***Backalley Alchemist***

***Design Document***

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**Introduction**

**Game Summary Pitch**

Backalley Alchemist is a Puzzle/Turn-Based combat game meant to give the player the feeling and experience of being a detective alchemist in an Urban Fantasy. The player will be faced with supernatural and paranormal cases, long forgotten by the masses and rarely witnessed by them, that they need to solve using concepts of mythology and alchemy-based magic.

**Inspiration**

* The Dresden Files: the main inspiration for the setting of the game. This book series provides the inspiration for being a wizard detective in modern day society solving supernatural cases using magic, magical and mythological knowledge in a world where the supernatural is something that only the very few unfortunate come in contact with.
* Supernatural: very similar to The Dresden Files, the game draws the same inspiration for solving cases using knowledge of the supernatural on a case-by-case basis.
* Fullmetal Alchemist: its alchemy power system mainly utilizing the concept of equivalent exchange is the other main inspiration for how this game is meant to handle its magic/alchemy power system.

**Player Experience**

The core gameplay loop the player will experience consists of the following phases:

* Analysis Phase: The player is given a case or a problem that provides only the most basic and necessary information. By analysing the information given, the player can conclude the cause behind given case/problem and move to the next phase.
* Preparation Phase: The player can prepare their upcoming equipment that will aid them in confronting the case/problem in the next phase. Preparation can include tools, crystals, potions and weapons
* Confrontation phase: The player will head to the location of the case with the confrontation taking either the form of a puzzle or combat instance that requires the knowledge the player has accumulated to solve.

This gameplay loop will be wrapped in a story-telling environment meant to give the player a deeper and real feeling experience in the world of the Backalley Alchemist. A diverse cast of hand crafted personalities will form a staple in the daily life of the player, having them interact with each other and progress through the stories each of them are fated to live.

**Platform**

The game is developed to be released on Windows PC with potential Mobile release in the future.

**Development Software**

* Unity for Game Development (planned switch to UE5 for educational purposes)
* Clip Studio Paint / Asesprite for Sprites and Graphics
* FL Studio / Audacity for Audio and SFX

**Genre**

Singleplayer, Puzzle, Turn-Based RPG, Urban Fantasy, stor-rich

**Target Audience**

Due to the nature of the setting and the mechanics leaning more towards complexity, this game is meant to be for people who are fans of the Urban Fantasy genre and those who are fans of any of the above-mentioned inspirations. Dynamic difficulty and accessibility is planned to support the game’s accessibility and reduce the strain of its inherent complexity

**Concept**

**Gameplay Overview**

NEW!

The player will take on the role of the Observer, overseeing the fate of an alchemist detective who, on the surface, runs a small back-alley bar. The bar is merely a cover-up for his secret paranormal detective service.  
Guests will provide the player with paranormal incidents that the player will have to analyse using the information given by the client to figure out the cause of case. After deciding on the cause, the player will be able to prepare the necessary tools and equipment needed to solve the case.   
  
Based on the case, the client will have to solve puzzles and/or fight the supernatural using their alchemical and mythological knowledge.

During downtime, through the eyes and actions of the alchemist, the player will interact with different characters who each have their own unique stories to tell and lives to live.   
Example of these characters are

**Theme Interpretation (Shadows and Alchemy)**

The Urban fantasy, secret paranormal society aspect of the setting symbolizes the “shadow” aspect of the theme, while the hidden/forgotten knowledge aspect of the case-solving and the equivalent exchange and transfiguration aspect of both equipment/tool preparation and combat provide the Alchemy aspect.

**Primary Mechanics**

**Analysis-Phase:**

Using information provided by NPCs to determine the cause of a case, the player will have access to a “Bestiary” in which they have a basic collection of entities, their features and characteristics, strengths, weaknesses and tactics, giving clues for the player to get to the root of the problem.

**Preparation-Phase:**

Based on what the player has concluded to be the cause of a case, the player can now prepare tools and equipment using alchemy-based magic by combining materials to create crystals, potions and weapons. Each of these items will have strengths and weaknesses. In addition to the player having limited carry capacity for their missions, they will have to think about their choice of loadout and equipment.

**Confrontation-Phase:**

The Confrontation Phase can take three different shapes:

* Fighting: turn-based combat with the entity where the player uses their prepared tools and equipment to defeat the entity.  
  Damage will be based on the type of magic or equipment the player uses and how these interact with said enemy strengths and weaknesses.   
    
  THEORETICAL IDEA:  
  The combat will be semi-turn based, as in switching between choosing/planning the next set of actions (such as trap planting, casting, transmuting, attacking, … etc.) followed by actually performing the planned actions in real-time.
* Extermination/Exorcism: a puzzle based minigame where the player needs to apply their knowledge of an entity to rid of them in a non-hostile manner.
* Trapping: a mixture of the other two shapes where the player can apply their knowledge of the entity before initiating combat to either weaken the enemy or give themselves a substantial advantage in the upcoming battle.

**Secondary Mechanics**

**Mythological/Alchemical Research and experimentation:**

The player will be able to obtain new knowledge, from both clients and in game 3rd party sources such as hidden vendors and book merchants, or experiment with the materials they gathered/bought to try and create new equipment, weapons or potions.

**Intelligent Familiar**

The player will have a companion familiar that will keep track of new knowledge and information the player gains while aiding them in both the analysis and the confrontation phase. The familiar is meant to function as an aid for the player, as well as an always present character for the player’s character to interact with and converse about the in-game relevant topics.

**Tertiary Mechanics**

**NPC Relations:**The player will interact with a couple of special, fixed NPCs on a regular basis. Through these interactions, the player will increase or decrease their relationship to said NPC, until a certain relationship threshold is reached, at which point a special interaction will occur, unlocking unique questlines and/or story events.