

Design notes from 11.04.2020

We want to use Scene Fusion program, but first we should also solve Github issues. This is also not a long term solution

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Developer story

Team Bonsai

The developers of this game, named “Team Bonsai” met on an online board while discussing how to improve a shooter they love. They then decide to make a better shooter of their own.

Bonnie (female) – The Solo Dev

Programmer from the U.K.

Solo dev until now, first time working in a team

Sometimes causes some conflicts because she makes decisions of her own

Nicolai (male) – The Idea Machine

Game Designer from Russia

19-24 years old

A machine for ideas

Very happy go lucky, but his unrestrained access to design when Sandra leaves leads to feature creep

Sandra (female) – The Veteran, and later The Traitor

Game designer from Germany

33 years old

Worked in a large game studio before

Went indie for creative freedom but wants control over the project

At the beginning, sees indie as a chance to realize her own visions without anyone else interfering

Shares best practices and established workflows with less experienced team members

Experienced, but therefore closed to new ideas

Also too harsh with criticism and calls it “honesty”

Leaves between stages 2 and 3, because one of their parents dies, later cuts down content from feature creep

Alejandro (male) – The Gambler

Artist from Argentina

Designed some game characters in the past but never thought he could make money out of it

Has a safe day job, works on the project in his free time

Quits his day job during the development and puts all hopes on the project

Projects his own commitment onto the team and expects everyone to be as involved as he is

Iver (male) – The Player

Artist from Denmark

Loves to play games and knows a lot of them, never worked on one before

Obsessed with bringing references and Easter eggs into the game

Learning about game development starts ruining playing for him

All characters should have a seemingly valid reason to become the traitor, so as to keep the player guessing who it is

Characters will also not be voice acted

In-game story

Percival (the protagonist, and player controlled character) seeks for hidden knowledge lying deep within the Gods of Virtues' palaces

The God of Patience has done a (yet to be defined) unholy/unvirtuous act, and is therefore vanquished from the pantheon of gods. Their punishment is to be sealed within their own weapon, a bow and arrow.

Now the God of Patience seeks revenge (The sin attached to patience is wrath), and it will aid the player in clearing through the palaces, betraying with this act his own kind further. The God may also communicate with the player from within the bow.

At the absolute end of the game, the player will obtain the hidden knowledge, but may choose to divulgate it or to burn it against the bow's wishes

Under discussion: which virtue should own and defend the first palace, and what mechanics does its boss have?

Under discussion2: What did the traitor god do?

Couldn't wait for an event

Somehow linked to other human to mirror traitor story

Level Design

Question for Artists: Do you want the player to start outside the building? And what is this building surrounded by dirt, water, air?

To make it recognizable that the player is traversing the same level but in different stages of development, it is important to have some important scenes/environments in a specific order

Some moments we'd like to explore: (tutorial-ish section, fight drones over bridge, maze, boss fight)

Challenge: It's hard to draw plans on paper for games with a lot of verticality

General Guidelines:

Introduce players to DevNotes from very early on, in a safe environment

Have alternating zones of action and exploration

A bunch of new (albeit unfinished) areas open in stage three, only to shut by stage four

There is no need to backtrack, or to leave the building where you entered from

Example of what the sequence of events for player in first stage could be like:

- Player is outside of building, in a safe zone. DevNote/s are in initial field of view to the side of the screen
- Player sees glowing beacon in distance on top of a tallish pillar (bow and arrow) jump up little obstacle and then on top of ascending pillars to reach the bow and arrow
- DevNote after pillars saying “Hey do you really think players will notice the bow and arrow on top of the pillars? Like, what if they don’t pick it up? If they don’t they’re dead”, in the next iteration the floor will be removed to force player through the pillar path
- After a short walk introduce stationary enemies. DevNote “Hey, I’m not shooting anything, is this thing even working?” answered by “yeah, don’t worry. It’s invisible for now. We’ll add the fancy shooting graphics later

Player Mechanics

Bow and arrow(s)

Holding down the mouse button charges the next arrow shot.

A longer wind-up time is translated into an arrow that travels faster or is affected less by gravity, the end result should be an arrow that stays aligned with your crosshair for a longer distance (this effect caps). A longer wind up time may also translate into the amount of damage the arrow deals.

Your own arrows may not hurt you

The basic arrow type has infinite ammunition

For stage 1 we’re happy with a non gravity projectile with no windup

We should see how Horizon Zero Dawn does it

Dash

With the press of a button the movement speed of the player increases drastically for a very short period of time.

This ability has a short cooldown and doesn’t interrupt bow windup or shooting.

It may not however be used in midair

This ability will be introduced in either the second or third stage of the game

Health

Since the virtue of the traitor God is patience, the player may heal themselves by meditating for a little while

When the player holds a button for a little bit the screen fades to black. The health UI stays visible however. The health bar fills back up during meditation. During meditation the player may not move or shoot. To quit meditation the player needs only to release the button.

The "health bar" is just an int on the UI at the first stage

Checkpoints

Are invisible to the player and placed by us (the designers).

You God Mail!

The Traitor God, now trapped in their own bow, may communicate with the Player, but this communication is one-sided

We're not sure: Either Gameplay pauses or text is on screen while you continue playing

Enemies

Enemies have a cone of vision they use to detect the player

If an enemy is hit however, after a short delay, the player is automatically detected.

Grounded

Should they be able to move? Yes, maybe not in stage 1

then they should probably low levitate or use a ball like BB8 from star wars



Flying

Movement patterns:

Patrolling: drone flies in a (predictable) pattern, patrolling around an area. Once a player is detected it will switch to chasing mode until player is out of range, promptly returning to its patrol.

Chasing: drone follows player until they're at a set distance from the player (or less)⁷

(Chasing is not finished yet)

Random Withing Area: drone has a 3 dimensional area assigned to them. Every (random number between 2 assigned ints) seconds the drone receives a new "objective point" within this area and starts flying to it (the countdown to next objective point is not active until the objective is reached). If a player is detected the drone start shooting at it, but its movement pattern is unchanged

Enemy attack

All drones will have a visible windup before shooting at the player

Types of attack

Regular

After a short windup shoot a projectile in the player's direction (taking vertical position into account)

Triple

After a slightly longer windup shoot a projectile in the player's direction, and 2 at a slight angle

Sniper

Drone draws a ray and aim towards the player, after a short amount of time the tracking/aiming stops and a sound warning plays, after this short warning a raycast deals a big amount of damage to the player

Take a look at Jedi: Fallen Order drones

Boss

In the first stage it will be just regular enemies that are enlarged and have more HP or deal more damage

The boss of later stages will have a mechanic linked to the God's virtue and sin.

DevNotes direction for first stage

Detailing missing features, lore, and ideas for the future: “and here will be a cutscene where the goddess Anul’tora speaks to Percival (the player)” // “We really need some other kind of enemy. It doesn’t matter how many there are, this is getting old”

Little **subtle** teaching moments: “are you sure it’s ok to make design decisions with the game looking this... bleak?” “Don’t worry, we’re just trying to see what’s fun and what isn’t” // “This is the max fair jumping distance, please use this whenever the player needs to jump across platforms”

Silly comments about how the game currently looks: “OMG that little turretboi looks like a lil caterpillar cuuuteee” “Can we make turrets our pets or something?”

Warning about bugs: “Hey for now don’t use the left path, something went wrong and they don’t have hitboxes. I’ll patch it later” - Programmer

Establish developers, don’t focus on relationships yet

What is the purpose of a prototype like this? What do you get out of it?

Rough direction of the game, current intentions, and differences between individual visions

How do artists comment on first stage?

- What will things turn into?

- Concept art and mood board goes into level as sprites, DevNotes close to it explaining intentions

Programming?

- What went into prototype?

- What bugs have to be fixed?