

Title Page

## Concept Document:

Evergreen Eyes

### an immersive music experience

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Background: Writing on Scratch Paper

*2011*

Picture this: Taylor Swift has just released Speak Now, Carly Rae Jepsen’s “Call Me Maybe” is on the radio every other hour on the hour, “Hey Ho” is all the rage with the baby teenagers who think they like folk music, and Florida Georgia Line is still making decent country music. Every kid on the internet was collectively cringing over Rebecca Black’s “Friday.” Owl City was still cool. Somewhere in Louisville on a bedroom floor, an eighth grader with her first guitar is writing her first song with no clue how vital music was going to be to her existence.

*2014*

That girl sitting on her bedroom floor finds herself more often than not weeping on her bedroom floor, the only company she has her guitar and some scratch paper as she tries desperately to put her feelings into lyrics, hoping that it will somehow make sense. She is thriving off country music, Tenth Avenue North, musicals, and hundreds of YouTube covers. She doesn’t dare make her own, but she dreams of one day being known for going on The Voice or something equally bold.

*2017*

College is a weird experience, finding yourself the most difficult and beautiful thing you can do. There’s a class at Asbury University called Narratives. In it, the professor asks students at midterms to do a project called Make Something. That girl, now a communication major with a dusty guitar and a slight fear of anyone hearing her songs, asks the professor to if she can have a rubric for the assignment, more details than he’s given. He says, “sure,” and writes two lines on a document:

*Make something. Present it to the class.*

She has no idea what to present, but that professor has read some her lyrics, and he suggests performing a song she’s written. She sings in front of a class of nearly 40, terrified the entire time, but something in her wants to keep doing that.

*2020*

An international pandemic is definitely enough to spiral anyone into a depressive episode. Getting cheated on and breaking up with the guy the day before the national quarantine starts out of nowhere makes things marginally worse. That girl has one singular coping mechanism when she’s alone: write some songs. She planned on writing a few songs just to get through the few weeks of quarantine America was promised. What she didn’t plan on was writing an entire album and a half’s worth of break up songs she is proud of and wants to share with the world. On a sunny day in April, a friend suggests making an album, putting it on Spotify, and seeing what happens. So, the girl starts dreaming up hundreds of possibilities for the project.

2021: Evergreen Eyes, An Immersive Music Experience.

Evergreen Eyes

Evergreen Eyes is a multi-platform, immersive audio/visual storytelling experience, taking the user on an adventure from despair to hope and every feeling in between.

BPM: Premise and Purpose

Designed to immerse the user in a world of story-making, songwriting, and nearly a decade of memories, emotions, dreams, and disasters, the 15-track music album at the center of the entire project is intentionally ordered to take the listener on an emotional journey. Through the album, a novella and an interactive documentary—all housed on a website designed specifically for the website.

Evergreen Eyes is aimed at entertaining 16-25 year old females who enjoy indie pop and indie rock. The feel of the album is similar to NEEDTOBREATHE, Jordy Searcy, Taylor Bickett, Jake Scott, and BANNERS. The novella has a similar flavor as Sarah Dessen, Colleen Hoover, and Rainbow Rowell.

While the album is the primary narrative, the primary branches are comprised of the novella and documentary. The album is titled Evergreen Eyes, which will be the title of the album in the novella. The novella is titled *Strings Attached*, and will follow Shelby Carlisle, the well-known front woman of indie rock band Saint Denis, and her band partner, Jamie Clarke through writing their upcoming third studio album. The novella loosely follows events that lead to the songs I have written for Evergreen Eyes, fictionalizing true events to deepen the story and emotional worlds described in the tracks.

The documentary is aimed at the older segment of the audience, but it will appeal to the entire target audience. It will follow me and my brother as we write and record for the album, while also containing footage of interviews with both Cody and me, primary locations in which different songs were written, and general behind the scenes footage. In the documentary, we explain the premise of the Evergreen Eyes project and how the novella connects to the album.

Key: The Medium

Evergreen Eyes is written in three parts, two of which can stand alone. The documentary bridges the gap between the print-based and audio-based mediums.

The documentary also will serve as the highly interactive piece of the project. Users will have the opportunity to choose the order in which they view the documentary, choose-your-own-adventure style. After a short introduction to the project in the documentary, users will be asked to choose what they want to watch and learn about, acting as director and camera-man in the documentary.

Genre

Evergreen Eyes falls into the coming-of-age category of New Adult (NA) storytelling, an emerging genre that bridges the gap between young adult (YA) and contemporary fiction, created specifically for 18-25-year-olds (Kieffer, 2017).

The novella securely finds its footing in this category while the album spans a larger age range as it deals with emotions to which anyone can relate. However, the album will appeal more to teens and young adults as it wrestles with things like graduating college, dating, and finding yourself.

Audience & Market

Overview

According to Pew Research Center (2020), the oldest Gen Zers are going to be 24 this year. Many older Gen Zers refer to themselves as Zillennials—the micro-generation that graduated high school between 2012-2016 (Upton-Clark, 2020). This very specific micro-generation is the sweet spot demographic for Evergreen Eyes. This is both due to the nature of the material, the main novella character being a part of this micro-generation, and being part of the Zillennial generation myself.

Research is still being conducted about members of this generation, but there are several assumptions we can make about them, as well as several proven facts about Gen Z’s entertainment habits. In terms of music listening habits, Gen Z prefers playlists to albums, loves sad music, and discover music through online communities like TikTok and Instagram (ReverbNation, 2020). They become invested in stories and “vibes” very quickly, as well (2020). In terms of reading habits, Gen Z does prefer fantasy overall, but they also cite books like *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green and *Crazy Rich Asians* by Kevin Kwan as defining for their generation (Jensen, 2019).

Because of these trends, it can be confidently determined that Evergreen Eyes will appeal to the market segment chosen for this project. Additionally, the appeal of an album accompanied with a book will appeal to the TikTok generation because they can use the audio from the album as an audio on a TikTok behind a video talking about the book. BookTok, a popular segment of TikTok will be a specific segment to target (Steffen, 2020).

Comparables

While there are not many projects to compare Evergreen Eyes to, there are several different, popular projects that have inspired the project. With the popularity of these media projects, it is not difficult to assume the viability of Evergreen Eyes.

Musically, the album does function as a standalone. Similar albums include the storytelling style of Sam Mooney’s “Time Bomb,” and Relient K’s “Air for Free.” Both albums walk through emotions and orchestral-style movements. These albums do the same thing Evergreen Eyes attempts—bring the user into the emotional world of the artist while allowing them to draw their own conclusions and relate their story to the general storyline of the album.

The novella finds its inspiration rooted in Colleen Hoover’s new adult trilogy *Maybe Someday, Maybe Not, and Maybe Now* (2014, 2016, 2019) This novel explores the fictional world of a girl named Sydney as she becomes friends with a musician after she gets cheated on. Throughout the book, she writes several songs with him, which Hoover wrote in real life and had recorded to accompany the novel. The book was received well. With over 1.5 million streams to date, the accompanying album is a success.

Finally, the documentary is based in a concept found in a 2019 Tenth Avenue North choose-your-own-adventure music video in which choices were given after each section of the song to the user. The user was given the choice of where they wanted the band to go in Nashville to perform the next section of the song out of four choices. The music video has just under 55,000 streams, and the album reached #30 on the Christian music charts (Price, 2019).

Narrative Elements

Overview

The tone of the narrative is hopeful and centers around stories of redemption and hope. The songs on the album are ordered in such a way that the listener can understand the full extent of the story as it takes you through the middle of the protagonist’s seemingly good relationship, a brutal break-up, learning to love herself again, and falling in love a year later. The album walks through the last year of my life with common themes to which all listeners can relate. The plot of the story is completely worked out.

Plot Synopsis: Strings Attached

*Strings Attached,* the interactive novella, follows Shelby Carlisle and her music partner Jamie Clarke as they are trying to write their third studio album, Evergreen Eyes. Shelby and Jamie are dealing with a rough bout of writer’s block due to Jamie’s inability to keep a girlfriend and Shelby’s legalistic fiancee, who does not support her music career to the extent Jamie would prefer. To make matters worse, their bassist just quit the band.

Enter Scott Drake: the new bassist for Shelby and Jamie’s band Saint Denis. Quickly, Shelby starts to fall for him, despite her engagement. However, things are not as they seem as slowly, it becomes clear Jamie has been in love with Shelby since she tripped over his worn-in converse on an open-mic stage in Nashville, Tennessee the first time they met. As the reader navigates their story, the constant question in the back of their mind won’t be answered until the very last page: will Shelby ever realize the love she so desperately craves has been tripping her up this whole time.

The user will be invited to further experience Shelby and Jamie’s love story through the songs and demos on Evergreen Eyes: the album.

Plot Synopsis: Evergreen Eyes, the album and accompanying documentary

Evergreen Eyes begins where any good story should end: a girl in love with a boy that picked her out of everyone in the world. The album starts with the track “Prior Engagement,” detailing the seemingly infallible relationship between myself and my ex-boyfriend. Immediately following, “Burn,” tackles the first hurdle of the breakup that started the day before the 2020 quarantine. “Use a Friend,” “Lifeline,” “Down to the Water,” and several more songs navigate a horrible spring and summer mourning the loss of love and loss of the world, while also discussing getting cheated on, and eventually lead into, “jon,” “blue,” and title track, “evergreen eyes.” These three songs tell the story of falling for my current boyfriend through conversations with both Jesus and my best friend Jonathan, as well as a few other people.

“Lucky One,” “Poets,” and, “Drive Me Wild,” continue this story of falling in love, declaring boldly that there is hope after deep betrayal. “Take Your Time (Addi Mae),” the penultimate track of the album, is written to my little cousin and tells the story of an, “island on the sea,” at which we spend our summers. It is what I wish I could tell my 14-year-old self about love and life. The final song on the album is a cover of “It’s You I Like” from Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood, a beautiful song dedicated to liking everything about a person’s personality rather than what they have or with whom they associate.

The documentary tells this story through significant places and people that played a large role in both the novella and the album.

Tone

The project is an experimental, coming-of-age romantic comedy story of a girl falling in love, getting broken, and healing all over again—all mixed with a bit of humor and a whole lot of Jesus. The tone is redemptive, hopeful, and bittersweet as our main characters fight their inner demons to find themselves on a joyful other side of pain.

Interactive Elements

Users will be able to engage with the album and novella simultaneously by listening to the songs as they are “written” in the novella. Users will be able to navigate from the novella to the album in several different ways. If they are consuming the print version of the novella, they will be able to scan a QR code on the bottom of the page. If they are consuming an ebook, they will also be able to scan the QR code or click a hyperlink. If they are reading directly from the website, they can listen via pop-up windows straight from the text.

Within the documentary, users will be able to choose which plot points they see first (within reason), acting as director, editor, and cameraman.

Characters and POV

POV

The POV of the novella will be first person from the perspectives of both main characters, Shelby and Jamie. The novella will primarily, however, focus on Shelby’s perspective.

The album has many POVs because of the nature of the songs. Some are written in first person, some in third, and a rare demo is in second person.

The documentary POV is mostly first-person because you are functioning as the camera-man, and I am speaking directly to the viewer.

Characters

Within the album and documentary, characters include:

**Sydney**: Me, the main character of every situation I find myself in, but mostly the main character in the album.

**Rusty Riley**: the subject of “burn” who cheated on me at the beginning of quarantine. The album was going to be called “These Aren’t Love Songs” because of him.

**Cody**: my brother and producer

**Sean**: my therapist and subject of “Use a Friend.”

**David**: my current boyfriend and the subject of the title track, “Evergreen Eyes.”

Within the novella, characters include:

**Shelby Carlisle:** Louisville native who got her big break after nearly breaking her neck on Jamie’s shoes at an open-mic. She is in a manipulative relationship with a man named Patrick. Shelby correlates with me in the story.

**Jamie Clarke**: Shelby’s band partner. He has been wearing the converse Shelby tripped over every time they perform for four years. They are his good luck charm. Jamie *hates* Patrick. Jamie correlates to both Jon and Cody in the story.

**Patrick Nelson:** Shelby’s awful boyfriend—yes you *are* supposed to hate him. He’s the worst. He genuinely does not want what’s best Shelby. He correlates to both Rusty and my other ex-boyfriend Jake in this story.

**Andy:** Saint Denis’s producer; tries to get Shelby to leave Patrick for their new bassist. Heavily correlates to Cody, my brother.

Structure and Interface

Starting Point

The two starting points (the novella and the album) invite the reader into an unknown world of heartbreak and healing, following Save the Cat beat sheet rules for conflict and resolution. The user will, ideally, feel the main characters’s experiences and apply their own life to their world.

The end point will begin with the documentary, which explains the story world and walks through the characters in the novella and to whom they relate.

Structure and Navigation

The project will be strutted in “tracks,” both on the album and in the novella. Rather than chapter 1, 2, 3, etc., chapters will be divided into tracks. There will be certain tracks that will be split into their song elements in the novella (verse one, chorus, bridge, etc.,) to denote which portion of the song the reader is participating in, prompting them to either continue reading or pause to listen to that portion of the song.

The user will navigate the novella’s use of the songs by either saving the spotify playlist, scanning the QR code found on the bottom of the pages of the novella, or simply clicking a hyperlink found in the text of the ebook. There will be an explanation on the back of the physical album, as well as the first page of the novella, indicating the experience in which the user is about to partake.

Storyworld

Setting and Locations

The major settings of the album and the documentary include Nashville, my brother’s recording studio, my old church,Quills Coffee (the, “coffee shop on St. Matthew’s Avenue,” as mentioned in the song “where it started.”), and my college campus. Ideally, the documentary would feature these places prominently, allowing users to explore them in depth through interviews with both myself and other characters appearing in the documentary and on the album.

The novella mainly takes place in Nashville, Tennessee. Important landmarks include: music row (where Liv’s fictional record label, Top Hat, resides), Liv and Ainsley’s little yellow house on Chestnut Street, and the fictional coffee shop “Nest” that is based on real-life coffee shops Anzie Blue and Honest Roasters. Top Hat is a place of immense stress for Liv; it is where the inciting incident of the novel takes place. Other notable locations in the novella include the Ryman, The Canary Ballroom, and Franklin, Tennessee.

User Engagement

While it seems as through the user does not completely engage in the project in the same way one would in the video game or other highly interactive media, users actually have many opportunities to interact with the content.

First, users will be able to navigate to and from the novella and the album through interactive QR codes and/or hyperlinks in the print and e-book versions of the book, respectively. If the user is reading the novella on my forthcoming website, they will be able to listen to the songs in pop-up windows without leaving the novella, allowing them a seamless transition between page and song. Users will also be able to navigate the documentary through scene choice as described throughout this document.

Users will be able to eventually become members of the website, allowing them access to member-only content, place-saving capabilities in the novella, and the ability to be the first to learn of any new editions to my discography, bibliography, and other projects I have coming down the line. This feature will also allow users to financially support my recording another album, should that be something the audience desires and something I am able to do.

In Conclusion

The Evergreen Eyes project was created to be an immersive, music-based storytelling experience which invites both the casual music listener and the melomaniac alike into the story of the 12-song, debut album from me, Sydney Olivia. It allows the user the opportunity to go beyond listening to a few tracks on an album; instead, it allows them the opportunity to dig deeper into the storyline and get an all-around “feel” for the “vibe” of the project. Although the chosen market segment for this project may feel hesitant at first to jump into something so deep, based on their involvement in other projects, there is no doubt it will find its way to the perfect niche of users.

The project brings a completely new meaning to music, and it invites users to step behind the curtain, offering a little something extra to any viewer or listener who may want to experience something new and exciting but has no idea where to start.

All you need to do is listen with strings attached.

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