to hide in. Indoor areas are probably on the smaller side but we could still have open spaces by going outside and traveling between buildings. Mad science experiment scenes could make for some interesting art showcases, otherwise pretty standard sci-fi fare. Cthulhu-style enemies work well with this scenario.

Night at the Museum where an alien forces us to confront our ancestor's sins

Premise: You play as an employee at a world renowned museum that hosts cultural artifacts from all over the world (think The British Museum). Archeologists associated with the museum make a grand discovery of a cultural artifact from a hereto unknown ancient civilization and bring it in as a new exhibit. Turns out, this artifact is actually alien in nature. A trans-dimensional being emerges and unleashes the angry spirits of colonized and appropriated cultures from every branch of the museum. The being demands that you retrieve sacred relics from each culture and deliver them to a central portal so that the being can curate a museum of humankind for its own people. The being imbues you with the ghost possession mechanic and calls it the power of your ancestors.

Objective: Complete puzzles to retrieve a sacred cultural artifact of great power from each culture and deliver it to the trans-dimensional portal. The cultural spirits will fiercely defend their artifacts.

Themes to Potentially Explore: Colonialism, cultural appropriation, racism, historical perspectives, historical preservation, etc (maybe this is too serious for class?)

Scalability: The British Museum is absolutely massive, so we could easily scale up if we move beyond proto. For the purposes of the prototype, we can keep it small and maybe only show off two cultures with a few rooms dedicated to each.

Tech, Gameplay, and Art Considerations: No unique tech issues I can think of. With it taking place in a museum, there would be plenty of population pieces to fling around with the telekinesis search behavior and the labyrinth and vertical nature of big museums could work well with the tentacle search. That said, from a gameplay perspective, it might make more sense to tailor abilities to be more culturally relevant. It could also be problematic to not give dialogue solutions, essentially forcing the player to re-enact ancestral violence with no other course of action. Architecturally, there could be a good mix of open and constricted spaces, but natural hiding spots could be harder to come by. As for art, we could really make every room unique and themed.

Jurassic Park but with pissed off animal spirits and Occult eco-terrorists

Premise: You work as a researcher at a facility that experiments on animals. Among the regular protestors outside the building, an extreme animal rights advocate with knowledge of the Occult performs dark rituals to release the tortured spirits of the animals caged inside your facility. You regret not searching for another job sooner.

<u>Objective:</u> Complete puzzles to reunite the vengeful spirits of each animal type with their physical body and then help the restored animals escape the building.

<u>Themes to Potentially Explore:</u> Animal abuse, research ethics, sentience, ecoterrorism, the Occult, etc.

<u>Scalability:</u> Research facility could easily be scaled up, potentially to zoo-like proportions. For the prototype, we can keep it small with a couple different animal spirits with a few different rooms each.

<u>Tech, Gameplay, and Art Considerations:</u> This one scares me the most, tech-wise. Instead of relying solely on humanoids, we'd be bringing quadrupeds into the equation. Furthermore, I think that from a gameplay perspective it would make sense to try to tailor abilities based on the animals. There would be plenty of cabinets and lockers to hide in as well as population pieces to toss around. Probably some good jump scare opportunities with windowed observation cells. The art could combine cold sci-fi with little pockets of "natural" habitat if we're willing to stretch how close we want to stay to a real animal experimentation facility.