

Aubrey Isaacman

## Enter Sandman

---

**NOTE:** Black text like this is description; [Blue text like this is player actions](#)

---

Before the game begins, players will [customize](#) their character: name, pronouns, body type, facial details, and clothing.

The game opens on a cut scene in which the newly customized player character comes home. They say goodbye to their friends at the door and head inside. They lie down facing the ceiling and drift off to sleep. The camera zooms in on their closing eyes and fades to black.

The player wakes up next to the watercolor lake. This place has a Salvador Dali-esque aesthetic, but the colors and steady flow of the water feel inviting with the calming atmosphere. This watercolor lake is an oasis in the middle of a dry desert. Once the player starts messing with the controls, the screen begins to shake ever so slightly. All of a sudden, a masked, cloaked spirit appears before them, floating on top of the lake. The colors swirl around excitedly and the bioluminescent underwater creatures light a path from where the player is to just in front of the spirit. The player [walks](#) up to the water and discovers that they can walk on the illuminated path to approach the spirit.

“I need your help,” says the spirit. “I need you to sleep and be safe.”

With those mysterious words, the spirit vanishes without a trace, except for the bottle of black sand floating above the lake. The player hears a harmonious melody come from the bottle and needs to [investigate](#). When they get closer, they touch the bottle and it shatters with a

powerful force. After the bottle shatters, the black sand floats in a beautiful swirling pattern for just a moment before it starts slowly sinking into the lake. All of a sudden, darkness takes over; darkness consumes nearly every trace of color in this world. The players can [try to stop the rest of the sand](#) from sinking but it's too late; every ounce of color is gone.

The sand swallows any trace of color or happiness, and tries to take the player with it. The player can [yell and scream](#) for help but nothing happens. They can [flail](#) and try to [fight the current](#) that's pulling them under. Nothing works and as the player falls into the lake, everything fades to black.

When the player opens their eyes again, they're in a strange underwater abyss. The player must [swim](#) around to find out what to do next. After a few minutes, the player sees the spirit again. The spirit is see through and looks more like a ghost now. The spirit repeats "sleep and be safe" before disappearing again.

The player continues [exploring](#) when they find themselves passing by small areas of bright light. These must be the bioluminescent creatures that created the pathway to walk on the lake! They look much uglier underwater than they did from the surface. The player must swim up to them and [touch them](#). This will trigger one of two things: a memory of their character from the waking world, or a memory of the mysterious spirit. If the player sees a memory from the waking world, an important [object from that memory will manifest](#) to help them on in this dream world. If the players sees a memory of the spirit, they'll [gain some boosts and new powers](#). After the player touches one of these creatures, the creature will become brighter and happily swim away, leaving some color in its trail. During this core gameplay loop, the player needs to interact with as many of these creatures as possible to bring light and color back, while learning about their history with the spirit.

As the player explores and interacts with creatures, they will eventually find an area that is well populated with beautiful lava and coral. While exploring this area, the player will discover new creatures. They're made of coral but the coral is just see through enough that they look like they're made of a rare glass. When the player goes to interact with these creatures for the first time, it begins very gently with lovely background music. After a few seconds, the creatures grab the player and try to absorb all of the color. The player must use their knowledge and new abilities/items to [protect themselves and defeat these coral glass monsters](#). Once vanquished, the monster will poof, spreading out the color it stole, and turn back into the black sand. It will then float all the way back up to the surface.

After this initial battle, the world begins to change. This is a dream after all; the areas the player used to know no longer exist. Now, everything is woven kind of like a mobius strip; it's almost impossible to tell where it begins and where it ends. The only way to [escape](#) is for the player to [survive the coral glass creatures](#) and all this nightmare realm has to offer, and [save enough bioluminescent creatures to discover the truth](#) about this place and why they're here.

However, the player must keep in mind that there are normal creatures and coral here as well. The player should [avoid hurting their environment](#) as much as possible. Each time the player hurts their environment, an innocent lifeform, or a bioluminescent lifeform, the screen will shake, more violently each time, and vision will become blurry for several seconds. The amount of times they hurt the things around them will affect the ending they get.

Eventually, the player will discover the last memory that will show them who the spirit is:

He is some type of Sandman who used to be human thousands of years ago. He dreaded sleeping because he was plagued with nightmares that became more difficult to face with each passing night. One day, he consulted a healer who reveals that he's a doorway to the dream realm. He was absorbing other people's dreams without knowing

it. She told him this was a great honor and would take great training. With time and patience, he would be her apprentice and become the next Sandman. He couldn't stand it. The thought of having to face just one more of these nightmares that weren't even his own drove him mad. He stormed off and took it upon himself to learn how to control the urge to sleep. He conducted scientific experiments on himself and began practicing black magic. He tortured his own soul for the sake of not becoming a monster, and he had failed. He eventually went on to transfer his urge to sleep so that he could stay awake forever while others slept for him.

Sandman had lulled nearly everyone into a deep sleep except for the healer and his twin sister. He threw all of his might into destroying the witch when he felt a suction from behind. His sister had trapped him in an intricate glass urn. He wasn't dead but this would keep him from hurting anyone. She took over as Sandman but know that her brother could still be dangerous. Unfortunately, the healer's wounds from battle were too great to heal. The new Sandman captured the witch's essence in an ancient talisman in the shape of an angler fish.

Now that the player knows all of this, the layout changes yet again and the coral glass creatures become bigger and more powerful. The player must [capture](#) the rest of the brother's sand by defeating these creatures. Towards the end, the player will have to defeat several boss level coral glass monsters. This would kind of work like the bosses in Yoshi's Crafted World in terms of timing when to do damage and when to heal/get more ammo. These fights should be some of the most beautiful scenes in the game: colors and darkness fighting for dominance in the background and throughout the monsters' bodies. The bioluminescent creatures will swim around in beautiful patterns to help back the player up and provide more light to fight with. The

player will also have the ability to send these creatures to fight the monsters while they find a place to hide. This is important because while hiding, the player can dream to conjure new items to help defeat the boss level monsters. These dreams will allow the player to conjure items from the waking world, or to conjure items from the healer. After this final one has been defeated, beautiful colors erupt from the center of the monsters and the monsters explode, sending gorgeous colors and lights everywhere; everything returns to its original beauty. The player floats slowly to the surface, watching the scenery heal itself after the battle. They find themselves again standing on the watercolor lake in front of the spirit, the Sandman. She takes off her mask and kisses the player. She then touches two fingers to the player's forehead, which sends them flying backwards, doomed to fall into the watercolor lake again. As they hit the surface, the player wakes up in their own bed at home. Relieved to be awake and alive, the player lets out a sigh of relief. All of a sudden, a familiar masked, cloaked figure suddenly emerges from the corner of the room. She takes off her mask, to reveal that she's the Sandman from the end of the player's dream, and says "Great work. Welcome to training, my apprentice."