

HE WHO FIGHTS WITH MONSTERS

When a nerdy wannabe fails to notice the demon apocalypse happening, he gains demon powers that force him to repeat after death. He tries to save his fake girlfriend from death, but her boyfriend complicates things.

PROLOGUE

We find ourselves in an apocalyptic desert wasteland à la Mad Max. The sky has the colour of bloody mud and the world is overrun by hordes of bloodthirsty Zombie-Vampires. In a hopeless world, one man refuses to give up. We slip into the role of Dirk Action, a man as manly as it gets, with bulging muscles, grizzled chin and a piercing gaze as he crushes a Zompires head with his boot. We get introduced to the movement mechanics and are prompted to run Dirk towards the action. Then we get to use the combat mechanics to slay some monsters using Dirks favorite weapon, his longsword "Deathkiller". We, as Dirk, grimly carve a path through the horde towards our goal. A young beautiful woman is surrounded by the ravenous fangs of countless undead bloodsuckers. We make quick work of the horde. But for every foe slain, ten more rise in it's stead. Our final image we have of Dirk is standing on a pile of corpses slashing with one hand and holding his woman in the other hand.

ACT I

The camera lingers a bit on the glorious scene before zooming out and revealing that we've been seeing a computer screen this whole time and the action we saw was that of a game being played. It was played by our protagonist Ben, a below average, 18-year-old nerd living on welfare in a small dirty basement apartment. We gain control over Ben after a short scene where he compliments the game on his great main character. We get to experience Bens life daily life by interacting with several things in his apartment. Each interaction gives us a short cutscene and a bit of interactivity that gives us a glimpse into Bens character and history:

- When interacting with the computer we go into a view as if we were really using the desktop and can move our cursor around. We can open files, emails, chats, game libraries and other funny things. Each little activity will prompt a little dialog line from Ben. For example, going onto Bens social network we open to the profile of his long-time crush, Brigitte Hoffman and Ben will say this: *"Why won't you notice me BB? What do I gotta do to deserve you?..."*;
- Further in the room we find his Dirk Action Cosplay hanging on the wall. The wasteland survivor armor consists of a ballistic west, a comically oversized longsword and several pouches and ammo belts. Interacting with it causes Ben to put it on and start swinging his longsword around and spouting Dirk Action one-liners: *"Remember when I said I'd kill you last? I lied "*;
- In one corner we can find an old chest labeled "WW2". In it we find belongings of Ben's deceased grandfather. In it we find a working service rifle and a few ancient grenades, along with some old clothes and medals. As Ben is looking through the chest, he gets a nostalgic smile on his face as he remembers the good times, he had with his cooky grandad. Upon inspecting the grenades, he wonders: *"Probably doesn't even work anymore after all this time"*

But we also see how unhappy Ben is with his lifestyle by interacting with other things in his apartment:

- We can look at the piles of trash and unpaid bills on Bens counter, prompting Ben to pick up one of the bills, look it over and then drop it in the trash: *“What’s the point...”*;
- On his computer we can find a job application file only the words *“Skills: idk...”*;
- When interacting with the dirty mirror in his bathroom Ben will first do some more Dirk action impressions but after a while, he gets a somber look on his face that soon turns to a hateful frown as he looks at himself with disgust: *“Pathetic...”*;
- Interaction with the dirty stove and the sink full of unwashed dishes will prompt Ben to make excuses: *“I’ll just let is soak a bit”*
- We can open his cupboard and discover a pile of empty Insta-Ramen containers: *“Shit I’m out. I’ll have to stock up again”*;

From all this we get the impression that Ben is not happy with his life, but his self-doubt keeps him from cleaning up his act. He sees himself as a perpetual failure. Hence why he seeks escapism in video games, Movies and his own twisted fantasies.

After interacting with the cupboard, we get Ben to leave the house to go shopping for more instant noodles. But when he opens his front door, he faces a hellish apocalyptic world with winged demons flying through the sky. It’s a scene straight from a horror movie as we see screaming people, burning cars and the sounds of battle in the distance. We are then panning over Ben’s face. Which is in awe. *“Fuuuuuck...YES!”* Visibly giddy he rushes back into his flat and gathers his cosplay gear (sword, body armor) and anything useful from grandpa’s chest (grenades, knife). He heads out full of vim and vigor, ready to slay some monsters and ready to begin his new exciting life as a survivor.

Since Ben is not at all equipped with the knowledge, skill and body to survive, everything goes south, and Ben is forced to run. And he runs straight into a boss fight with a big muscular demon. Ben tries to overcome his fear by channeling his Dirk Action impression and stand his ground. It doesn’t go well, and Ben is about to be eaten. As a last-ditch effort Ben uses the grenade and rams it down the beast’s throat. It bites down, Ben loses his arm and the monster blows up. Ben lies dying in a puddle of guts, mud and blood from both him and the demon. Ben dies, but he wakes right back up again in his bed drenched in sweat. He thinks it was all just a bad dream but discovers that his left hand has been replaced by a muscular, red, scaly, spiky, clawed hand. Ben freaks out at this discovery and hides under the blankets of his bed and tries to wake up from this new nightmare.

ACT II

Ben doesn’t get a break though because his whole apartment complex is decimated by a series of giant spikes rising from the ground and plowing through the area, subsequently collapsing the building on top of him. In Reflex Ben just closes his eyes and gets crushed and dies. Ben wakes up again however at the same time as

earlier. He is still in denial about what's happening to him. Through trial and error (dying and waking up again) the player has to lead Ben safely out of the collapsing building.

Now Ben is out on the street and standing in front of him is a small, almost cute demon. Ben approaches him slowly. It attacks Ben and he is really struggling against the small thing and can't get it off. Ben is getting choked out and about to go unconscious again when the demon is grabbed from behind and hurled into a wall. As Ben looks up to see his savior he's looking into the face of a young girl. Behind her a burly man is finishing off the demon baby. The girl says nothing but offers Ben a hand and pulls Ben up with surprising ease (if it's because she's strong or Ben is just frail is up to the viewer). Wiping off the demon blood from his hunting knife the man introduces himself: *"Ey Chap! Noice ta meetcha! Oim Frank 'n this 'ere is my uh... daughter Alison. Nasty lil' buggers those amirite?"* Ben is lost for words. The two survivors notice Ben's arm but act surprisingly empathic. *"Dun worri 'bout it bub. Oi've seen weirder stuff th'n your wankhand there."* Frank and Alison take Ben into their group and together they make their way to their safehouse. Frank gives Ben the rundown of what happened to the world, that 13 days ago the sky was wreathed in red and demons began spawning out of nowhere. *"So! Oi wus roidin me bike 'ome frum wök oaight. 'N suddn'ly t'sky turn all red 'n der's demins puppin up oll owa t'plaice. Then one thin' led to 'notha and Oim fitin demons from the stygian pit in me backyahd."*

Ben tells his new companions his goal to save his love interest Brigitte which he pretends to be his girlfriend. They get to her House but find her corpse being devoured by a demon. The sight of this enrages Ben and awakens his Demon powers. Powered up he and his companions defeat it. As the demon lies dying Ben is compelled to walk towards it, ram his hand into the monster and absorb it. This extends the demon part of his arm up to his shoulder. Ben is in a trance state and is approached by Frank which triggers an involuntary counterattack, instantly killing Frank. Ben regains his senses after he's done "feeding" and stares in horror at what he's done. Alison is cowering over Franks corpse, she's cold and professional and loots Franks body for useful items. Ben is distraught at this sight. He slowly approaches her whilst stammering apologies. Alison, with a lightning fast attack, rams her knife into Bens chest. He falls to the ground and Alison stands above him and slowly slits open Bens throat all the while holding unwavering, unfeeling eye contact. He's bleeding out fast and is very much scared of what this little girl has become. After dying Ben wakes up in his bed again but this time the clock on his bed shows one day earlier.

On that new day Ben meets up with Frank and Alison again and the dynamic of the three is established. Ben seeks them out each day and together they try to find Brigitte. In the process Ben starts to understand his power, with each demon he absorbs he becomes stronger and wakes up one day earlier per demon boss.

In this Period of time we get backstory on Frank and Alison. How Frank lost his wife in the first few moments of the apocalypse and he could only save Alison from their collapsing house. We also see a shift in behavior from the pair. Alison in particular has been a cold, emotionless killer when Ben first met her. But with each earlier day that Ben lives through, he see's her return to the funny and innocent little girl that she was. Frank's change is less apparent but it's clear to the audience that he's trying to hide deep sadness and sorrow

under a thick layer of faked happiness and jokes. We see a change in Ben's behavior and attitude. With every slain demon he discovers more about his powers and grows stronger and more powerful, which is exactly what Ben wants. He gets cockier and more assertive and his attitude towards Frank and Allison who he first sees as savior, then as companions, then as friends changes to useful acquaintances towards the Ordeal. Frank and Allison also are more and more distant from Ben the more he grows in Power. They still take him in as they see the humanity in him and the good in his heart, but that goodwill is stretched to almost breaking point towards the end of this section.

So, Ben is living, dying and repeating until he gets to the day that Brigitte is still alive.

Through continuous search and study Ben has deduced the correct day that Brigitte is still alive and after killing the last needed demon boss, Ben finally wakes up on day four, the day Brigitte is destined to die. Contrary to his usual routine, Ben doesn't first look for his companions. He is anxious to get to Brigitte as fast as possible and doesn't care about anything else, he's obsessed. All the way to Brigitte's home he is hyping himself up and tries to think of the best Dirk Action lines to say when he rescues his damsel and she falls for him.

Ben arrives at Brigitte's location and finds Frank and Alison there too, locked in a fierce battle with a demon boss. Ben jumps in as the hero who saves all of them. Together they defeat the monster and it's lying ready to be absorbed. However, a building has begun to collapse on top of Brigitte. Only Ben can get to her in time and shields her with his body, catching a large piece of Building just above her. As she's lying below him the two have a little moment. Ben clears the debris away and helps her up. He catches her in his arms like a dancer. Ben's heart is racing. This is the moment. Everything is going in slow-mo. He goes in for the kiss. He's almost there.

But then, Brigitte looks past Ben and sees Frank and Alison. She runs towards them, leaving Ben hanging in the air like a pillock. He watches in horror as Brigitte and Frank embrace and kiss, overcome with joy about their reunification. As Alison joins in they look like a family. A happy family. Ben however feels alone. Betrayed by the people he called his friends for so many lifetimes. In him his emotions are starting to boil like a kettle that is about to burst. Sadness hits him first: *"No... no... this is not how it's supposed to end. Not like this..."*; After that bargaining: *"Why... why do they deserve this... why do they deserve to be happy..."*; Then Anger: *"FUCK! GOD DAMNIT FUCK! FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK!"*; Then greed: *"I deserve this. I did all the work. I'm the one who's supposed to be happy! This is MY STORY! I GET TO WIN! I GET THE GIRL!"*; And finally, blind rage directed at his betrayer, Frank. He attacks Frank and gravely wounds him. Alison jumps in at the last second, stabbing away wildly at Ben with tears in her eyes. He grabs her, slams her into the ground and chokes the life out of her. Frank can only watch as his daughter is begging for her life. After a small snap Alison goes limp and her eyes lose focus. Ben snaps out of his rage just a second too late. Before he can say anything, Brigitte stabs him right through the heart from behind. Blood is gushing from Ben's wounds onto Alison's body. Ben falls to the side and as he lies dying, he is looking into Alison's lifeless eyes. Frank is holding her body and starts to weep bitterly. The last image Ben has is of a broken family. Frank and Brigitte crying together over Alison's body.

The next time Ben wakes up again in his bed he feels numb. He's thinking about what he just witnessed. He destroyed a family, just like he destroyed his own family. He feels empty. Alone. He finally became strong and powerful. And yet the woman he loved still didn't want him. *"Guess I'm even more unwanted than I thought. Even now everyone hates me. Can't I do anything right."* Ben lies in his bed, contemplating what he'll do from now on until he notices a dark shape lying on his couch move slightly. He approaches it carefully and finds a sleeping Alison under a blanket. But she has changed. There is a ring of red skin around her neck and small horns are protruding from her forehead. She wakes up and after a round of confused shouting from both of them they calm down and try to figure out why Alison is in Ben's apartment and why she can remember Ben killing her. Ben explains to Alison everything that happened up until this point, his powers, his dying and respawning and his relationship with Frank and Alison. She is skeptical at first but accepts it. Ben feels lost, but Alison knows what she wants to do. She wants to find Frank and Brigitte and save her family. However, the pair soon finds out that Alison's appearance has had drastic consequences on the world and Alison has powers too now.

ACT III

Where Ben has lived through the days of the apocalypse multiple times and previously knew what would happen usually, now with Alison's appearance he is lost in a new world all over again. On their quest to find Frank and Brigitte the two find out in an emotional reveal that Frank has become possessed and turned into a terrifying demon. They don't find Brigitte at all. Frank becomes the antagonist to the pair. He's hunting them and is growing stronger with every demon he defeats, just like Ben.

Alison is clearly distraught that Frank is now a monster and she is content on saving him however she can. She is pushing Ben to help her. But Ben is hesitant. He has been unsure about everything since the ordeal. However, Alison starts to talk sense into him. Even a 12-year-old girl knows that Ben is being an idiot. Ben gradually opens up to her and tells her that he has been alone all his life because he's weak and powerless. So now that he's become strong with the help of the demon power he should be deserving of love and friendship. This fear stems from his broken family. His father left as his mother became pregnant and she blames Ben for it. We also find out that Alison's mother died in childbirth, but Frank never blamed her for that, he just loved her even more. Over the course of third act Alison and Ben become friends and she makes him realize that he's not worthless and that he shouldn't let the past define him and blame himself for something he didn't do. Gradually Ben is finding his confidence again, and with the help of Alison they try to prevent stop the apocalypse right at the beginning. So that no one has to suffer anymore. Throughout the story it has become clear that the apocalypse has broken out at a research facility just outside of town.

The two of them defeat the last remaining bosses and arrive at day 0. They wake up to a bright blue sky and set out to the facility. On the way there the sky turns red; the apocalypse is starting.

They arrive at center of the outbreak, a portal spewing forth an endless stream of demons and red smoke. There they are confronted by Frank, their final obstacle, who has no humanity left in him and is fully demon. Ben and Alison are looking similar, with most of their bodies being demon and only part of their faces still

human. The three class for the final fight. All throughout the fight Alison is trying to reason with Frank but it seems pointless, he's too far gone.

The battle is fierce and tough. The pair is winning but are badly wounded in the process. A defeated Frank then suddenly starts pleading for his life, Alison is shocked by this and stops Ben from dealing the finishing blow, only to be stabbed in the back by Frank. Ben watches in horror as Alison's demon form is being sucked up by Frank, making him stronger in the process. Alison is lying motionless as the fight between Ben and Frank starts anew. Ben loses quickly to the powered-up Frank and his powers are getting absorbed as well. It looks like the end.

But just as the last of Ben's power is about to be gone, Alison grabs Frank's foot and whispers "Daddy, I know you're in there...". Frank hesitates, his last remaining bit of humanity is fighting back, giving Ben an opening to sever Frank's connection and absorb Frank's power. Alison is tending to an unconscious Frank. Ben goes to close the portal, but it would be suicide. Alison begs him that there must be another way. But Ben smiles and tells her this is what he has to do. The one useful thing he will do in his life. Saving his friends. So, he throws himself onto the portal and everything goes black. Ben wakes up again. At first, he's scared that it might not have worked. But he looks around and finds Alison is not there and his clock says that it's now day -1. A day before the apocalypse. He realizes this is his chance to save everyone. So, he heads out to the facility. There he channels all his Power into an explosion to destroy the facility. Everything goes black again.

He wakes up to the sound of wind rushing past his ears. He's been hurled a large distance by the explosion and lands in a field near a lone tree. Ben did it. He saved the world but he's dying. As he lies on the tree, knowing that all the friends he made are now able to live their lives in peace. But nobody will ever know what he did. He dies for the last time, a single tear rolling down his face.

Ben finds himself on a gray beach surrounded by fog with a small boat waiting for him. He knows what to do. He must go. As he enters the boat he stops. He looks back and decides to run into the fog. Ben wakes back up in his bed. Calm and peaceful. Ben gets to live and make friends with all the people he met in the apocalypse. He's finally happy.