Open Design Questions - Lars

1. Who are the developers? What are their relationships?

Team Bonsai

Bonnie (female) – The Therapist

Programmer from the U.K.

Solo dev until now, first time working in a team

First one to sort out interpersonal conflicts and calm down heated discussions

At the beginning, causes some conflicts because of too quick decisions

Nicolai (male) – The Gambler

Game designer from Russia

Designed some games 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

Sandra (female) – The Veteran

Game designer from Germany

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

Aurelio (male) – The ???

Artist from Spain

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

2. Who's the traitor? What made them quit?

Went absent during the crunch phase

Had to look out for their very sick child

Team is totally cold towards them when they return despite saying that they understand it

Hoped it would get better over time, desperately wanted publisher to sign it so they'd have a steady income for their child's treatment

Just a couple of days before the pitch, team informed them that they no longer feel comfortable working with them

Traitor releases all versions to show the public how they've been treated

3. What is the underlying game story?

3.1 Who are the gods?

Machines, rather than persons

Carry special weapons (like the sci-fi bow)

Sometimes walk amongst humans but should never interfere with what will happen

In reality, they do but hide it from the other gods

Each one resembles a Christian virtue

Patience

Now banned

Did not wait to see how human will handle disease but prevented it

Bow fits patience, aim carefully and then release

Chastity, Temperance, Charity, Diligence, Kindness, Humility

Their flaws are about breaking the virtue they resemble

3.2 What exactly is the player doing?

Fighting their way through each level to reveal flaws of another god

Following the call of the bow, not really sure why they're doing it themselves

3.3 Who is the player character?

Curious human being, not important for the game

Called to this place by the bow

Follows their instructions to find out about the other gods

Respawn could even mean a new human finds the bow

3.4 Where does the bow come from?

God who owned it is no longer a god

Helped humans avoid a catastrophic disease

As punishment, they were sealed inside their own bow

Managed to teleport to the place as revenge hoping a human would pick it up

Equipped with this godly weapon, a human could destroy the protectors and unveil the information that shows other gods are equally flawed

3.5 What is the place about?

Hall of Records or The Observatory

Surreal place where knowledge about gods is stored

Nobody knows who is creating the knowledge, it just appears in this place

Gods can't destroy the place so they send their minions (drones) there to protect it from humans who might find it

Each god has their own department (level) in this place

4. What should the level be like?

Visually distinct landmark visible from early on to show it's the same level

Going down

Matches idea of diving into a person's secret

Makes fights early on easier because you have the high ground, later the chance is higher that you'll be attacked from above

Ensures players see large parts of the level early and recognize it's the same

DevNote you can't miss at the start to teach players

Alternating phases of action (combat) and rest (exploration)

Most DevNotes are placed in areas that focus on exploration

Some large areas opening up in stage 3 must be cut in stage 4

Boss fight at the end

5. How do health and combat work?

Depends whether arrows need to be shown on the HUD

Screen effects could distract from aiming and shooting

Developers could start with screen effects and come back to a standard health bar later

Cool artistic idea in the beginning but in the end, it's replaced for something more legible

Way of showing how art always impacts gameplay as well

Players often wonder why seemingly cool ideas didn't make it into the final game

6. What are the DevNotes in the first stage about?

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

Ideas for the future

7. Will there be a choice for the player somewhere in the game?

Only in the very last stage

Player gets the information after beating the boss

Can decide whether they take it out of the building or keep it there to keep the illusion alive for the public

Bow urges player to take the information with them and make it public

Resembles the meta-decision of the players to share the leaked versions with other players