Noire Game Design Document

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Summary

Noire is a 3D indie RPG, where you play as Nilo, a Dreamer with a troubled past, who was taken to the Dream World and find their mysterious friend, the Fellow Dreamer, somewhere in the depths of the Dream World. It's a story-heavy game with a focus on exploration and combat, set in a surreal, dream-like world. Throughout the game, Nilo will have to overcome their fears and face their past, growing as a person, before they can find the Fellow Dreamer.

Story

Nilo is a young adult, who has been struggling with anxiety, and later depression, for a long time. They had a hard time connecting with others, with only the Fellow Dreamer approaching and befriending them in their early childhood.

Note: The Fellow Dreamer's name is currently undecided and a WIP.

The Fellow Dreamer was a very energetic and outgoing person, who always stuck with Nilo and tried to help them overcome their issues. The Fellow Dreamer dreamed of becoming a famous adventurer, and later discovered that they had the ability to stay lucid in their dreams, allowing them to explore the Dream World. They would often tell Nilo about their adventures in the Dream World, and Nilo would listen with great interest, though they didn't quite believe that the Dream World was real.

Over time, Nilo and the Fellow Dreamer grew apart, as the Fellow Dreamer became more invested in their adventures, and also frustrated with Nilo's lack of progress in overcoming their anxiety despite their efforts to help them. Nilo, on the other hand, felt the Fellow Dreamer was becoming more distant and was worried that they would leave them behind. The unresolved tension and lack of communication between them eventually led to a falling out, causing Nilo to become more withdrawn and the Fellow Dreamer to turn to the Dream World to escape their problems.

The Fellow Dreamer, distracted by the falling out, made a mistake in the Dream World, and was trapped by a Nightmare in the lower layers of the Dream World. In the real world, they fell into a coma, unable to wake up. Nilo, having heard about the coma, researched many ways to help someone wake up from a coma, but to no avail. Eventually, they gave up, and moved on with their life, though they felt guilty and regretful about the falling out.

Note: The reason for the Fellow Dreamer being trapped in the Dream World is subject to change, as it can play a big role in the story.

Many years later, Nilo, now a young adult, is struggling with depression, and has been having strange dreams. One night, they wake up in the Dream World, having been pulled in by the Fellow Dreamer, who is still trapped in the Dream World. They find a note, left by the Fellow Dreamer, telling them where they are, and that she is stuck in the lower layers. Nilo suspects that the writer of the note is their old friend, but doesn't get their hopes up.

Nilo sets out to explore the Dream World, hoping deep down that they will find the Fellow Dreamer, and that they can make up for their past mistakes. Throughout their journey, they will have to face various enemies, which represent Nilo's fears and regrets, and overcome them, growing as a person through the process.

Characters

Nilo

Nilo is the player character, a young adult with a troubled past, who has been struggling with anxiety and depression for a long time. Their personality is somewhat shy and reserved, leading them to have few friends throughout their life.

Their appearance and gender are purposefully kept vague, so anyone can relate to them. They are a silent protagonist, and their personality is mostly revealed through the journal entries they write throughout the game.

The Fellow Dreamer

The Fellow Dreamer is a energetic and cheerful girl, the only friend of Nilo in their early childhood. She has grand dreams of becoming an adventurer and exploring unknown lands, and is very passionate about it. She is also very caring and tries to help Nilo overcome their anxiety, though she is not very good at it.

At a young age, she discovered that she could stay lucid in her dreams, and discovered the Dream World. So far, no one else she knew could do the same, so she kept it a secret to everyone but Nilo.

Svartskogen

The Handler

Enemies

Lantern Fly

A literal 'lantern' fly. Represents Nilo's fear of bugs. A minor fear that they can easily overcome.

Does melee attacks only. Weak, but can be dangerous in groups.

Moves:

- Claw Attack: The lanternfly attacks with its claws. Short range melee attack.

Eyeball

A floating eyeball. Represents Nilo's anxiety. A major issue in their life, and a stronger enemy. Stronger versions of this enemy can be found in many proceeding levels in the game.

Does ranged attacks (eye laser). Bit hard to dodge, later versions might have shorter warning before attacking, attacking faster, melee attacks, and so on.

Bat

Feral Cat

Thorny Plant

Moves:

- Eye Laser: The eyeball shoots a laser. The eyeball flashes before doing so, and will stop moving a moment before it attacks.

Setting

The Dream World is a mysterious realm that connects all humans together, created by the collective unconscious of humanity. When people fall asleep, they enter the First Layer of the Dream World, at their mind's island, which is shaped by their subconscious mind. Usually, people are not lucid when they enter the Dream World, and stay in their island to experience their dreams. However, there are a few who are able to remain conscious and aware of their surroundings, called Dreamers. They are able to leave their island and explore the foggy sea of the collective unconscious that surrounds it, roaming the many layers of the Dream World.

Long ago, the Dream World was a vibrant, living and breathing world, full of creatures born from imagination and the kingdoms they built. All of humanity was once able to truly Dream, and walk the Dream World as Dreamers. However, as humanity grew and developed, new technologies and ways of life arose, and old ways were forgotten. Humanity chose to focus on the Waking World, and slowly, the Dream World was forgotten. The Dream World began to fade and crumble, as it faded from humanity's collective memory. The creatures of the Dream World disappeared or changed, and only ruins of the past remained. Fewer and fewer people were able to Dream, and the Dream World became a lonely, empty place.

As Nilo goes deeper into the Dream World, what they encounter will become less and less familiar and specific to them, and more fantastical and abstract, as they enter the collective unconscious. This allows the

game to explore Nilo's personal story, while not being limited to it, and also allows for more creative and surreal environments and creatures.

Message

A core message of the game is moving on from the past, and accepting change. The Dream World was once a wonderful place, now in ruins. Some of the creatures of the Dream World are still stuck in the past, unable to accept the change that has happened, and are still trying to live in the past. But only by accepting that the past is gone, and moving on, can they begin to rebuild a new home.

This is also reflected in Nilo and the Fellow Dreamer's story. Nilo is stuck in the past, their anxiety causing them to be consumed by their past mistakes and regrets, unable to move on until they accept that the past is gone, and that they can't change it. The Fellow Dreamer, likewise, is stuck in the past, being unable to move on from their falling out with Nilo, and is unable to accept that they can't change the past. Only by accepting that the past is gone, and moving on, can they both begin to heal and rebuild their friendship.

Levels

Level 1: Solura Valley

This area represents Nilo's early childhood. The Svartskogen, an NPC made from the memory of Nilo's childhood toy, can be found here, as well as a scene from Nilo's childhood. There are three areas:

- Solura Path: A cobblestone path leading down a grassy valley. Stone ruins half-buried in the ground litter the landscape.
- Solura Cliffs: Across the valley is a cliff, houses built into its sides. In the houses, scenes from Nilo's childhood can be seen.
- School House: A twisted version of Nilo's middle school, dredged from unpleasant memories, stands at the end of the valley. Dark hallways and unpleasant memories adorn the school. An unpleasant encounter lies inside.

Gameplay

The gameplay of Noire is similar to the indie game Hades, with a fixed camera angle, attacking with a melee weapon, and dashing to avoid attacks.

Dream State Mechanic

A core mechanic of the game is the Dream State mechanic. If the player dies while in the Deep Dreaming state, they will appear in their last save point again, but in the Lucid state. Now, they have less health, and have to kill the enemy that killed them to be in the Deep Dreaming state again. If they die again, the game ends.

Art

TODO: Explain art style and how it changes with certain mechanics and story events.

Sound and Music

TODO: Explain sound design and music style.

UI and Controls

TODO: Explain UI and controls.