

## Before I Forget

Cultural depictions of dementia usually evoke a mix of fear, revulsion and gloom. It's portrayed as a heart-wrenching brand of illness that eats away at one's identity, evoking fears of losing ourselves to our own deteriorating minds. As a tale centred around someone suffering from early onset dementia, a brilliant scientist named Sunita, *Before I Forget* doesn't stray far from these representations. But rather than painting her as passive to a frightening illness, the game centres on something much more significant: Sunita's eventful life.

*Before I Forget* has you rummaging through Sunita's belongings, scattered about the apartment she shares with her spouse, Dylan. As Sunita, you begin by searching for her glasses, her blurry vision focusing on the Post-it notes reading 'Find Dylan' plastered near the entrance. Interactions with various paraphernalia, from Sunita's profile on an issue of a science magazine to a sky chart detailing constellations pinned on a bedroom wall, reveal more about her: her career as a cosmologist, anecdotes about life with Dylan and hints at her earliest struggles with dementia. As you learn, colours seep into the once-drab furnishings, mirroring the slight revelations (and the relief of recognition) Sunita experiences every morning. Unexpected twists, however, threaten to derail

*Before I Forget* is a brief affair – a shorter runtime suits such an emotionally intense game. A useful addition from the developers is a note that recommends players finish it in a single hour-long sitting

**Developer/publisher** 3-Fold Games  
**Format** PC  
**Release** Out now



### MEETING OF MINDS

To better capture the reality Sunita has to confront every morning, Bristol-based micro-studio 3-Fold Games (comprised of Chella Raman and Claire Morwood) consulted medical professionals from UK-based nonprofit organisation, Gaming The Mind. The developers are also working with Alzheimer's Research UK to raise awareness of dementia this September. The research and partnerships have paid dividends: this game encourages players to empathise with those who are living with mental illnesses, without diminishing their experiences.

these routines. One such is a frantic hunt for the toilet; when every room is awash in the same grey, monotone shades, the task becomes difficult and distressing.

Yet Sunita's dementia isn't just a plot device to explain the gaps of knowledge around her memories. Her experiences, as she struggles to comprehend her circumstances, are bound up in your own understanding of her illness. There's the sinking feeling that something dreadful has taken place, even as Sunita herself remains unaware of what that is. This insight you have over her only deepens the melancholy, and *Before I Forget* latches onto this tension as Sunita's reality unfurls through the artefacts and spaces of her home. What does it mean to see hoarded, uneaten tins of peaches, or congratulatory emails, dated years ago, left unanswered? What's left unsaid only underscores the game's central tragedy.

Despite the grim subject matter, *Before I Forget* isn't just about the pains of living with dementia; it's a deeply emotive tale that highlights an extraordinary life. Which is why its final chapter feels so disconcerting, even if framed as a statement about the toll dementia can take. Take this as a spoiler warning – the finale may be triggering for those with a history of, and tendency to, self-harm. It's a disappointing move away from what makes much of *Before I Forget* so compelling: its rejection of a well-worn depiction of dementia, and nuanced portraiture of a life richly lived.

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