

CS 4483 – Game Design

**The Written Future - Game Pitch**

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**The Premise (also known as the High Concept):**

*The Written future* is primarily a side scroller, metroidvania game focusing on the player's progression through the labyrinth as they slowly regain their memories and abilities to become stronger and stronger. The "hook" of the game consists of the fluid and rich world lore and environment, as well as the intense boss battles the player must undertake on their journey to regain their former power.

**Player Motivation:**

The victory condition of the game is collecting all the pages to complete the Life Tome, challenge the council of mages to retake their place, and once again become the Mage Eternal. The player will be forced to complete puzzles, defeat guardians, and become stronger as they complete each dungeon to obtain new chapters of their book. The player's drive will be slowly seeing their character improve as they hone their core ability use and put it to the test, eventually letting them go off the rails in any direction they choose to make their character and their own style.

**Unique Selling Proposition (USP):**

This game focuses on a captivating storyline, challenging fights, and perplexing puzzles. The lore and story behind your character will be slowly unraveled as you learn more and more about them, giving hints to puzzles or even enemy or boss weaknesses. The fights will leave you on your toes from the challenge, requiring learning from experience. Perplexing puzzles will require thinking outside the box to find hidden caches, secret doors, shortcuts, or other alternative additions. The combat will start of simple and intuitive, slowly adding more variety but remaining focused on fundamental skills for the player to unlock.

**Competitive Analysis:**

*Hollow Knight:*

Pros:

- Unique and hand drawn art style.
- Amazing soundtrack composed uniquely for the game.

- Well balanced division between mandatory, optional, and very extra content offered to the players.
- Fluid progression through stages of the game and learning curve.
- Fast paced but manageable combat.
- Character's have a lot of personality and thought put into them, making many unique and memorable.
- Decently replayable, with plenty of optional content and challenges to do after the main story.

Cons:

- Storyline details are hard to derive intentionally, and without intense searching.
- Some dialogue is very standard.

*Undertale:*

Pros:

- Amazing soundtrack composed uniquely for the game.
- Extremely well thought dialogue, witty banter, and jokes between characters feels lively and draws you in.
- Combat is unique in its options, revolving around humor, and mini-games over fluid action.
- Character's have a lot of personality and thought put into them, making many unique and memorable.
- Decently replayable with multiple play styles to take, altering the game progression.

Cons:

- Very simple pixel art.
- Lack's much challenge.

*Dead Cells:*

Pros:

- Fast paced but manageable combat, that can be harsh for beginners, but is picked up relatively quickly.

- Very replayable, with plenty of optional content and challenges to do after the main story.
- Being a rogue-like game offers intensity and lack of regret, allowing players to live in the moment and enjoy each run.

**Cons:**

- Storyline details are hard to derive intentionally, and without intense searching.
- Some dialogue is very standard.
- Very simple pixel art.
- Soundtrack is decent.

**Genres:**

The game will be a mix between metroidvania, dungeon crawler, boss battle focused, puzzle, platformer, side-scroller, and loaded with rich story telling. Most games that are focused on exploration and combat tend to involve less storytelling for more adrenaline seeking players; however I believe adding lots of additional content that paints an interesting picture in the story and provides subtle hints to the players as a reward for paying close attention will give a more diverse experience. The uniqueness of the game comes in its flexibility to choose how you as the player will style your character, your combat, your goals, and traverse the world within this game. The level of focus and detail to take in solely depends on the player, allowing for a hard thinking player to thrive on customizing builds and making their own creation, a player who just wants to fight without having to make big decisions, and anywhere in between.

**Gameplay:**

- Combat:
  - Is fluid, involving flexibility between how the player defines their style best. While the player was originally a mage, they can choose to gear their character towards alternative play styles, with magic being a supporting factor. Whether their style consists of the traditional sword and shield, dodging, long ranged magic or projectile use, or any variation in between.
- Puzzles:

- Range from silly and simple, to complex and comprehensive. However the more difficult the puzzle is, the more optional it tends to be, as well as the higher the reward.
- Platforming:
  - Platforming is a fun way to add diversity to the game, making it the player vs. the environment rather than the enemy for intervals.
- Dialogue:
  - Having side characters and NPC's that offer lifelike and enthusiastic dialogue options, while being informative and helpful additions to the game. This dialogue allows the player to get attached to the characters.
- Story delving:
  - Discovering subtle details about the intricacy of the true lore and nature of the world the game takes place in. Simple and major details are given to the player, but many details can be discovered by those who take time, and even further details by those who seek a thrill in analyzing and searching for clues to contrive possible lore.
- Boss battles:
  - Boss battles give the player unique enemies to learn and adapt to, with a chance to show the skills they've learned, and feel a great sense of achievement once completed.
- Upgrading:
  - Primarily finding chapters of the Life Tome in order to regain the ability to use spells and other perks/traits the Mage Eternal originally had. Getting better weapons, armor, trinkets and unique items from bosses or secret areas/chests and other rewarding progressions. Additional upgrades can include upgrading a safe haven for the character, otherwise known as their hub, where they could store items or craft things.
- Exploring:
  - Exploring routes to find the best way to progress the game, finding hidden treasures and upgrades, or even lore details tucked away in nooks and crannies. Backtracking to old areas with new upgrades such as a grappling hook or a double jump would also encourage reusability.
- Experimenting:

- Each player can attempt to find the write play style for them individually, changing the additional item choices they have to supplement main game mechanics.
- Customizing:
  - Each player should be given some options to customize their character sprite slightly so it feels like a unique experience playing your own story to a degree, rather than someone else's fully.

### **Story Synopsis:**

*The Written future* is set in the medieval/fantasy world of Terramar, where the main character is the most powerful mage that's ever existed, receiving the moniker "Mage Eternal" from the council of mages and commoners alike. In order to be immortal, they channeled their life, their past, present and future to be stored in a book and kept in their sanctum, the Life Tome. Within a few years discontent grows among the most powerful mages that have been overshadowed by the Mage Eternal's fame. They hatch a plot to contain the Mage Eternal just long enough for the Life Tome to be stolen by the best thief in Terramar and the pages ripped out and scattered across the land. The Mage Eternal loses all their memories, power, and their very identity. One day they come across a fragment of the Life Tome and remember who they were. Now they begin a quest to find the pages of the Life Tome scattered within a labyrinth guarded by the worst horrors created, regain their power, and take back their legacy from the usurping council of mages.

There will be plenty of little pieces of information about the generic enemies, unique enemies, NPC's and bosses the character will encounter. Leaving the player with hidden knowledge of weaknesses, strengths, moral desires and even the past of those the player encounters. This may leave you burning with the desire to destroy an enemy, or even go so far as to pity the boss you face, desiring only to put them out of their misery.

### **Target Market:**

This game is targeted towards teens and adults, typically those enjoying single player fantasy games with a challenge. While the mandatory content of the game is not meant to be

extremely challenging, it's not supposed to be easy at all. The game contains violence, monsters, and plenty of potion chugging, resulting in the game landing somewhere between Everyone 10+ and Teens. This game would be targeting for North America as well as Japan, but may also see significant play in China. Few aspects in particular warrant a very mature individual to play the game, however the content is generally darker, and has a lot of key story based features, which typically more young or innocent audiences would not enjoy. The reason someone would buy and play this type of game is to enjoy throwing themselves into an interactive and in depth world that feels challenging but not punishing. The game is meant to challenge and allow the player to pursue their creativity primarily. The target audience in the end would be focused on catching lore driven players, explorer types, and adrenaline junkies seeking to find a challenge that leaves them on the edge of their seat.

**Target Platform:**

The target platform for this game will be the computer (with the aim for controller support as the most recommended way to play the game), but in the possible future of this game, it would play well on other consoles such as the Playstation, Xbox, or Nintendo Switch. It would run on at least Windows 7, requiring a processor at least as capable as the Intel Core 2 Duo E5200, with memory of 4GB of ram or more, a graphics card equivalent or greater than the GeForce 9800GTX+ (1GB), DirectX: Version 11, and somewhere between 5-10GB of hard drive space. Additionally use of a keyboard, mouse, and a recommendation for having a monitor supporting 16:9 resolution at 1080p.

**Summary:**

This game covers a plethora of the major aspects and desires players have in a game, exploration, combat, story, progression, additional content, replayability, and flexibility all rolled into one amazing package. This is game made by a gamer, for gamers. Something that will be worked on with passion, taking feedback from beta testers and other players in order to create a balanced, fluid and fair system that feels rewarding and enjoyable.