Game Creation: Design Document

Bloodlines of Fate: The Sacred Succession

Ming Sun (1008369294)

Rui Sun (1008329140)

Pengjun Long (1007211349)

Department of CCIT, University of Toronto

CCT311H5F LEC0101

Instructor: Alex Chalk

Date: October 9, 2024

Introduction

Game Vision Statement:

Bloodlines of Fate: The Sacred Succession is an immersive role-playing board game that explores themes of power, equality, and self-awareness. Players will navigate a rich narrative set in a continent torn by ideological conflicts between three distinct nations. Through strategic choices and character development, players are challenged to question their beliefs, navigate complex social dynamics, and influence the game's ending based on cooperation, betrayal, and individual goals.

Game Objective Statement:

The primary objective of this game is to guide players on a journey of self-discovery and challenge their perceptions of power and ideology. Through role-playing and decision-making mechanics, players will confront collective ideologies, explore moral dilemmas, and reflect on the relationship between power structures and equality. The game emphasizes strategic cooperation or betrayal, encouraging players to explore the trade-offs between collective interests and personal goals. Ultimately, the game aims to evoke a deeper reflection on authority, individual choice, and societal values.

Overall Story:

Bloodlines of Fate: The Sacred Succession takes place on a continent divided between three ideologically opposed nations: the authoritarian Caldean Kingdom, the egalitarian Falor Theocracy, and the nomadic Nagari Tribe. The story begins just before Caldean's "Sacred Lion Succession Ceremony," an event shrouded in secrecy that solidifies the royal family's power. Leo Caldean, a former prince who fled to Falor after learning the truth about his family's deceptive use of power, now faces the difficult choice of revealing the truth or risking a war. Meanwhile, the radical Edric Noth gathers intelligence to expose the Caldean

royals, and Khal Amir, leader of the Nagari Tribe, wrestles with whether to ignite a rebellion or protect his people from the looming danger of the royal bloodline.

Players embody characters caught between personal loyalties and larger political forces. As they navigate this complex world, they face decisions about cooperation, betrayal, and their evolving beliefs. With a focus on self-awareness and ideological conflict, the story challenges players to question their values and consider the consequences of power, authority, and societal change. Through exploration, dialogue, and critical choices, players ultimately shape the fate of the continent and influence the game's ending, reflecting the delicate balance between individual action and collective outcomes.

Minimum Viable Version:

To ensure the project is feasible within the given timeframe, the game will initially focus on a streamlined version, referred to as the "Minimum Viable Version". This version includes three core player characters (Alfred Caldean, Elias Caldean, and Selena Noth) and three explorable locations (Village, Swamp, and Inn). Players will experience two possible endings, based on critical decisions made throughout the game. By concentrating on this core version, the fundamental themes and mechanics will be fully developed, allowing for expansion later while ensuring the core gameplay experience is polished and functional.

Self-Discovery, Authority, and Choices in Game:

- Challenging Authority and Self-Reflection:
  The game encourages players to gradually question their character's beliefs and challenge the dominant ideology through carefully crafted narrative revelations and character interactions. The game mechanics prompt players to reflect on their own

values as they navigate these moments, fostering a deeper, more introspective worldview.

- Collaboration or Betrayal:

  By enabling the exchange and withholding of information between players, the game sets up a dynamic of strategic cooperation and conflict. Players must navigate choices of trust and betrayal, weighing personal objectives against group interests.

- The Power of Decision-Making:

  Through voting systems and branching narrative choices, the game emphasizes the significance of player decisions in determining the story's outcome. With multiple possible endings, the game mirrors the complexity of self-discovery and the far-reaching consequences of character choices in different scenarios.

Game Background

World Setting:

The game takes place on a continent composed of three nations: the Caldean Kingdom, the Falor Theocracy, and the Nagari Tribe.

Caldean Kingdom:

Caldean is an absolute monarchy located on vast plains. The nation's structure is divided into nobles (royal family), commoners, and slaves.

Noble blood is considered supreme. The first king promoted the belief that noble blood held special powers to better control the population. This belief in the "blood of the king" is the foundation of Caldean's power.

Every twenty years, Caldean holds the "Sacred Lion Succession Ceremony" in its capital, Yalma, to strengthen the people's belief in the royal bloodline, thus solidifying their rule. During the festival, the king passes the throne to the next heir, and the secret of the bloodline is known only to the current king and the new king on the day of the ceremony.

The game takes place ten days before the "Sacred Lion Succession Ceremony."

Falor Theocracy:

Falor is a religious nation founded by people who separated from Caldean hundreds of years ago, unable to accept its authoritarian rule.

Falor is located in a desert region, separated from Caldean by the River Alda. Its doctrine is "equality for all," leading to a tense relationship with Caldean and constant border conflicts.

Falor is led by a pope and two ruling figures.

- Pope August: Believes in the principle of equality, where everyone should be treated equally. Most of Falor's people are former Caldean commoners or slaves who fled due to unfair treatment.
- Edric Noth: A radical egalitarian who commands the battlefield, firmly believing in Falor's ideals. He has witnessed the oppression caused by Caldean's belief in noble blood and has developed a new doctrine: "All are equal except the Caldean royals, who must atone for their sins." Although Edric despises the Caldean royal family, he knows his views conflict with those of the pope. Hence, he secretly gathers intelligence on the royal family, planning to reveal the truth about their bloodline to incite internal conflict in Caldean and launch a "Great Holy War."

- Leo Caldean: The former prince of Caldean who discovered the secret of the royal blood during the last "Sacred Lion Succession Ceremony." Unable to accept the deception of the people for power, he fled to Falor with his son. Leo became one of the rulers of Falor due to his exceptional leadership. He supports the doctrine of equality but fears revealing the truth about the bloodline might lead to war. Edric suspects Leo's true identity and constantly undermines him, limiting Leo's actual power.

Nagari Tribe:

Nagari is a nomadic tribe founded during a slave rebellion in Caldean twenty years ago.

Tribe leader Khal Amir led the rebellion to escape slavery when his daughter was about to be born, unwilling to see her live a life of servitude.

During the last "Sacred Lion Succession Ceremony," a prince's defection caused a breach in Caldean's defenses, sparking Khal's escape and igniting the slaves' uprising.

Khal now vows to free all slaves, but he fears the power of the royal bloodline and worries for his daughter's safety, so he has not launched an attack. The tribe has lived in hiding in the Nagari Woods in southern Caldean, becoming a legend to the younger generation on the continent.

Player Character Backgrounds
- Alfred Caldean:
  Son of the current Caldean King Edwin III, destined to succeed the throne at the upcoming ceremony, believing firmly in the sacred power of the royal blood.

- Elias Caldean:

  Leo Caldean's son, who internally struggles between his duty to his family and the pursuit of true equality.

- Selena Noth:

  A top member of Edric Noth's intelligence network, loyal to him yet questioning the contradictions in Falor's ideology.

- Arya Amir:

  Khal Amir's daughter, committed to helping her people without taking pride in her lineage.

- Gareth Reynolds:

  A young elite of Caldean's royal guard, unwavering in his belief in the royal blood and dedicating his life to its protection.

Game Flow Overview

The game consists of multiple stages, each involving exploration and decision-making.

Players will gradually uncover their character's background and explore the game world, ultimately influencing the storyline.

Stage 1: Introduction and Self-Presentation

- Reading Character Booklets:

  Players see a "no turning pages, please see here first and talk to other players" message in the booklet to make sure all players are on the same page.

  Players read the initial content of their character booklet to understand their background, including:

  ➔ Who they are and where they come from.

➔ Why they are here today and who the other people present are.

➔ Their goals and what they need to hide.

➔ Information is revealed gradually, ensuring a slow story progression.

● Self-Introduction and World Setting Exchange:

Players introduce their characters to each other, sharing as much information as possible to build relationships. The purpose is to deepen the understanding of the world and establish interactions among characters.

● Choosing a Location to Explore:

➔ Players select specific locations to explore, like "Village," "Swamp," or "Inn," which are displayed on cards.

➔ Each card provides a description of the location and NPC interactions that may hint at character secrets.

➔ Players can choose to share or keep this information secret to drive the narrative.

Stage 2: Major Decisions

● Reading New Booklet Content:

Based on the exploration, players read the next section of their character booklets to continue the story.

● Group Decision-Making:

➔ Players vote on collective actions based on the new scenario, which influences the story's direction.

➔ Discussions and persuasion among players are encouraged to shape the game's outcome.

● Executing Actions:

Depending on the vote, players turn to the appropriate page in their booklets to continue the game. For example, if players choose to "explore the deserted station", they will turn to the corresponding page to continue the story.

Stage 3: Repeating Exploration and Decision-Making

Cycles of Exploration and Decision Making:

- The above exploration and decision-making process is repeated about 3 times, each time with new locations and new decision-making situations that drive the game's plot to branch and evolve.
- The cycle of exploration and decision-making repeats, leading to different story branches and evolving character relationships.

Special Choices and Endings

- Special Choices:

  Certain characters may trigger special choices under specific conditions:

  ➔ Spy character: Decide whether to betray the group.

  ➔ Royal heir: Choose whether to reveal their identity.

  These choices can significantly affect the game's storyline, leading to different endings.

- Endings:

  ➔ The main conclusion is determined by the major decisions made at each stage.

  ➔ Special choices may also alter the overall story's direction.

Key Game Mechanics

- Staged Script Reveal: the game is divided into multiple stages, each of which gradually unlocks plot and personal goals for the player based on their character's background. Each stage's plot reveal is progressive, gradually increasing in complexity and depth.

- Exploration and Clue Collection: The player explores different scenes to obtain clues. These clues help players understand the story context and make decisions.

- Choice and Divergence Points: At the end of each stage, the player is faced with choices to decide what to do next. These choices influence the direction of the game's story and generate different plot branches.

- Character Interaction and Strategy: Players can exchange information, conceal facts, or strategically cooperate with each other to advance their individual goals or reach collective goals.

- NPC and Location Cards: Depending on the player's choices, specific NPCs or location cards will be triggered, and these cards affect the player's actions and story development.

- Voting Mechanism: At decision points in major plot branches, players vote on where to go next, thus making collective decision-making an important part of the game.

- Multi-Ending System: Based on the players' choices and interactions, the game has different endings that are influenced by the characters' individual and collective goals.

Scope and Feasibility

Minimum Viable Version:

To ensure the feasibility of the project within the given time frame, we are focusing on a streamlined version of the game that retains the core mechanics and narrative, while simplifying the overall complexity. The initial version will include:

- Three key player characters instead of five: Alfred Caldean, Elias Caldean, and Selena Noth. These characters represent the central ideological conflict, allowing us to focus on developing the core narrative and mechanics.

- Three explorable locations instead of multiple: Village, Swamp, and Inn. This will allow us to maintain depth and detail in each location without overwhelming production and design efforts.

- Two possible endings based on major player decisions, rather than multiple endings. This will streamline the narrative while still giving players meaningful agency in shaping the story.

- Core card mechanics for exploration and interaction will focus on essential NPCs and locations, with fewer cards to simplify playtesting and production.

Gradual Expansion Plan:

Once the core version is complete and tested, additional characters, locations, and endings can be gradually added to enrich the game experience. This approach ensures that the core mechanics and narrative are polished and functional before expanding the game's scope.

Assets

Script:

- A complete script for each character, including individual backstories, reasons why the characters come together, and multiple stages of plot content.

- Detailed descriptions of the different stages of plot branches.

- Descriptions and trigger conditions for the different endings.

Cards:

- NPC Cards: contains the background, action logic and conditions triggered in the game for each NPC.

- Location cards: Used to describe the environment information, explorable contents and hidden clues of different scenes.

- Event cards: used to trigger special events that change the direction of the plot or interactions between characters.

- Voting Cards: Used to support the design of mechanisms for players to vote at key plot points (serial number/XO cards)

Scene Map:

- Contains player-explorable areas and key point labeling.

Character stand-ups and visual designs:

- Visual designs for each character. Draw a picture of each character to make it easier for players to identify themselves.

- Visual elements for NPCs and important locations to increase game immersion.

Scope and Accountability

- The breakdown of roles and responsibilities for each member of the group is clearly indicated.

There are three members in our group, Pengjun Long (PJ), Ming Sun (Cassie), Rui Sun (Rita). In game design, PJ is good at brainstorming and providing inspiration, so he is responsible for providing innovative ideas for the game content and adding some interesting stories. Cassie is good at extending and diverging ideas provided by team members. For example, after determining the main story of the game, she will enrich and improve the story. Rita is very careful and good at sorting out and reviewing game content. She can help us find out what doesn't make sense in the story and offer suggestions for improvement.

Since this is a board game, we also need to provide the player with all the story in the scripts. Therefore, the PJ is responsible for breaking the story line into different scripts from different player perspectives. Cassie needed to organize and typeset the content of these scripts so that every player could understand their character and story after receiving them. Rita needs to print out these scripts to check for problems and wrap them. For the cards, PJ is responsible for creating the text content, Cassie is responsible for providing innovative ideas and typographic beautifications of the text, and Rita is responsible for checking whether the content of the cards is reasonable. The team will work together in the library to design the game map, including the map's locations and graphics.

In the homework that requires writing a paper, we will write the corresponding content of the game report according to the game part that we are responsible for. We will discuss and confirm together before we finish our separate parts.

- Accountability procedures are clearly communicated and actionable

We communicate with each other through WeChat. We build a chat group, and all of our group members should be active during every discussion. We also use WeChat voice calls to organize some meetings to discuss the tasks and group assignments. We will organize meetings every week to make sure our jobs and duties are well distributed. The fairness of the distribution of work depends on the amount of work each person completes. We will try to make the amount of tasks done by each team member not too different, there will not be a situation where one person does a lot of

work, but the others are very leisurely. At every meeting, we ask our team members if they have completed their assigned tasks on time. We will make a summary of the completed tasks and consider what we need to do next week. If we have a difference of opinion or disagreement in our work, we will discuss it immediately and come to a non-controversial result.

● The scope of the game is plausible within the time constraints of the project

Since this is a group project throughout the semester, we have plenty of time to make our board game as perfect and detailed as possible. During this week's meeting we decided on the theme and the general storyline of the game, and our time was well spent. So, every week in the future we will push the design process forward in meetings. First, we need to design the main story and setting of the game over the next two weeks. Next, we will improve the game's feeder. From 11.27 we need to show the showcase demo, so we plan to finish the preliminary game design on 11.17 and check if there are any major issues. We need to complete the review and revision of the final stage of the game after the showcase of the demo. By the end of the week we need to complete the game video and submit it.

Schedule

Week	Dates	Goal	Tasks
Week 1-2	October 9 - October 22	Finalize the main story and setting	- Brainstorm and outline the game's storyline - Create character profiles - Assign tasks
Week 3-4	October 23 - November 5	Develop game mechanics and gameplay feeder	- Define game rules and objectives

			- Create a prototype of game mechanics
Week 5-6	November 6 - November 17	Complete preliminary game design	- Refine game mechanics - Develop physical components draft - Internal playtesting
Week 7	November 18 - November 24	Revise and finalize the showcase demo	- Analyze playtesting feedback - Polish demo for presentation - Prepare showcase materials
Week 8	November 25 - December 1	Showcase demo and final revisions Finalize and present the complete game	- Present demo on November 27 - Collect feedback - Complete final revisions - Record and edit video - Submit game video on the end of the week