# 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, waking up in the Dream World and seeking to find and rescue their friend, Florence, the Fellow Dreamer, somewhere in its depths. This is 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 face the mistakes of the past, whether theirs or others, and grow as a character.

# Story

Nilo is a young adult, struggling with anxiety, who had trouble connecting with others. Their only friend was Florence, a cheerful, outgoing girl, who approached and befriended them in their childhood.

Florence had a strange ability to always stay lucid when she slept, and exploring her dreams led her to discover the vast, mysterious Dream World. Having dreamed of becoming an adventurer, she was elated at the discovery, and sought to explore the depths of the Dream World.

Excitedly sharing her discovery with others, she found that no one else seemed to know about the Dream World or believe her, dismissing her tales as made-up stories or the vivid imagination and dreams of a child, all except for Nilo. Nilo was fascinated by her stories and happy to have a friend, and Florence was excited to have someone who believed her, and so the two quickly became close friends.

Florence, ever ready to help someone, noticed Nilo struggling with anxiety and was happy to help take the lead when Nilo couldn't speak up. But as they grew up, she realized that her attempts to help Nilo was only stifling Nilo's growth. She tried to gradually let Nilo handle things on his own, but Nilo mistook this as Florence being frustrated at their lack of improvement and trying to distance herself from them.

Nilo took this very hard, feeling abandoned, and their anxiety only worsened. This culminated in a confrontation with Florence, where they accidentally lashed out at her, telling her that she was leaving them for her make-believe world. Florence was hurt and betrayed, as Nilo was the only one to have believed her about the Dream World, and stormed off.

Florence, feeling angry and hurt, went to the Dream World to escape from the confrontation. Unfortunately, her distracted state led her to be defeated by a Nightmare in the Dream World, trapping her there and falling into a coma in the real world.

Meanwhile, Nilo, having cooled down, realized their mistake, and went to apologize, only to find her in her comatose state. It was a devastating discovery, and Nilo was filled with guilt, believing to have caused this to happen somehow. Years passed, and Nilo lost hope that she would ever wake up, regretting that they could not make amends with Florence, leading to their anxiety worsening, and feeling depressed.

Many years later, Nilo, now a young adult, mysteriously wakes up in the Dream World after falling asleep, and soon realizes where they are, finds out what happened to Florence, and sets out on a quest to find and rescue her.

# Characters

# Nilo

Nilo is a shy and anxious young adult, filled with regret from their many past mistakes. As the player character, Nilo will journey across the Dream World, facing the mistakes of their past, resolve their regrets, and grow as a person.

Many details are kept vague about them, so anyone can better related to them.

# Florence

Florence is Nilo's childhood friend, and seems to be the only one who can explore the Dream World. She is a cheerful, outgoing girl with a penchant for helping others and a dream for adventure. Despite no one else believing her, she is determined to find the truth about the mysterious Dream World only she can see.

# Svartskogen

A giant, talking stuffed bear, that was Nilo's childhood toy in the real world. A gift from Florence, it was a source of comfort to Nilo as a child. In the Dream World, it once more provides comfort as it cheers Nilo on and takes care of the Bedrock Plains.

# The Handler

A mysterious figure who Nilo encounters at various points in their adventure. He occasionally gives Nilo advice and guidance, but his true motives seem unclear.

He once traveled with Florence for a time, having been a friend of hers before she was trapped in the lower layers of the Dream World. He is determined to restore the Dream World to its former glory, and is eager to get Nilo to rescue Florence. He might not agree with Nilo's decisions if the player chooses to take certain paths.

# Enemies

## Lantern Fly

A large fly with a lantern as its body, representing Nilo's fear of bugs. It is a minor fear that they overcome early, on, indicated in Nilo's remarks in the journal entry. Multiple versions can be found in various levels.

## Eyeball

A floating eyeball, representing the (perceived) stares of judgement that Nilo is anxious about. It is a major issue in their life, and a more difficult enemy. Only after a while do they overcome this

issue, indicated Nilo's remarks in the journal entry. Multiple versions can be found in various levels.

## Origami Bat

An intricately folded origami bat, with glowing red eyes. It hides in the rafters and dark corners of the Schoolhouse (Level 1). It represents the bullying Nilo received in school, which wasn't the worst, but was still impactful.

## Feral Cat

A small, unsettling, and vicious cat, staying still until seen, where it will attack at shocking speed.

## Thorny Plant

# Setting

The Dream World is the dreamscape of humanity, the dreams and nightmares of all given form. It is the place where you go when you sleep, and experience your dreams. Those who hold on to their dreams are able to explore the Dream World, and are called Dreamers. They wander the many layers of the Dream World, shaped by imagination and the collective unconscious of humanity. There Dreamers may find the Dream Folk, born from the dreams of humanity, and the Nightmares, born from the fears and anxieties of humanity.

Once, the Dream World was a vibrant, living and breathing world, where the Dream Folk built their kingdoms and prospered. All of humanity was once able to walk the Dream World as Dreamers. However, as time passed, more and more people began to abandon their dreams for the demands of the real world, and were unable to Dream. With less and less Dreamers, the Dream World began to be forgotten and fade away. The fog began to spread across the Dream World, like an old memory becomes foggy and details are distorted or forgotten. The Dream Folk were consumed by the fog, twisted, changed or disappeared. Their kingdoms fell into ruin as the Nightmares began to overrun the Dream World. Fewer and fewer people were able to Dream, and the Dream World became a lonely, empty place.

# Levels

## Level 1: Solura Valley

Nilo's island of consciousness, floating in a sea of fog. Themed after Nilo's childhood, it has a nostalgic, yet melancholic feel to it.

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 four initial areas:

- Bedrock Plains: A small area in the edge of Nilo's island of consciousness. The walls and floor of Nilo's bedroom, drawn from their memories, lie strewn about the area. It serves as a hub area where some NPCs can be found as the player progresses through the game.
- Solura Path: A cobblestone path leading up to 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.

There are also several side areas, unreachable until certain abilities or items are obtained:

- The Bridge: A forlorn, broken bridge that descends down into the fog sea, leading to level 2. A dash ability is needed to cross the gap in the bridge.
- Shadow Cave: A dark cave near the Schoolyard, blocked by a shadowy monster. The monster can only be defeated with the Lantern, which can be found in Level 2.
- Clifftop: The top of the Solura Cliffs, needing a grappling hook to pull an unreachable platform closer to the player to access.
- (Name TBD): A small area, where an elevator shaft can be found. The elevator is unlocked in Level 2, and allows fast travel between the two levels.
- Shorelines: A secret area, only accessible with some key item (TBD). A small, peaceful beach, where the the island river turns into a waterfall. A small, hidden cave can be found here, with a secret item inside.

## Level 2: University Ruins

Below Solura Island, in the foggy sea of the Dream World, lies the University Ruins, the second level of the game. The theme of the level is college, and the areas are drawn from Nilo's memories and experiences from that time, though somewhat more distorted and abstract than the first level. Deeper in the Dream World, the surroundings are no longer drawn from just Nilo's memories.

The level is divided into several areas:

- University Grounds: The only open area in the level, right in front of the Entrance Hall. Here, Nilo will face a scripted boss fight with the Counselor

- Entrance Hall: A large, well-decorated and tidy entrance hall. A hub area, leading to the Collapsed Library, Dark Maze, and Counselor's Office. Well-lit and organized, like Nilo's initial outlook on university
- Collapsed Library: A convoluted path of hallways and room leads to the library, initially a large open space, but growing smaller and more claustrophobic as Nilo progresses. A parkour segment is here, where Nilo will have to run and parkour as the library collapses behind them. This section represents Nilo's collapsing mental state
- Burned Maze: A maze of hallways and interconnected rooms, dimly lit and dilapidated. Various sections of the maze appear to have been burned in the past. The Lantern can be crafted here. This section represents Nilo's feeling of being lost and burnt out
- Counselor's Office: The final area of the level, where Nilo faces off against the Counselor again and defeats him.

# 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.

# 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.