**Basic Outline**

**What do I want the game to be?**

* Action-oriented turn-based RPG
* Steampunk Setting
* Elements System (5?) w/ weaknesses and strengths
  + Unattuned
  + Water (Weak Electric, Strong Fire)
  + Electricity (Weak Nature, Strong Water)
  + Fire (Weak Water, Strong Nature)
  + Nature (Weak Fire, Strong Electricity)
* The right mix of goofy weirdness and heartfelt/tearjerking moments (basically an earthbound-like).
* There will be no actual magic within the game (aside from the elements). Humans will be inventive about finding ways to harness them (such as balthazar’s elemental mind projection helmet, or Danielle’s water rapier)
* Lesser number of hard fights, buffs matter, make sure that it’s not just A Button Simulator
* Overarching themes: the effects of war, environmentalism vs progress, mental health, disease
* Personifications of life and death
  + **What’s my hook?**
  + **What’s my home?**
* Battle theme starts with a factory whistle
* Item system where supplies are very limited and only certain characters can use the
* Techniques increase the more you use them
* Cinder and Bal can permadeath
* Could have it you can “buy abilities” with limitations based on stats

**Mechanics Ideas**

* Equipment will stay the same throughout the journey, but you will be able to tinker with them with upgrade parts you find in a very steampunk fashion.
* Battle system will be real time action, with combo moves like chrono trigger.
* Characters will unlock certain upgrades to techniques based on the stats they decide to level up
* Dungeon ideas
  + Bal’s Mother’s Mind
  + Quarantine Zone
  + A battlefield
  + Electric Zone Factory (which you blow up) (You revisit it later in the game, after strategizing with the Mom. The player can select different routes they wanna take in order to infiltrate the building.)
  + Forest (retrieving balthazar)
* Somewhere halfway-3/4s through the game, a big nuclear-type weapon strikes the heart of the nature nation. We see a cutscene of people we’ve come to know throughout the game holding each other close, as they know this is the end.
* Relationships with each other can rank up due to dialogue options and working together and such. Goes from 1-5, with a "secret" 6th rank for dating. Might replace the player treatment with this one. When you hit rank 3 with two character, you unlock a new combo ability, which upgrades at rank 4 and rank 5. At rank 6 you get another combo ability. When you get 3 characters all at rank 4 with each other, you unlock a triple combo ability.
* Danielle becoming a better leader
* Balthazar killing himself after he loses his family to the bomb (too dark?)
* Each character has their own button during menuing, such that you could technically use all of their abilities or attacks very close to each other

**Lets flesh out this battle system**

**Stats:**

* Strength: Scales damage of basic attacks
* Constitution: Scales HP and damage reduction
* Intelligence: Scales damage of Attuned techniques, as well as lowers tuning time
* Agility: Scales accuracy and evasion
* Speed: Scales the action meter speed
* Luck: Scales critical hit %

**The Action Meter:**

* Every character and enemy has an action meter. This replaces a typical turn-based scenario with one of real-time, including menuing.
* This bar will scale with the Speed stat of a character. At base level, it starts as 5 seconds for every character. Every point in speed will decrease this amount by 1/70th of a second (rounded up to the nearest 10th). This means that at level 50, with a perk in speed, the average action bar time is going to be 2.1 seconds.

**Leveling up:**

* When a character levels up, they gain 2-4 points in a Perk stat, 1-3 points in normal stats, and 0-2 points in a Derp stat. The player will also get 1-5 “free points” that they can spend on whichever stat they want.
* There will be no explicit level cap, but at the end of the game I would expect the characters to be around level 50, so final stats would be something like 200 for perks, 150 for normals, 100 for derps.

**Using Techniques:**

* Characters will have attuned abilities that require a short wait after using to “retune” their magical item. This is the replacement to resources like “mana.”
* The length of time this takes is calculated very similarly to the action bar, except that it will be decreased by Intelligence instead of Speed.
* Characters will be able to combine certain techniques with each other. (Like Cinder and Danielle using Steam Guard)

**Balthazar Plainstrider**

* Nature Attuned
* Healer
* Anxious and world-weary, Avoids conflict
* Human Treebeard
* Life Backpack (cool)
* Perks: Intelligence, Strength
* Derps: Luck
* Green tunic with lots of light brown straps, pale skin tone and black emover w/ green highlights. Golden eyes.
* PTSD
* Wants to cure his mom.

Balthazar has a tragic past. When he was little, his mother fell to severe mental illness, and tried to kill him. His other mother saved him, but was scarred afterwards. While his mother was sent to an asylum, and the other was recovering in the hospital, Bal had to tend to his younger brother and sisters, still recovering from his own personal trauma. Once his she had returned home, Balthazar swore to explore the world, and find a cure for his mother’s ailment.

Balthazar’s mother’s mind will be a dungeon within the game, through some sort of Nature-Healy magic. Within will be heartbreaking scenes from Bal’s past, including the one where he is almost killed, which is when this will be revealed to the party (maybe we don’t know who this woman is?). Fighting their way through, the party will come across the force controlling her (demon/illness/whatever) and fight it off. The thing will claim to kill his mother if he is destroyed, and the fight will have a gimmick around it gaining control of different party members (but never Bal). Slight fakeout death with the mother, but she’ll get up and look noticeably younger/healthier. To cap off the arc, there’ll be a tear-jerking scene between the two mothers, with some “catching up to do ;)” near the end to leave it on a cutesy high note.

**Bal Mechanics**

**Battleshock:** When Balthazar damages an enemy, he is stunned for one action. This increases to two actions if the enemy dies. He is immune to this effect if he spent the previous action affecting an ally.

* Wood Pummel | Life | Unlocks with Strength: Deals 60/70/80/90/100% Intelligence as water damage to target enemy.
* Cure | Life | Unlocks with Intelligence : Heal Target Ally by 20/40/60/80/100% of Intelligence
* Restore | Life | Unlocks with Constitution: Remove 1/2/3 debuffs from target ally.
* Accelerate | Life | Unlocks with Luck: Target ally gains 10/20/30/40/50% agility for 3 actions.
* Overgrowth | Life | Combo w/ Danielle at Rank 3: Heals all allies by 50%/75%/100% of the average intelligence of the two.
* Tea Time | Unattuned | Combo w/ Danielle at Rank 6: Increases the speed of all allies by 25% for 3 actions.
* Experimental Surge | Electricity | Combo w/ Archibald at Rank 3: Target enemy is stunned for 2/3/4 actions, or all enemies for 1 action.
* Helm Overcharge | Life | Combo w/ Archibald at Rank 6: Take control of an enemy for 3 rounds.
* Hay Fever | Fire | Combo w/ Cinder at Rank 3: Target enemy is sickened for 3/4/5 rounds.
* Supernova | Unattuned | Combo w/ Cinder at Rank 6: Remove all statuses and debuffs from all allies and transfer them to enemies.

**Cinder Glade**

* Fire Attuned
* Tank/DPS
* Hotheaded and impulsive, serious
* Enraged Mechanic
* Literally Chandra from MTG
* Fire Gauntlets
* Big Plate Armor
* Perks: Constitution, Strength
* Derps: Intelligence
* Fiery orange hair, styled like one large lick of flame, dark skin, piercing purple eyes. Short, slightly stocky build, mostly muscle. Freckles.
* Dyslexic, ADHD
* Gets her arm cut off at some point
* Wants a sense of purpose

Cinder will be a powerful sorceress, able to deal devastating AOE fire attacks… as long as she wasn’t hit the previous battle round. If Cinder gets hit (even for zero, but not missed), she will not be able to do anything except melee attack, but she will do 1.5x(?) damage while enraged. It wears off the next turn. Cinder can taunt so that each enemy has a 100% chance of targeting her, or parry so that every attack misses her for a turn. This is intended to be a complex mechanic to keep players on their toes, and should reward them for strategizing rather than punish them for getting hit.

Cinder will be the starting character of the game. At first, she’ll start off as unattuned, but Archibald will give her an invention (fire gauntlets or something) that’ll start her journey as a fire mage. Somewhere near the middle-end of the game, Cinder’s arc will conclude with her gaining better control over her rage, which mechanically will allow her to cast offensive spells as well while she is enraged.

**Cinder Mechanics**

**Enrage:** Whenever Cinder is dealt damage, she enrages. This causes her attacks to deal 50% extra damage, but she cannot use any techniques.

* Taunt | Unattuned | Unlocks with Constitution: Causes target/each enemy’s next 1/2/3 attacks to target Cinder.
* Parry | Unattuned | Unlocks with Strength: The next 1/2/3/4/5 attacks targeting Cinder trigger a free attack action against the attacker, doesn’t trigger enrage.
* Flaming Uppercut | Fire | Unlocks with Intelligence: Deals 60/70/80/90/100% Intelligence as fire damage to target enemy.
* Flame Shield | Fire | Unlocks with Luck: Target ally gains a 10/20/30/40/50% defense buff.
* Heat Bomb | Fire | Combo w/ Danielle at Rank 3: Deal 35/55/75% Intelligence as fire damage to all enemies.
* Steam Guard | Unnatuned | Combo w/ Danielle at Rank 6: Each ally gains a 50% defense buff
* Strategize | Unattuned | Combo w/ Archibald at Rank 3 | Unlocks with Luck: Archibald can predict target enemy’s next action with perfect accuracy, or meek can predict each enemy’s action with 50/60/70/80/90% accuracy. Then, target ally gains a shield that reduces the next attack of the predicted element’s type by 30/40/50%.
* Nuclear Fission | Fire | Combo w/ Archibald at Rank 6: Target enemy takes average Intelligence in fire damage and target ally gets a 40% boost to all stats for 3 rounds.
* Hay Fever | Fire | Combo w/ Balthazar at Rank 3: Target enemy is sickened for 3/4/5 rounds.
* Supernova | Unattuned | Combo w/ Balthazar at Rank 6: Remove all statuses and debuffs from all allies and transfer them to enemies.

**Danielle Seahawk**

* Water Attuned
* Swashbuckler (quick dps)
* Damien But Female, Cocky, For-Fun
* Will eventually Get It with Cinder
* Water Rapier
* Deep cut pirate outfit
* Perks: Agility, Speed
* Derps: Strength
* Will start off as an intermediate (and somewhat reluctant) antagonist
* Long, deep purple hair styled into a loose braid, olive skin, brown-eyed girl. Tall, slender.
* Wants Archibald back, then wants to come along with him.

Danielle is from an old crime family, going back generations. She is currently next in line to become don. This makes her cocky, arrogant, and a bit of a showoff. The journey I want to see Danielle go on is one of maturing, still keeping some of her boisterous nature, but having it become more toned down in place of good leadership characteristics.

Due to their natural weakness to electricity, the water people were the first to be attacked by the electric people, being taken under their rule. The Seahawk family made a deal to be subservient to one of the noble houses, the Von Wagonbagons, allowing them to keep a majority of their autonomy.

**Danni Mechanics**

**I’ve Got Rhythm:** Chaining together Danielle’s actions causes her damage to decrease by 6%, but her speed to increase by 10%. Stackable up to five times.

* Water Jet | Water | Unlocks with Intelligence : Deals 60/70/80/90/100% Intelligence as water damage to target enemy.
* I’ve Got Music | Unattuned | Scales with Agility: Consume up to 1/2/3/4/5 stacks of I’ve Got Rhythm for up to 1/2/3/4/5 immediate basic attacks.
* Stop the Beat | Water | Scales with Strength: Stops and temporarily disables target enemy’s next action for 1/2/3/4/5 actions.
* Feel the Song | Unattuned | Scales with Speed: Target ally gains 5/10/15/20/25% speed
* Dampen | Water | Combo w/ Archibald at Rank 3: Target enemy loses 30% agility for 2/3/4 actions.
* Mass Paralysis | Electricity | Combo w/ Archibald at Rank 6: Decreases the speed of all enemies by 25% for 2 actions.
* Heat Bomb | Fire | Combo w/ Cinder at Rank 3: Deal 35/55/75% Average Intelligence as fire damage to all enemies.
* Steam Guard | Unnatuned | Combo w/ Cinder at Rank 6: Each ally gains a 50% defense buff for the next 3 times they are attacked.
* Overgrowth | Life | Combo w/ Balthazar at Rank 3: Heals all allies by 50%/75%/100% of the average intelligence of the two.
* Tea Time | Unattuned | Combo w/ Balthazar at Rank 6: Increases the speed of all allies by 20% for 3 actions.

**Archibald von Wagonbagon**

* Electric-Attuned
* Master Artificer (everyone else are inventors, he’s just a Really Good one)
* Sporadic, Flakey, Antisocial, Anxious
* Short and round (friend shaped), unstyled black hair mostly hidden by a welder’s mask that he keeps up. Dirty, yellow kevlar apron, and a cool, mid-level skintone where his body isn’t replaced by brass prosthetics. Scarred face always seems to carry an anxious expression.
* Has a big robot named Meek
* Steampunk Prosthetics (Right arm and leg)
* Perks: Intelligence, Luck
* Derps: Agility
* Constantly wears a welder’s mask, usually up, but down when he needs it to be.
* Wants to stop the weapon.

Archibald was an inventor, and a son of one of the newer noble families that came with the Rise of Electricity. He was working on his latest project, a protector robot, when an unintended explosion shook the room, ripping not only limbs from his body, but a piece of his soul. The piece was absorbed by the robot, and Archibald had accidentally created a somewhat sentient metal man. We discover that this explosion is what gave rise to the idea of combining all four elements to create the ultimate weapon. Archibald had unintentionally contributed to the likely mass genocide of the Nandurans. He had decided that enough was enough, and departed to warn the High Council of the incoming attack.

**Archie Mechanics**

**Two Souls:**  When selecting a technique, you can choose to use either Archibald or Meek. When Meek is chosen, the ability takes a powerful effect on one target. When Archibald is chosen, that same ability occurs, but split over every target.

* Energize | Electricity | Unlocks with Agility: Target ally gains 15/30/45/60/75% damage on their next turn.
* Swap | Unattuned: Swaps Archibald and Meek
* Lightning Strike | Electricity | Unlocks with Intelligence : Deals 60/70/80/90/100% Intelligence as electricity damage to target enemy.
* Calculate | Unattuned | Unlocks with Luck: Archibald can predict target enemy’s next action with perfect accuracy, or meek can predict each enemy’s action with 50/60/70/80/90% accuracy.
* Dampen | Water | Combo w/ Danielle at Rank 3: Target enemy loses 30% agility for 2/3/4 actions.
* Mass Paralysis | Electricity | Combo w/ Danielle at Rank 6: Decreases the speed of all enemies by 25% for 2 actions.
* Experimental Surge | Electricity | Combo w/ Balthazar at Rank 3: Target enemy is stunned for 2/3/4 actions, or all enemies for 1 action.
* Helm Overcharge | Life | Combo w/ Balthazar at Rank 6: Take control of an enemy for 3 rounds.
* Strategize | Unattuned | Combo w/ Cinder at Rank 3 | Unlocks with Luck: Archibald can predict target enemy’s next action with perfect accuracy, or meek can predict each enemy’s action with 50/60/70/80/90% accuracy. Then, target ally gains a shield that reduces the next attack of the predicted element’s type by 30/40/50%.
* Nuclear Fission | Fire | Combo w/ Cinder at Rank 6: Target enemy takes average Intelligence in fire damage and target ally gets a 40% boost to all stats for 3 rounds.

**Lore of the World:**

**Elwandi: Land of Electricity**

**Wardania: Land of Water**

**Nanduru: Land of Nature**

**Firosa: Land of Fire**

Long ago, there were three great kingdoms: Wardania: the Water Kingdom, Firosa: the Fire Kingdom, and Nanduru: the Nature kingdom. The former two could be compared to a family, constantly bickering, yet hopelessly dependent on one another. The latter kingdom, Nanduru, stayed out of the conflicts. This all changed when one day, a fourth kingdom - Elwandi - landed on the shores of Wardania.

Until this point, Wardania and Firosa had been in a loose alliance in order to produce a common good: steam. Steam was used for transportation, heating, lighting, and much more. Both kingdoms needed it as badly as one another, and both kingdoms relied on each other to produce it. Elwandi, however, had the power of electricity. Their army stormed the beaches of Wardania quickly, fiercely, and with little warning. The aqueguard were no match, both due to the vast technological difference and their natural weakness to electricity. The king fought bravely to the end, but was struck down, leaving Wardania a city-state of the newly invading Elwandi kingdom.

At present, Firosa is in a trade deal with Elwandi, so that they keep their access to the steam that keeps their citizens warm and factories running. Nanduru, however, is in all out war with the Electricity Kingdom. Their location, as well as their natural resistance to electricity, makes them much more resilient to the invading forces, but even this is just barely enough. Every day, Elwandi pushes the tide of battle further in their favor.

**Archie and Danni**

Danielle, being part of the high members of society, attended many an event with Archibald. Both of them had never much enjoyed the gatherings, so they naturally gravitated towards each other at a young age. They had never had much romantic interest in each other, but were very close nonetheless. As they grew older, their relationship became more complicated. Danielle was assigned with the task of protecting Archibald, he being of a higher class due to his natural Elwandi blood. They try to stay close, but a lot of work-related issues tend to get in the way. Danielle finds Archibald’s final betrayal unforgivable, and feels very personally about the issue, while Archibald did not consider her in the equation.

Danielle will try to take Archibald back three times throughout the course of the game. Once while the team is on their way down to Nanduru, once at the end of the temple where they find Balthazar, and lastly… where she breaks down and tells Archibald how he made her feel.